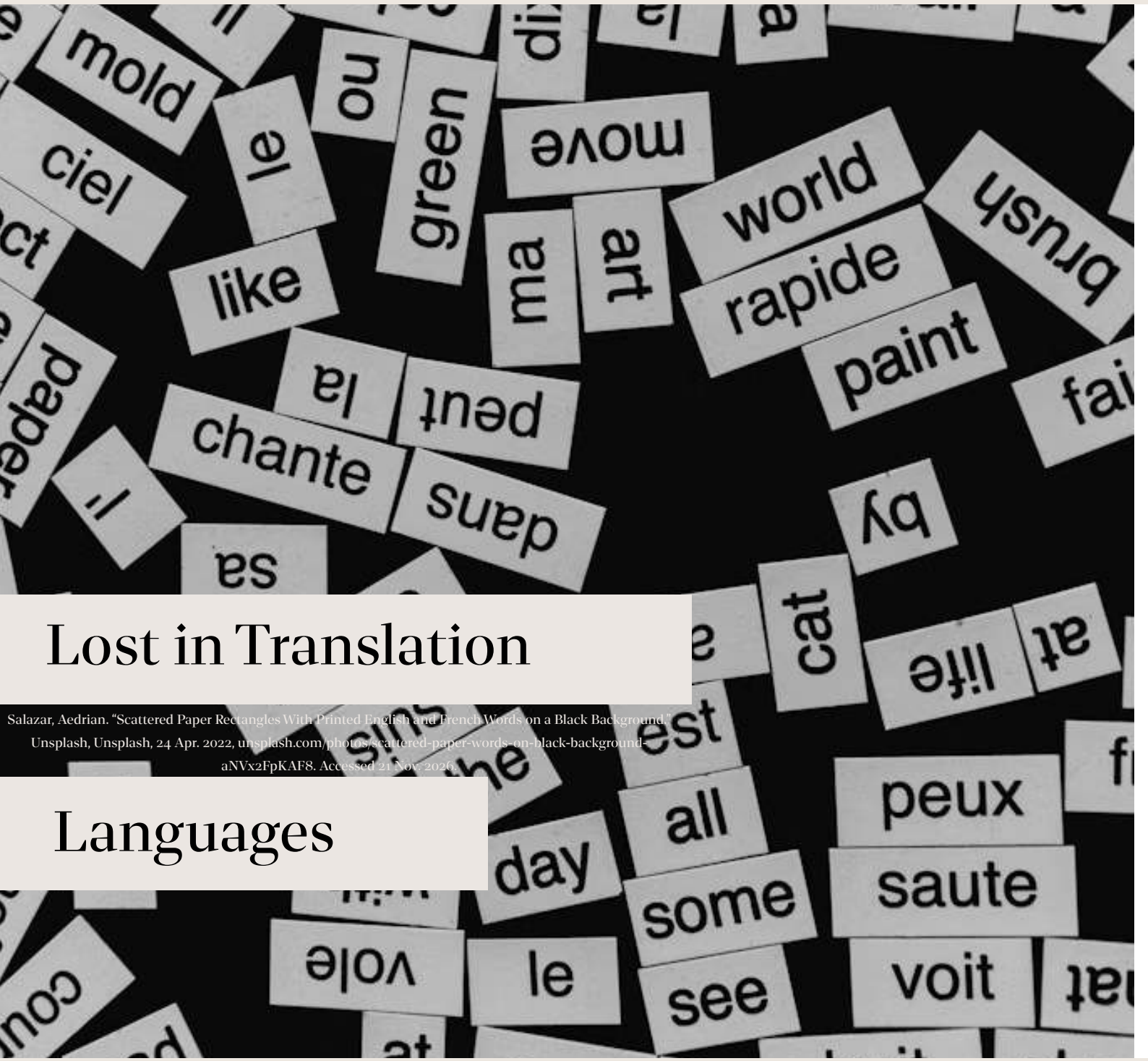
# THE IB TIMES




## Lost in Translation

Salazar, Aedrian. "Scattered Paper Rectangles With Printed English and French Words on a Black Background." Unsplash, Unsplash, 24 Apr. 2022, unsplash.com/photos/scattered-paper-words-on-black-background-aNVx2FpKAF8. Accessed 21 Nov. 2026.

## Languages

November 2026

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# How do languages shape perspective?

*Author: Gabriela Sadowska*

Language is an inherent part of our lives. We use it for art, expression of feelings but also, most importantly, for communication. Hence, it became something people don't necessarily pay attention to on a daily basis. We don't think about how language influences our perception of the world, which differs depending on the means that the language provides us with to comprehend reality. Surprisingly, the differences in the worldview are stronger than we would expect them to be.

One of the aspects most influenced by language is the orientation we have in our surroundings. In Europe we give directions in a very simplified way where we distinguish left, right, front and back. This happens because our languages do not require us to be more precise and the uncomplicated communication is highly efficient. However, it deprives us of awareness of cardinal directions. Conversely, in languages such as Guugu Yimithirr and Kuuk Thaayorre among indigenous groups in Australia one must be incredibly oriented in the space. It is demanded by the very vernacular they use as in it the directions are given by referring to South, West, North and East instead of the simple way it is done in most languages. Thus, populations using such communication have a shockingly good sense of orientation and move around new places much more effortlessly than other societies would.



Whalen, Tom. Illustration for "How Language Shapes Thought," by Lera Boroditsky.

On the other hand, the perception of colours may be altered by the range of expressions we possess to describe them. In Polish we differentiate between blue and navy very clearly. We call them respectively "niebieski" and "granatowy", which are visibly not even closely related when it comes to sound. They are not even treated as different shades but rather two different colours in daily communication. Therefore, the association with the word blue is specifically with the light colour because there is a word for the dark one. However, in Russian such a distinction doesn't exist. There is a general word that contains a whole range of shades within, from baby blue to navy. Hence, people using that language as their native tongue perceive blue as a broad spectrum rather than a specific tone. As a result conflicts may stem from differences between languages. While Russians may refer to dark blue, a Polish person will most likely assume something bright.



Getty Images. Accessed 29 Nov. 2026

There are countless aspects that could be discussed around variations in vocabulary or grammatics that contribute to the way people perceive the surrounding world. We don't think much when we speak, it comes naturally but in fact we perceive reality through the lens of language we use. It determines the tools we have to describe feelings, concepts and even the landscape, limiting or enhancing our understanding as well as comprehension of details. These differences may also contribute to tension and misconceptions but it might be a trigger to learn more and try to see the world through other languages and discover how the standpoint changes.

*Page design: Antonina Szklarzewska*

# Oasis Will Live Forever!: Oasis Live ‘27 Tour

*Author: Paulina Wróblewska*

September 14th 2026, the date which lit up the Manchester sky during a drone show, marked a historic date for all Oasis fans across the globe - the band has finally confirmed new tour dates for 2027. After their wildly lucrative reunion in 2025, the Gallagher brothers will tour the UK, Ireland, US, Europe and revisit Knebworth - the place of their greatest, most memorable live triumph.

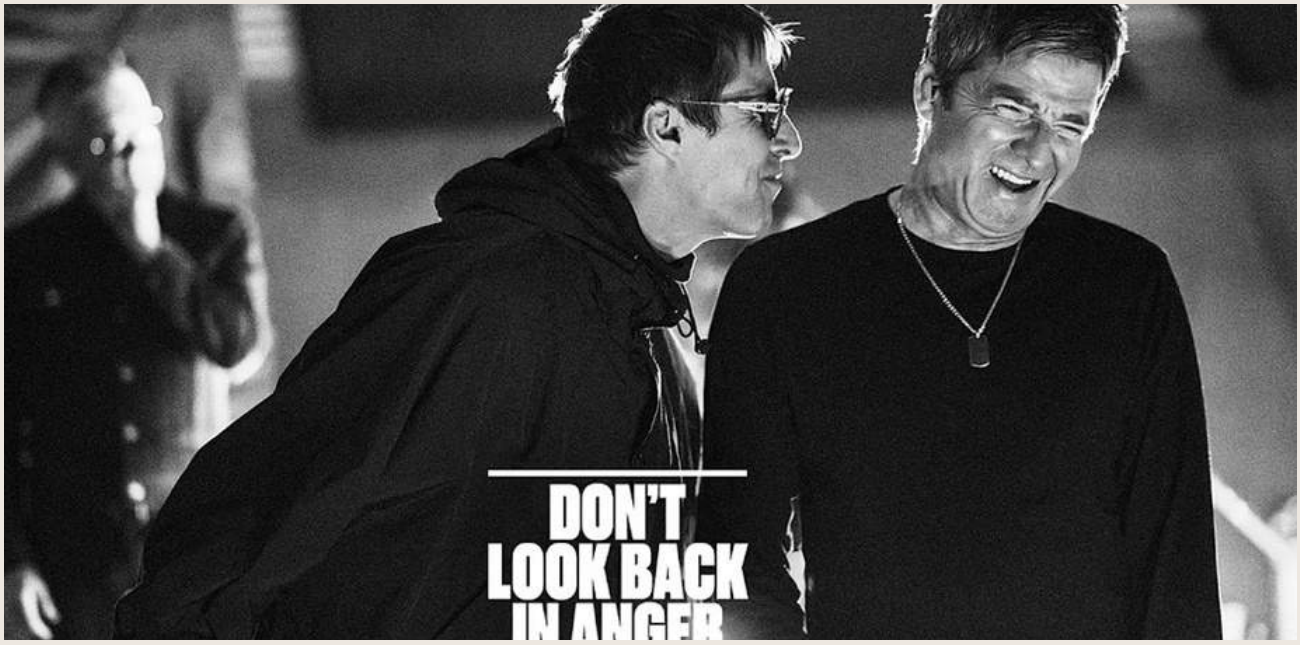


Mieczysław Koryl. “Oasis Już Oficjalnie Ogłosili Trasę 2027 - Zobacz, Co Mamy Dla Ciebie Z Tej Okazji •Photoninja.Pl -.” *Photoninja.Pl - Sklep Z Pomysłami*, 15 Sept. 2026, https://photoninja.pl/oasis-juz-oficjalnie-oglosili-trase-2027/. Accessed 21 Nov. 2026.

In early September the band started sharing a video featuring a series of numbers, which fans recognized as coordinates for some of the venues. Around that time Noel Gallagher gave an interview at Talksport and said: “Let’s put it this way: there’s no football tournament next year, so we’ve got to do something in the summer, right?”, hinting that the tour is in preparation.

The actual announcement arrived just a couple days after the premier of the new movie documenting the band’s incredible return in the summer of 2025 and the brothers’ reconciliation titled “Oasis: Don’t Look Back In Anger”. The documentary also features the first joint interviews with both Gallaghers in almost 20 years.

The tour will feature over 42 dates across eleven cities in the UK, Ireland, US and Europe, including eleven dates in their home city and six at Knebworth Park, the first time since 1996 where Oasis played their iconic concert at Knebworth Festival on 10th and 11th of August. Over 250,000 people attended both days, witnessing 29-year-old Noel and 23-year-old Liam perform a historical concert. To this day it is often cited as representing the absolute pinnacle of the Britpop era and one of the best live performances. The concerts will begin with five nights in Celtic Park, Glasgow and end with six nights in Knebworth Park. Oasis will also visit Munich, Barcelona, Amsterdam, Paris, Rome, Boston and Las Vegas.




Mouriquand, David. "Euronews Culture's Film of the Week: 'Oasis: Don't Look Back in Anger' - Biblical or a Missed Opportunity?" *Euronews*, euronews.com, 10 Sept. 2026, https://www.euronews.com/2026/09/10/euronews-cultures-film-of-the-week-oasis-dont-look-back-in-anger-biblical-or-a-missed-oppo. Accessed 21 Nov. 2026.

As of now, all of the tickets have been sold out, but have no fear resale will be available through Ticketmaster at the original price paid no later than 31st of December!

While the venues, dates and tickets have been confirmed there is still one question that remains unanswered: which artists will be supporting Oasis? The only official singer that has been confirmed is The Verve's frontman Richard Ashcroft who will perform alongside Liam and Noel at all of the 42 dates. Fans have listed several other bands that they would like to see on the Live'27 Tour, such as Kasabian, Stereophonics or even Blur. When a fan suggested Fontaines D.C., an Irish post-punk band formed in Dublin in 2014, Liam, in true Gallagher fashion, replied that "There not good enough they don't have any tunes". This is not the first time the younger Gallagher has insulted the band, in September 2024 he called Fontaines "little spunkbubbles". Many Fontaines D.C. fans simply laughed the insult off saying that getting slandered by Liam Gallagher is almost a rite of passage and a classic rock tradition. Liam is well known for his snarky comments at other artists, so lots of people just dismissed the critique.

As the anticipation surrounding The Oasis Live'27 Tour grows, the brothers' comeback stands as a testament to their influence on British music, pop culture and their everlasting legacy. Oasis are giving their longtime fans an opportunity to experience hearing the music which shaped generations live and seeing the Gallagher brothers side by side on a stage once again. The band's return promises to be a remarkable celebration of one of the biggest bands in the world.

*Page design: Amelia Puchalska*

# Looking Back at “Addison”

*Author: Nicole Dzitkowska*



Corcoran, Nina. “Addison Rae Shares Video for New Song ‘Fame Is a Gun’: Watch.” Pitchfork, 30 May 2025, https://pitchfork.com/news/addison-rae-shares-video-for-new-song-fame-is-a-gun-watch/. Accessed 21 Nov. 2026.

## “AR2” On The Horizon?

It seems like Addison Rae might not be done surprising the music industry just yet. Following the success of her self-titled album “Addison”, fans have been eagerly waiting to see what comes next. With rumours about her second studio album, unofficially referred to as AR2, gaining more attention online, and a few hints from the singer herself sparking speculation, excitement surrounding a new chapter in her career is growing. Although no official release date has been announced, this makes it the perfect moment to look back at the album that started it all and explore what made “Addison” an important step in her career and one of the most successful rebrandings in recent years.

## From TikTok Star to Pop Artist

Released on June 6, 2025, “Addison” marked a major turning point in Addison Rae’s career. Having first gained popularity as a TikTok creator, she faced the challenge of proving that she could be taken seriously as a musician. Although her music journey had started earlier with the release of her debut single “Obsessed” in 2021 and her first EP, “AR”, in 2023, it was her first full-length album and it truly established her artistic identity.

## The Sound and Aesthetic of “Addison”

The album was preceded by five singles: “Diet Pepsi”, “Aquamarine”, “High Fashion”, “Headphones On” and “Fame Is A Gun”. Each offered a different glimpse into the album’s sound and aesthetic, gradually building anticipation for its release. One particularly memorable moment in its promotion took place at Coachella in April 2025. During a surprise appearance alongside Arca, Addison Rae revealed the album’s release date in an unusual way, showing pink underwear with the words “June 6” written on it. Later that month, she officially announced the album’s title and cover.

Musically, “Addison” combines dreamy synth-pop, dance influences and nostalgic elements inspired by earlier pop eras, particularly the late 1990s and early 2000s. Tracks such as “Diet Pepsi” and “Aquamarine” stand out for their catchy melodies and atmospheric production, while “High Fashion” and “Headphones On” reveal different sides of her musical identity. The album feels cohesive, even though it moves between dance-oriented moments and more atmospheric sounds. One of the most interesting aspects of this album is its visual and musical direction. The project embraces a nostalgic, almost cinematic version of pop combining familiar influences with a modern approach. Rather than trying to completely reinvent the genre, Addison takes elements of different pop eras and turns them into something that feels distinctly her own. This is also reflected in the album's artwork and promotional campaign, which helped create a recognisable aesthetic surrounding the release.

## The Success of Her Rebranding

Following its release, “Addison” received generally positive reviews from critics. More importantly, it helped change the way audiences perceived Addison Rae’s artistry. She was no longer simply a TikTok influencer experimenting with singing, but an artist with a creative vision and a sound of her own. The album demonstrated that her ambitions in music extended beyond her internet fame.

## What Comes Next?

With a second album potentially on the horizon, fans are wondering whether Addison Rae will continue exploring the sound of her debut or take a completely different direction. Whatever comes next, “Addison” deserves another listen. This project was more than just her introduction to the music industry, it established her identity as a pop artist and proved that she was capable of much more than her TikTok fame.

*Page design: Amelia Puchalska*

# Communication Without Words: How Art Shows the Unspoken

*Author: Sofija Apanasiewicz*

Spoken language is not the only way we can communicate with each other. Although it is the most common form, a lot of people express their feelings through pictures, sounds or even body movements. The thing is that all of these things serve the same purpose: to communicate.

**If art can communicate, does that make it a language on its own?**

"It's easier to show than to explain," they say. But is this true?

People use gestures, facial expressions and tone of voice to communicate.
Artists use different canvases, techniques, colours, and many more just so that we can grasp the meaning of the painting as well as possible. Art can help people cross language or age barriers too. Imagine yourself trying to understand what a child wants when they can't express themselves as well as you can. Communication between different generations might be hard. That's when you should try giving them a piece of paper and something to draw with, so the child can explain what they want without using words, which is a great way of conveying meaning! They can literally show you what they want through art. After all, people don't have to use words to communicate.



*Wilkinson S. a close up of an orange and black substance. unsplash. October 5, 2022. Accessed November 14, 2026. https://unsplash.com/photos/a-close-up-of-an-orange-and-black-substance-tTlhyhT0Hv8*



Unsplash. Photo by Samantha Weisburg on Unsplash. unsplash.com. February 13, 2019. Accessed November 14, 2026. https://unsplash.com/photos/group-of-people-performing-on-stage-hFTcxZFsG6g

**However, communication does not always guarantee success.**

A gesture that is perfectly obvious to us might have a completely different meaning in another culture. For example, in many countries the "OK sign" means "agreeing to something", but in Japan that's a gesture that represents "money". With art it works in a similar way. We might look at a painting and see something completely different from what someone else sees, or even from what the artist originally intended. For example, butoh. It's a type of Japanese dance that includes more of a theatrical movement than moves that people are used to calling "dance".

For some people, this performance is a meditation and encourages them to think about the meaning of life, while for other people it's just a stage show. As in Malevich's "Black Square" , the audience interpreted the painting as a joke about how art doesn't have to be as complicated and pretty to be called art. However, Kazimir was really serious about showing the audience "the zero form" of art and pure feeling of fullness.

Every brushstroke can mean something different. Dancers express their feelings with every movement. Musicians make music to evoke different emotions in their listeners. All of them can do it without words. Art is a language. A very abstract one, but a language nonetheless.

**Are there any limits ?**

Of course not. One of the traits of a language is that millions of different sentences can be created. Art works the same way. You can play a song, perform a dance, change the colours on a painting or take as many photos as you want. Just as in verbal communication we can say directly what we want the audience to feel, art shows it more in a philosophical way, which allows people to think about its hidden meaning for a while.

There's no limit.



Getty Images. circa 1800: A butterfly rests on a jug of marigolds. (Photo by Hulton Archive/Getty Images). unsplash. October 31, 2022. Accessed November 14, 2026. https://unsplash.com/photos/circa-1800-a-butterfly-rests-on-a-jug-of-marigolds-photo-by-hulton-archivegetty-images-6oHp2N9RY14

**How can people tell what the meaning is?**

Before we think - we feel.

Just as the tone of someone's voice can change the meaning of their words, colours and movements can influence our emotions too. Although colours don't have one fixed meaning, if you look at the picture painted in warm colours and one painted in cooler shades, you experience more positive emotions while looking at the first painting . That's how color psychology works. As some people that have seen Flowers in a vase by Rachel Ruysch feel just common calmness, others might rather pay more attention to how fast time passes. Although their interpretations may differ, both are connected with melancholy. The emotion is being summoned by the dark, almost black background and cool, faded colours. While someone remembers the times when there were flowers on his table, someone might just see a really pretty painting.

It works the same way when two different people hear one word (f.e. "park") and think about different stuff, but they know what park is, they just interpretise the word differently. In this way, people can experience the same underlying emotion through art, even if they understand its meaning differently.

**Can we feel art?**

If you look at the picture painted in warm colours and one painted in cooler shades, you experience more positive emotions while looking at the first painting. That's how color psychology works. Of course it depends on personal experience too, as well as the colour contrast. It works the same way as the tone of the voice, the sharpness in a dancer's movements, the quality of a picture.

Art proves that sometimes words are not enough to express what we feel or think, but art can make it easier.

So, can we communicate without words? Yes, very easily.



Romain Briaux. brown and white food on black ceramic plate. unsplash. July 10, 2017. Accessed November 14, 2026. https://unsplash.com/photos/brown-and-white-food-on-black-ceramic-plate-G7eI_KNp7iw

*Page design: Zofia Kitlas*

# *The Message Lost on the Path of Translation.*

Author: Nadia Michalik

Have you ever caught yourself not being able to explain a word from one language to another? Or noticed subtitles differing from an original dialogue in a film? Most of us have experienced both. Some phrases simply cannot be directly translated since they only exist in one specific language, and sometimes capturing the essence of what makes them special is a far more intricate problem than it appears at first glance. Conveying the true message is a genuine art, demanding remarkable skill and effort, which makes it a fundamental problem every translator needs to tackle.

## *Untranslatable Words*

There are plenty of words that simply refuse to travel. They are untranslatable in a way one cannot substitute them with a foreign equivalent. Take the most commonly known Portuguese word *saudade*. It describes a desperate state of longing for a person or a thing that is no longer present. It could be associated with homesickness or even deep nostalgia. In other words, a bittersweet feeling based on a mix of pain and pleasure, often prevailing in literary contexts as a motif. That one word takes full sentences to explain in English, yet something is still missing. This lost piece from a puzzle is one of numerous examples of such a phenomenon. Words are not labels you can just swap to match different languages; they are fragments of centuries of history, heritage founded by our ancestors. A translation can, of course, provide a description of a term, but not the word itself. The message is there, just not as explicit as the original one, thinner, wandering in between, in the depths of translation.

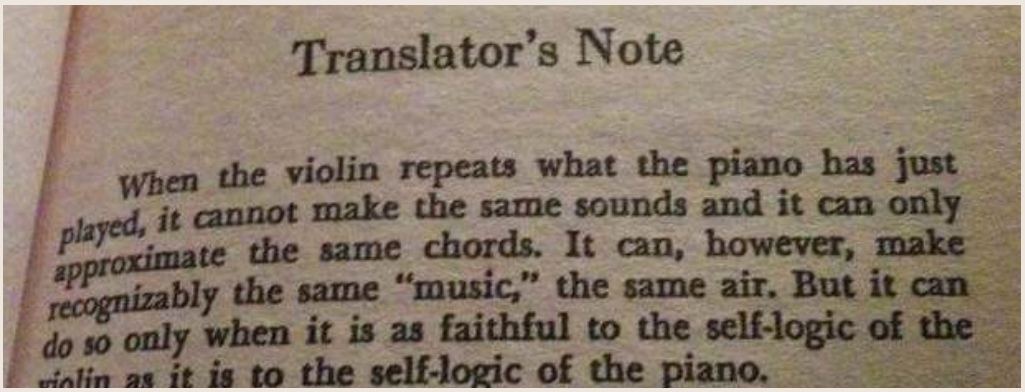



*Hageman, R. (n.d.). Lost in translation movie poster [Poster]. On Pinterest. Retrieved 16 November 2026, from https://i.pinimg.com/1200x/b0/a3/55/b0a355dc6fd89445e8f198300ec888ec.jpg*

Another term worth mentioning is 闺蜜 (guī mì). It is an abbreviation of a word in modern Chinese 闺中密友 (guī zhōng mì yǒu), portraying a unique, eternal bond between female best friends, comparable to sisterhood. This word outlines profound loyalty, trust, intimacy and mutual understanding. 闺 refers to a boudoir, a chamber reserved for women, whereas 蜜 refers to sweetness or is a component of the word honey (蜂蜜). Both linked together form a term highlighting the transcendence from a usual friendship into a sister-like bond. Translating it to simply best-friends is utterly inappropriate. Although the message survives the journey, the trace of it barely remains.

# *Bizarre Subtitles*

Subtitles. The most challenging task for every translator. It is a compromise: concise message, short form, readable in seconds, appropriate to the flow of ongoing conversation in a film. So many facets, yet so little space. Nowhere is the message lost more visibly than in this case. A character delivers a joke rooted in the culture the film comes from, the subtitles cover a literal translation but it does not fit anymore. Though the plot survives, the irony, subtle remarks quietly disappear in the background. Watch a film with subtitles in a language you know well, and you will notice those differences. The words are written, but are they the same as the spoken ones?




*Translator's note on music and logic. (n.d.). [Photograph]. On Pinterest. Retrieved 16 November 2026, from https://i.pinimg.com/1200x/9c/75/ca/9c75cad0429e91ce12c2b6bbf24f6baf.jpg*

Culture contrasts are often the main obstacle. What is funny in one language can be confusing in another. Sometimes a joke is irrelevant after translating, pure nonsense. In fact, subtitles may suggest a rather lightly toned dialogue, while a scene was meant to be tragic, resulting in an unintentional change in audience reaction. At times filmmakers alter a title in a way that spoils the entire piece. One of the renowned examples is Michel Gondry's Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind which was translated into Italian as Se mi lasci ti cancello (If You Leave Me, I'll Delete You), giving away the entire plot. The first one is a quote from the 1717 poem Eloisa to Abelard by Alexander Pope which depicts a devastating state occurring in a forbidden love affair, a tragedy resulting from passionate romance. The choice of this line being the title of the film shows deeper meaning beyond the surface, conveying the genuine essence of this production. The latter, however, completely mismatches the tone, and by losing the poetic nuance it makes the first impression more superficial. This is why translation, especially in the creative industry, matters. It cannot hide – it sits in plain sight, preserving the message – or letting it go.

So where does the message go on its path between languages? I would not say it is destroyed while travelling – rather, it is altered. Translation is about interpretation of the message, what was the author's idea and purpose. A translation is a piece of art meant to be understood by the masses. Language differences are not the main issue; it is the way a text is interpreted. Therefore, the journey is a complex, perplexing process, like a set of tangled earphones. It takes time to unravel the true essence. Perhaps the real task is not to fight the loss, but to notice it. The message is always there, just not quite the one that started the journey.



*emmaharutyunyan_ . (n.d.). Couple lying on cracked ice [Photograph]. On Pinterest. Retrieved 16 November 2026, from https://i.pinimg.com/1200x/a2/cb/a9/a2cba9d690e8f4b3ea2ab71da9afe193.jpg*

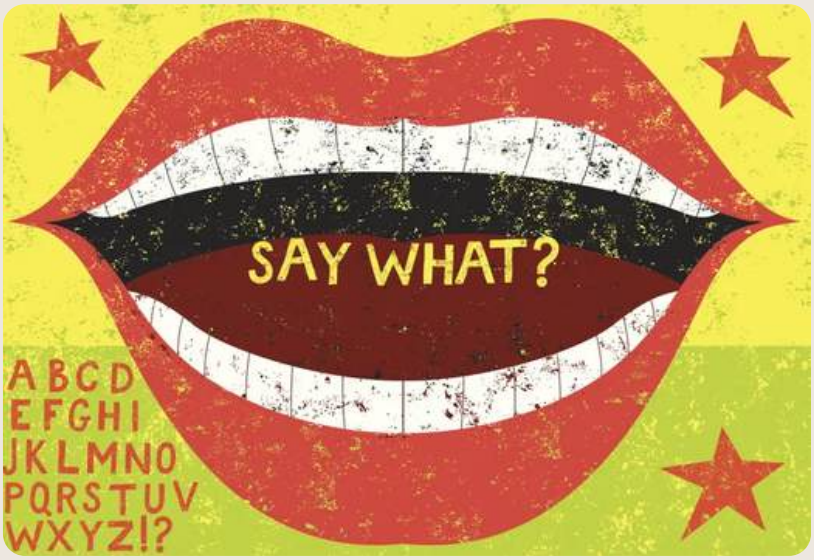
*Page design: Sofija Apanasiewicz*

# Where did that word go? The mystery of the “Tip Of The Tongue”

Author: Anita Konstantynowicz

## THE TOT PHENOMENON:

Have you ever found yourself during an engaging conversation, actively communicating, when suddenly you’d forgotten a word you wanted to use? It seemed like you almost got it but it just disappeared from your mind at the most inappropriate moment. You have probably experienced the Tip of the Tongue phenomenon at least a couple of times. And what's so intriguing is the fact that you remembered vividly the sense of the needed word, how long it was, what the first letter was, or what it looked like. This phenomenon, which may also be called “lethologica”, is characterized by a frustrating feeling of knowing the word and understanding the meaning of it, however struggling to pull it out from your memory when needed. Having a word on the tip of your tongue doesn't mean you forgot it, it just means your brain knows the meaning and needs some time to find the right sound.




*Getty Images. Accessed 22 Nov. 2026*

## COULD IT BE AN ILLUSION?

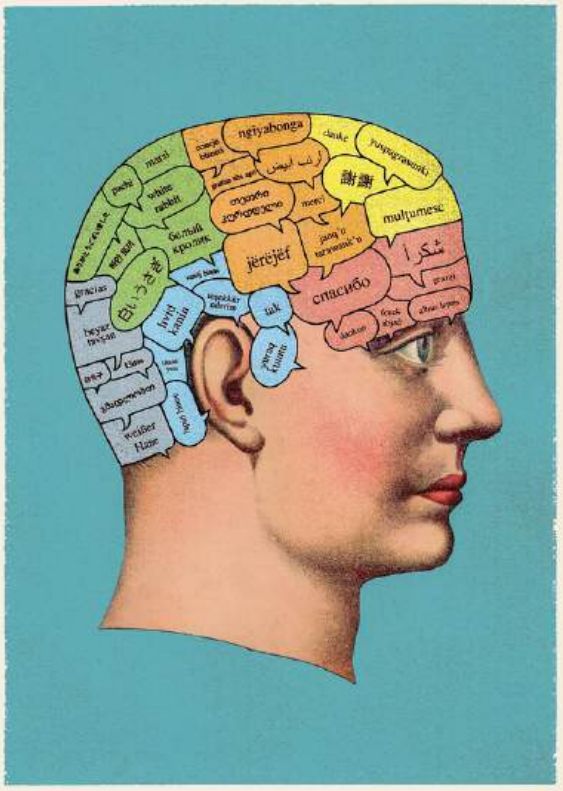
No matter how sure we might be that we are literally on the point of recalling a word and know the exact associations such as some of the letters, there's actually a high possibility of our brain attempting to somehow trick us. In some cases, it can be compared to deja vu, which is generally described as a feeling that you have experienced the current situation before, even though it's happening for the first time. So going back to the illusionary impression of being able to name the right first letter of the missing word, studies have shown that in most cases people simply fail to recall the proper one. This means the thing we're trying to remember is not always as close as we might assume.

## WHY DOES IT HAPPEN?

There are plenty of reasons why we are constantly faced with this phenomenon. The most common is a rare usage of the word, which makes it significantly harder to recall after a long time, as our brain puts it on the back burner, assuming it's no longer that important. Another reason is tiredness and lack of concentration that may also often lead to problematic attempts of expressing your thoughts properly. Being either stressed or impoverishes our vocabulary rather than enriches it, which we can notice after some time as we’ve calmed down and immediately remembered what we had been trying to say.

## THIS HAPPENING TO MULTILINGUALS:

What's also definitely worth taking into consideration is the prevalence of the Tip of the Tongue phenomenon among multilingual individuals, who are constantly going through this kind of challenge. When you know a lot of languages, for instance more than three, and especially use them all on a daily basis switching from one to another, your brain is constantly overloaded so there're often moments when something you're attempting to say comes to mind in another language or even several other ones, but not in the one you need at that moment. In such moments you feel like you're capable of saying something but you actually can't find a needed equivalent in a specific language. So talking to a multilingual, don't forget to take into account that sometimes the connected speech costs much more effort than it might seem.




*Munday, Oliver. 2018. Universal History Archive / Getty (Face). Accessed 22 Nov. 2026*

## SO, HOW DO WE DEAL WITH IT?

Thinking about the context is said to be one of the most effective advice. You can try to focus on what the word means or what it might be connected to. Using a physical gesture such as moving your hands also stimulates specific areas in the brain. But if it's still unsuccessful, it's worth trying to bring to mind how this word might sound in another language, which may be easier to recall. What's more, research has shown that searching for the first syllable, not just the first letter, unlocks the word much faster than guessing single letters. Saying other words with the same starting syllable often appears to be helpful in order to recall a word. For those speaking several languages, it's incredibly useful to learn such skills as being able to describe a forgotten word using other words instead of forcing yourself to remember. This might not only prevent you from finding yourself in an awkward situation, but also activate the needed associations and retrieve words more easily. That's why, when learning new words in a foreign language, remembering the description of the word in other words in this language instead of just the translation is actually very important.

## THE TAKEAWAY:

No matter how hard we try to always remember what we are going to say or write, forgetting will always be an inevitable and natural process for all human beings. That means the TOT phenomenon doesn't need to cause any worries (unless it becomes excessive or happens constantly, of course), and can also surprisingly be a proof that your brain works properly. Struggling to recall a word forces your brain to strengthen neural pathways and once you finally remember the word, you are much more likely to recall it faster next time. So next time you find yourself in this situation, keep in mind that the strong feeling that you know the word is an alarm which tells you not to give up searching because it's definitely somewhere in your memory.

*Page design: Antonina Szklarzewska*

# *Can the untranslatable mind express what words cannot?*

*Author: Klaudia Aksiucik*

We are all familiar with language being an integral part of our humanity. It is supposed to let us, as humans, connect with each other - and most of the time, it does. But sometimes having a conversation can be utterly exhausting. Picture a patient in a doctor's waiting room, trying to describe a pain in a foreign language, or a nurse who cannot find the words to ask a question. Language barriers affect anyone trying to communicate in a tongue that was never actually theirs, and it was never just a vocabulary problem. I wrote about this once before, and I actually thought that I had everything I wanted to say. I was wrong.

Over a year ago, I explored the concepts of language barriers. I mentioned various aspects, whether it is cognitive overload, culture shock, or the "swimmer" example (you can read it here). I ended the article with a spark of hope. I argued that with genuine understanding, no one has to be left feeling lost in translation. However, the more I think about it, the more I realise that only half of the story has been told. My attention in that article was fixed on shining a spotlight on the people who cannot find the words in a foreign language. But what about the rest of us? What about the moments when the words are simply not there, in any language?

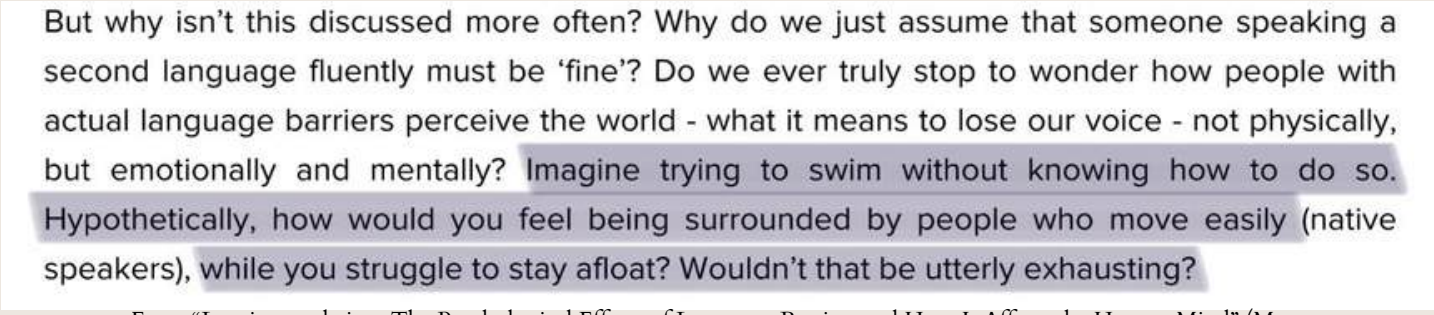


Pinterest. (2023). 간단한 그림 | 포즈, 배경. [online] Available at: https://kr.pinterest.com/pin/631700285257043316/ [Accessed 15 Nov. 2026].

Yes, language barriers do occur, but far more common is one with nothing to do with vocabulary or grammar at all. Have you ever been asked "how are you, really?" and your mind went blank because the feeling refuses to become a structured sentence? Have you ever found yourself in the middle of an argument with your loved one, knowing exactly what you feel, and yet saying a completely different thing? The knowledge is complete. Only the words are missing. What I want to focus on are the specific moments when the words are genuinely not there, even in the language we classify as our native one.

We tend to believe that we think first and speak second. When will we understand that the human brain simply does not work that way? Before a single word is chosen, the brain has already reacted. The amygdala, also known as a small almond-shaped structure found deep in our mind, determines what matters and what threatens us. So, when you finally reach for a sentence, instead of just picking words off a shelf, you are translating from a system that never learned any language at all. No wonder the translation is never fully complete.

In Broca's aphasia, damage (usually from a stroke) to an area in the frontal lobe that produces speech leaves patients unable to speak fluently. However, they can still solve problems and recognize faces. The person is intact. The meaning is also intact. Only the doorway into words has faltered. The opposite of this is Wernicke's aphasia, caused by damage to an area in the temporal lobe that processes word meaning. This means that patients speak fluently, but their words carry no direct sense. Together, these two conditions prove the idea that producing words and attaching meaning to them are completely different processes in the brain. And they are physically connected by the arcuate fasciculus, a bundle of nerve fibers linking these regions. Over a year ago, I wrote that no one has to be left lost in translation. Now I am not so sure. Because if meaning and speech live in different places, connected by a bridge that can fail, can some degree of being "lost" may simply be part of being human?


But why isn't this discussed more often? Why do we just assume that someone speaking a second language fluently must be 'fine'? Do we ever truly stop to wonder how people with actual language barriers perceive the world - what it means to lose our voice - not physically, but emotionally and mentally? Imagine trying to swim without knowing how to do so. Hypothetically, how would you feel being surrounded by people who move easily (native speakers), while you struggle to stay afloat? Wouldn't that be utterly exhausting?

From "Lost in translation: The Psychological Effects of Language Barriers and How It Affects the Human Mind" (May, 2025)

Going back to the swimmer from my other article, I ended that piece with an idea that no one has to drown if they receive understanding and support. I still believe in the support, but I want to add another thought to the water. The swimmer is not struggling due to their mind being empty. The mind below the surface is actually full with ideas, emotions, arguments, entire inner worlds. It is simply encoded in images rather than sentences. Native speakers move easily because, for them, the water happens to match their stroke. Not due to their mind being somewhat "deeper". This changes the perspective. We usually imagine two languages on either side of "lost in translation". But what if they are actually the mind on one side and the word on the other? What if the translation that fails is from feeling to language instead of Polish to English?

So, can the untranslatable mind express what words cannot? I think so. The mind is always translating, whether it is through words, movement or the look on our faces. It never had only one language. We have just spent centuries pretending that it does.

*Page design: Sofija Apanasiewicz*

# *Can words change your brain chemistry?*

Author: Malwina Gawryłowicz



*Troy Erstling, Flow, The Neurochemistry of Flow States, https://troyerstling.com/the-neurochemistry-of-flow-states/, Accessed 22 Nov. 2026*

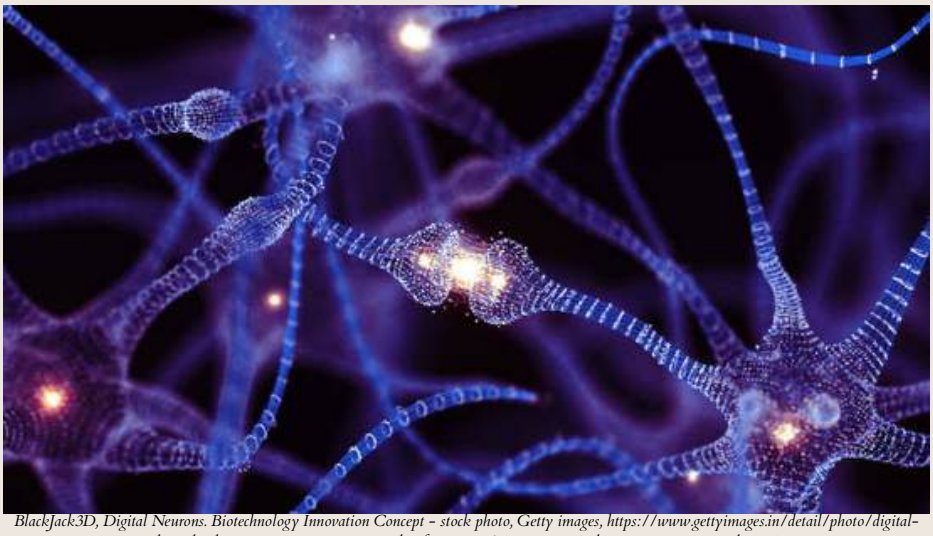
On social media, you might have heard someone talk about a moment that changed their brain chemistry, but have you ever wondered how that actually works? Even if you haven't, you probably have replayed a sentence in your head long after someone said it. Maybe it was a compliment that made your day, or a hurtful remark that stayed with you for weeks. Words are powerful enough to inspire, comfort but also hurt us. However, their influence goes way past our thoughts and emotions. It's time to ask ourselves "Can the words we hear actually affect the chemistry in our brains?" After all, words themselves are not chemicals. Our brain processes them through billions of electrical and chemical signals. Yet, something as simple as a sentence can influence those processes in remarkable ways. A few words can change how we perceive a situation, while a remark can trigger a stress response. But how does something as intangible as language interact with the physical chemistry of our brains?

Let's start with the basics: what actually is brain chemistry? Also known as neurochemistry, it refers to the chemical processes that allow our brains and nervous systems to function. It revolves around the production, release and interaction of different chemicals that help brain cells communicate. Our brains contain millions of cells called neurons. They communicate constantly through electrical and chemical signals. When an electrical signal reaches the end of a neuron, it triggers the release of neurotransmitters. These messengers travel through tiny gaps between neurons called synapses and bind to receptors on neighbouring cells. This allows different messages to be passed throughout the nervous system. However, brain chemistry is not limited to neurotransmitters; different hormones, such as cortisol, influence how we respond to our surroundings, mainly in stressful situations. Interacting within complex networks and influencing how we process information to react emotionally is what makes it so important.

When someone tells you something positive, like "I believe in you" when you need it most, there is neuroscience behind why those experiences feel rewarding. When we hear positive words, our brains process not only the meaning, but also the emotional significance behind them. When words are interpreted as rewarding, they engage brain regions involved in reward and motivation, including pathways that use dopamine. Dopamine, also known as the happiness hormone, is a neurotransmitter associated with learning, reward and motivation. As a result, positive communication can contribute to encouraging us to repeat certain behaviours or developing positive associations. A compliment does not trigger a dopamine release, however, research suggests that positive language can be associated with changes in neurochemical activity. On the other hand, a negative comment can stay in our mind much longer than the positive ones. Our brains are sensitive to information that we interpret as threatening or socially significant. When we hear threatening language, our brains activate regions involved in emotional processing and threat detection, like the amygdala. Depending on our

interpretation of the situation, the body's stress response system, known as the hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal axis. It can trigger a release of cortisol, a hormone that helps our bodies respond to stress. Meanwhile, neurotransmitters like norepinephrine, work to regulate alertness and attention. These responses influence how we feel, what we focus on and how we react. This shows us that the emotional meaning of language is strictly connected to the chemical processes underlying those experiences.

The influence of words goes beyond consciously interpreting a sentence. It also involves receptors and chemical signalling systems responsible for the communication between brain cells. Receptors are specialised proteins on the surface of neurons that recognize and respond to different chemical messengers. They help determine how neurons respond when neurotransmitters bind to them. Words can change our expectations, and expectations change the way our brains interpret different information. Imagine someone told you an experience would be painful before you experience it. You might become more anxious and stressed, potentially changing how you experience the situation. It's related to something known as the nocebo effect, where negative expectations contribute to negative physical experiences. According to research, these expectations can involve changes in brain activity and neurochemical signalling, including systems associated with regulating pain. Words don't directly change the structure of receptors or change their responses simply because we hear them. The meanings and expectation language creates can influence the brain's signalling systems, which affect how we process sensations, emotions and experiences.



*BlackJack3D, Digital Neurons. Biotechnology Innovation Concept - stock photo, Getty images, https://www.gettyimages.in/detail/photo/digital-neurons-biotechnology-innovation-concept-royalty-free-image/2151108488?adppopup=true, Accessed 22 Nov. 2026*

So, can words influence our brain chemistry? Science says so. Words aren't chemicals, however the meanings attached to them can influence neural networks, hormonal responses and transmitter systems in our everyday experiences. Over time, repeated experiences and patterns of thinking can contribute to the way our brains form associations. This is what makes language so fascinating. We think of words as something that just leaves our mouths without thinking and reaches someone's ears. Their influence doesn't end when the conversation is over; on the contrary, it only starts then. A sentence may stay with someone for years, shaping how they see themselves and others, how they interpret the world and how they respond to people surrounding them. Although we don't get to see the chemical reactions in our brains, science reminds us that the words can have consequences extending far beyond the moment they are spoken.

Page design: Julia Odyjewska

# *Why do sad lyrics speak to us so deeply?*

**How songwriters use words to make us cry.**

Author: Natalia Grynczel

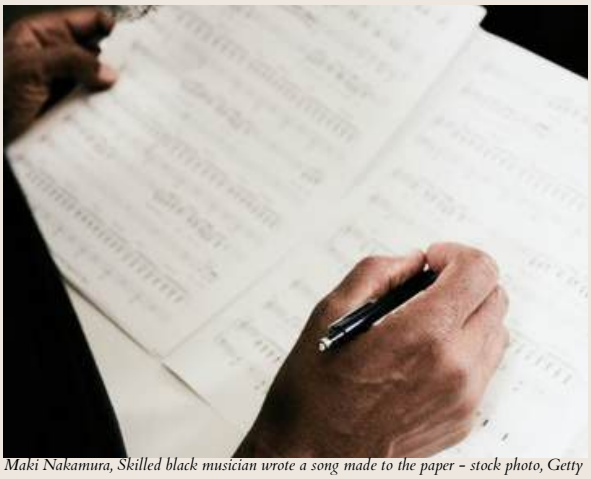
Music is a part of our daily lives. It's portrayed as a universal way of communication. We listen to music not only to improve our moods or seek comfort. We often reach for headphones to deal with sadness, grief or heartbreak. Not through entertainment, but through letting us be sad. Listening to songs with sad meanings, melody and lyrics. But… why do we do that? Why do we listen to music to make us even more sad?

## How do we feel sad lyrics?



*Dvtape2005. On Pinterest [online], https://pin.it/4ir9BfKbl, Accessed 22 Nov. 2026*

Of course the role of music is to express ourselves through emotions. However, it's not only the melody, tempo or instruments that influences our psychology. The lyrics also have a huge impact on our mood. The way that words are written. The language. They can express the feelings that we couldn't put into words. They can evoke deeply buried memories or emotions. A sad song can trigger various emotions at the same time. The most emotionally stimulating songs are the ones that trigger nostalgia. This emotion is neither sadness nor joy. It's a mix of the two. It's something in between. Songs might sound like oxymorons – two words colliding with each other. It's like remembering a heartwarming memory that is now painful. Words take a huge part in influencing our state. As recent studies on decades of hit lyrics suggest, specific linguistic choices and metaphors allow listeners to take active part in the emotional journey of the song. This deep engagement helps us process complex feelings, turning a stranger's lyrics into a personal reflection of our own lives.



*Maki Nakamura, Skilled black musician wrote a song made to the paper - stock photo, Getty images, https://www.gettyimages.in/detail/photo/skilled-black-musician-wrote-a-song-made-to-the-royalty-free-image/1080091416?adppopup=true, Accsessed 22 Nov. 2026*

## The songwriter's intention

Songwriters frequently take inspiration from their own lives – heartbreaks, grief, loneliness, adolescence or mental health issues. Writing lyrics might be their way to deal with struggles. Their intention isn't necessarily to make the listener cry;, sometimes they are just sharing feelings through music. Artists can create something that other people can recognize in their own lives. Authenticity is one of the reasons why certain lyrics can have such a deep emotional resonance. A song written by a stranger can sometimes understand us better than the people around us, can't it?



*tg.inst - nsolargrain, on Pinterest [online], https://pin.it/26YUvzFqm, Accessed 22 Nov. 2026*

## Why do we like listening to sad music?

So… if we are fully aware that listening to certain songs makes us feel even more depressed, why are we still doing this? Wouldn't it be a better choice to listen to something that is going to lift our spirits? Why are the most heartbreaking songs often on the tops of popular lists? It turns out that we can derive joy from sadness. This concept traces back all the way to Aristotle. He states that "we take pleasure not in the terrible events as such, nor in our own emotional states, but in the tragedy in which tragic events are presented to us," (Schaper, pg. 138–139, 1968). Thus when we hear or see a work of art sadness, we tend to romanticize the aesthetic while minimalizing our own worries.
Moreover, the feeling of nostalgia is actually proven to increase empathy and be responsible for boosting self-esteem, positivity, meaning of life and improving well being. These positive emotions going hand in hand with bitter-sweet lyrics make us want to experience it more and more.

Ultimately, sad lyrics act as a double-edged sword. On the one hand, the power of language allows songwriters to validate our deepest struggles, offering comfort, empathy and a safe space to process grief. Nevertheless, there is also the fact that we listen to these songs repeatedly instilling negative affirmations in our subconsciousness . The key lies in being aware and letting sad songs help us understand and release our emotions rather than letting their words define our reality.

Page design: Julia Odyjewska

# *Endangered, dead and extinct. Languages, of course!*

Author: Inga Chrostowska



*Copyright rhinoneal, Old book and fountain pen - stock photo, Getty images, https://www.gettyimages.in/detail/photo/old-book-and-fountain-pen-royalty-free-image/169234464?adppopup=true, Accessed 23 Nov. 2026*

**We've all thought it before.**
**"Maybe I should study a new language…"**
**"Spanish? How about German?"**
**Why not Old Norse? Or how about Coptic?**
**In this article, we'll be talking about endangered, dead and extinct languages.**

To understand the concept of these types of languages, we must first define what language is. However simple it might sound, language is a system of communication consisting of words and grammar. Language encompasses speech and nonverbal gestures such as writing, letting individuals convey their thoughts and feelings, helping cultures develop and societies to unite.

For a language to be living, it needs to be actively spoken on a daily basis by a community of people. The best scenario is when a language is spoken by a large number of young people because they can keep the language alive through passing it on as a first language to younger generations. Living languages are prominent in areas of the globe with little ethnic groups and a general ethnic unity. Though there will always be differences even within the North and South of a country, the language still stays stable and alive because there are little changes to it. These languages include English, Spanish, Mandarin, French, German, etc.

The change happens when a language becomes endangered. The more people there are that speak a language, the more it is bound to survive. The different stages of endangerment begin with the youngest generation. If children no longer use the language as their native tongue, it becomes a "definitely endangered" language. The next stage targets the slightly older generation where neither parents nor children can use the language functionally, in which case the tongue becomes classified as "severely endangered" which signals its imminent death. The final stage of endangerment is when only the oldest generation is partially able to speak the native language. The critically endangered language is represented by grandparents - the last living speakers with partial knowledge of their native tongue.

As the last living speakers pass, the endangered language dies. With them the language transitions into a dormant state, no longer used as a first language. Examples of such languages are Hawaiian, Yiddish, Sanskrit. The situation of endangerment seems hopeless, but rest assured! A dormant language can actually be revitalised. Revitalising or reviving a language means for people to speak the language functionally after death, hence – revival. Many native tongues have been brought back after years of occupation, oppression or economic pressures- factors which provoked people to stop speaking the language in the first place. Such languages include Hawaiian, Cornish, Maori, Manchu, Wampanoag, etc. How did communities bring these languages back? First of all, most of the evidence of languages were usually found in texts such as liturgical documents or well-preserved books. When the grammar, vocabulary and sound systems were known, communities' main focus was on creating new native speakers. Children were educated through "language nests" or engaged in Intergenerational Transmission which would be based on using the endangered language while speaking to peers or parents. In our age, social media also help to educate through digital spaces.

**What about the languages which hadn't been revived? The languages that never made it back into casual, daily life?**

This may or may not be a surprise, but some dead languages turn out to be pretty popular. This includes Latin, which we use in law, religion, science, medicine, etc. Viewing death from this perspective isn't so bad. The language isn't spoken communicatively but it's used daily at universities,in labs and books across the world. Another dead language that's present in our lives, possibly without us even knowing, is Ancient Greek. Think about it. Do you know where the words: democracy, chaos, choreus, theatre or tragedy come from? Ancient Greek! This proves that while dead languages aren't spoken functionally anymore, some are still used in scholarly circumstances or have weaved their way into our own spoken languages.

Other dead languages might not be so well-known. For example: Sanskrit, Old Norse, Sumerian, Classical Chinese or Old English.

The history behind some languages suggests that the fall of an Empire can stimulate the endangerment and later death of a language. For example: The Sumerian language that disappeared after the fall of the Sumerian Empire.

**Now, we've talked about languages that are on the brink of disappearing, languages that are already dead, but there's the last and final stage no language can come back from.**
**Extinction.**
**The stage after endangerment, after death.**

In fact, to put it simply, extinct languages don't have any living native speakers whatsoever. So many languages have disappeared over the years and it all started from economic pressures or Empire falls. There are hundreds of these languages which used to be spoken by many people. Nowadays, languages mean nothing to no one. I presume most people have never heard of Coptic, Old Nubian, Laurentian, Panobo, Hunnic, Lydian, Akkadian, Ancient Macedonian or Venetic. These are only some extinct languages out of hundreds more recorded and probably even more unrecorded ones.



*Benedek, Old Hebrew Manuscript circa 10th Century Pentateuch - stock photo, Getty images, https://www.gettyimages.in/detail/photo/old-hebrew-manuscript-circa-10th-century-pentateuch-royalty-free-image/157334068?adppopup=true, Accessed 23 Nov. 2026*

As modern people living in a world where language is so developed, we should sometimes take a look at how many years and societies it took to form the languages we have today. Through languages we see how people can unite over communication. Language is not just words and texts. It is what brings societies together and can fuel cooperation between people.
It's inspiring and hopeful to see how communities work to preserve languages that are important to studies and laws that came with those languages.

Languages are a big part of cultural identity too. People can actually have a chance at getting to know their ancestry on a deeper level.

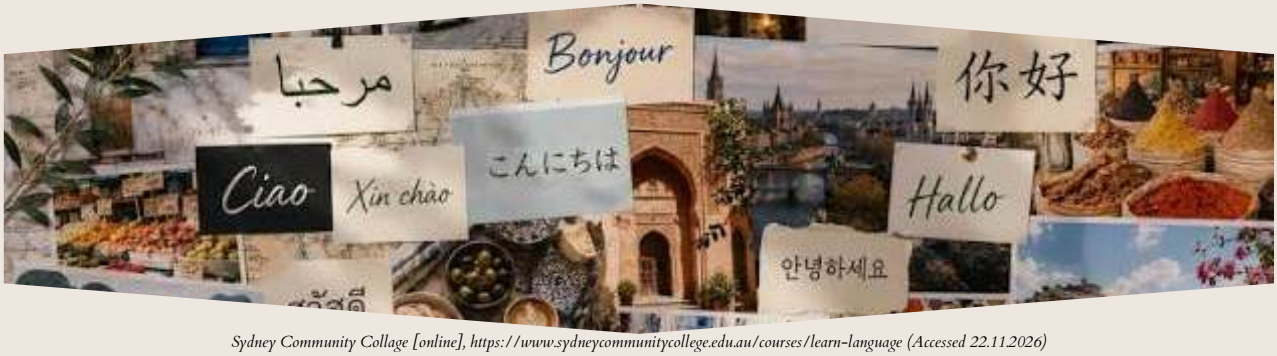
By learning the process of languages and the sheer amount of them that have come and gone, we can grasp how diverse our cultures are and how rich our history as humans is.

Page design: Julia Odyjewska

# *Esperanto Dream of Monolingualism*

Author: Martyna Szymańska

Most people speak one or two languages. This can cause many language barriers. Not understanding someone can be annoying and isolating. It makes you feel like the people around you are different just because you don't know what they are saying. One man decided to fix that problem.




*Sydney Community Collage [online], https://www.sydneycommunitycollege.edu.au/courses/learn-language (Accessed 22.11.2026)*

L. L. Zamenhof wanted to create a language that wouldn't be attached to any country nor political beliefs. Esperanto wasn't supposed to support any nationalistic ideas. No borders, no rivalries, no religion. Just a neutral language.



*Wikipedia [online], Ludwik Łazarz Zamenhof, https://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ludwik_Zamenhof (Accessed 22.11.2026)*

Zamenhof was multilingual himself, speaking a total of 13 languages: Yiddish, Polish, Belarusian, Italian, German, Russian, French, Greek, Hebrew, Latin, Lithuanian, Volapük and Aramaic, natively being fluent in Yiddish, Polish and Russian. A Jew from Białstok was always surrounded by a mixture of languages and isolated communities. He said: "I was taught that all people were brothers, while outside in the streets every step I felt that there were no people, only Russians, Germans, Poles, Jews and so on. This was always a great torment to my infant mind… so I often said to myself that when I grew up I would certainly destroy this evil."

He wanted everyone to speak an easy and flexible language as their second language. He grew up fascinated by the idea of a world without war and believed that this could happen with the help of a new international auxiliary language. Anyone from any country could communicate with everyone else. Once we understood everybody, human empathy would do the rest.

*Esperanto uses a 28-letter Latin alphabet that contains the six additional letters ĉ, ĝ, ĥ, ĵ, ŝ and ŭ, but does not use the letters q, w, x or y. Zamenhof suggested Italian as a model for Esperanto pronunciation. The language was created in such a way that by learning 3000 root words you can create another 20 000 - the number of words known by most native English speakers. All the grammar and word formation follow strict but easy rules. If you're unsure of a word in Esperanto, your guess is likely correct. Esperanto vocabulary, syntax, and semantics are derived predominantly from Standard Average European languages. Roots are typically Latinate or Germanic in origin which makes it easier to learn if you already speak any European language. Most studies report that Esperanto is somewhere between five to fifteen times easier to learn than most European languages.*

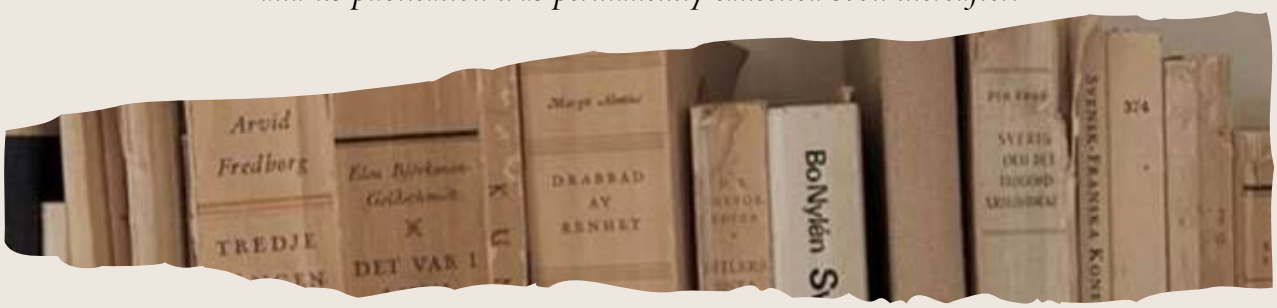



*Invaluable [online], Kongreso de Esperanto, https://www.invaluable.com/auction-lot/poster-by-eric-vasstroem-kongreso-de-esperanto-en-341-c-d52aafaf0 (Accessed 22.11.2026)f*




*Internet Archive [online], Esperantysta Polski,https://archive.org/details/jbc.bj.uj.edu.pl.NDIGCZAS043693_1932_003 (Accessed 22.11.2026)*

*The Jewish ophthalmologist self-published the first book of Esperanto grammar on 26 July 1887. He did so under the pseudonym Doktoro Esperanto (meaning "one who hopes") and simply called the language "the international language". Early speakers grew fond of the name Esperanto and began to use it as the name for the language. Zamenhof began to receive letters from individuals expressing interest in the project, prompting him to provide reading material for the nascent Esperanto community. He began publishing a periodical called 'The Esperantisto' where Esperanto speakers could fellow learners and read his translations of Charles Dickens. Zamenhof then translated and published a part of Leo Tolstoy's essay "Reason or Faith" in La Esperantisto, which led to the Russian Empire banning the publication for advocating civil disobedience, resulting in hundreds of subscribers lost. Tolstoy himself successfully appealed the ban in May 1895, but it was too late to revive the journal and its publication was permanently cancelled soon thereafter.*




*dudacontentclub - books on a shelf, Pinterest [online],https://es.pinterest.com/pin/464363411592418635/ (Accessed 22.11.2026)*

*Besides his linguistic work, Zamenhof published a religious philosophy he called Homaranismo. It is a philosophy based on a set of principles for a moral common ground across religious divisions. He believed in uniting the world into a place where a country's language, religion and people would be separate from national interests and the state.*




*At this time nationalism, unlike anything the word had ever seen before, was erupting around him. He felt his purpose greater than ever, but his influence was at its lowest as Europe was gripped once again by antisemitism. Zamenhof, being Jewish himself, made Esperanto political. Hitler accused Esperanto in Mein Kampf as being part of the Jewish conspiracy. Esperanto speakers from any background were imprisoned and killed in concentration camps throughout Europe. Due to their advocacy of international communication, Esperantists would also be killed in Stalin's purges. Despite all the Nazis' efforts, prisoners were still able to teach each other Esperanto. They made guards believe it was Italian. Esperanto managed to survive through both world wars and continued to spread afterwards.*

*Today Esperanto is being used worldwide with an estimated 2 million speakers. It is gradually being seeped into popular culture with even whole films made in Esperanto. It was included on the Voyager 1 message and even has an island named after it. It isn't the first or last artificial language but it is the biggest one.*

The Rosetta Project [online], Ese... Esselen... Esperanto!, https://rosettaproject.org/blog/02009/jul/15/ese-esselen-esperanto/ (Accessed 22.11.2026)

Page design: Daria Grygorowicz

# *Beyond Words: The Cognitive and Social Benefits of Multilingualism*

Author: Aleksandra Tarasik

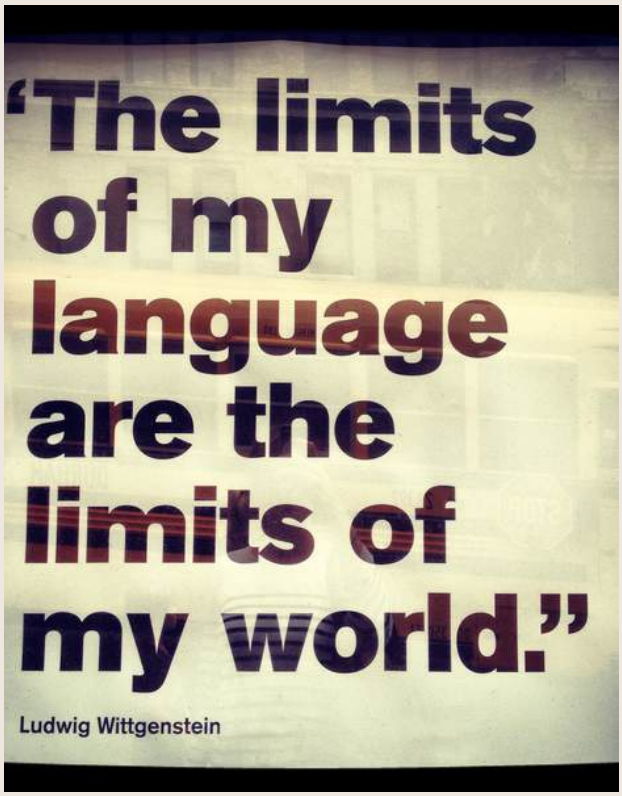
*It's getting more and more common for people to know other languages than their native language – it's called multilingualism. For sure you have to sacrifice your time to master a language to a higher level than just basic grammar and vocabulary. Regardless, the ability to speak different languages is worth it.*

*As we grow older the connectivity in our brains often deteriorates which blurs our memory and slows the process of creating thoughts and causes dementia. Studies found that speaking more than one language retards the process of our brain aging. Scientists discovered that for people who knew two languages their brain's age was about six years younger than for people who only knew one and four languages speaking people's brains were thirteen years younger.*

*Studying in general helps your brain evolve and preserve memory. By learning a new language you can acquire knowledge of how you memorize information and it will be easier for you to pick up a new language.*

*Many people feel left out or like they don't belong in their country's society. Speaking other languages besides the native one helps them connect with people from different countries because they are able to understand their culture, inside jokes or their typical behaviour. Thanks to that, these people can find where they belong and meet their people. Also every language has its own expression so a person can put into words their feelings in different ways as well as become a different version of themselves in every language.*

*In our everyday life we meet a lot of various people and we have to communicate with them. Especially if you are overseas and the locals aren't able to understand your native language, you have to know another language to interact with people while you are on a vacation, when you are on a business trip or work with people from different countries, you are forced to somehow get along with them to make the job done. Knowing different languages makes the world your oyster, so you can study at a university that offers a higher level of education than in your country or you can acquire knowledge by doing an internship abroad. You also can watch movies without dubbing – in the original language because it doesn't sound so stilted as it is in some movies.*




*The limits of my language. (2013, August 24). Pinterest. https://es.pinterest.com/pin/the-limits-of-my-language--454371049876098865/*

*Speaking different languages has a wide range of advantages, from personal development and improving the condition of your brain to finding your place in the world and meeting your people. Life gets a bit easier when you are able to communicate in more than one language because the chances of meeting a person that speaks a language you know increase. That's why every person should be able to speak at least two languages.*

Page design: Lena Limberger

# *The history of communication: How did language begin and develop?* Author: Sofia Suhaka

Language is one of the most important inventions in human history and one of the most important parts of our lives. Without it we wouldn't be able to communicate with each other, share ideas and experiences, express our thoughts and emotions, pass knowledge from one generation to another or even evolve. It wasn't invented by one person at a particular moment but developed gradually over thousands of years. But still the origin of language is one of the greatest mysteries in science, which is being investigated by researchers from different fields, such as linguistics, biology, anthropology and archaeology. They study when and how language began and developed to the form we know today.



Magnific [online], Wooden dice with letters on them between the pages of a book. , https://www.magnific.com/free-photo/wooden-dice-with-letters-them-pages-book_17182417.htm#fromView=keyword&page=1&position=0&uuid=17fd0b43-fc41-47aa-bf78-e0fc563d1325&track=ais_hybrid&query=Linguistic+aesthetics (Accessed 23.11.2026)

Nowadays we use thousands of different languages and dialects around the world. Some of them are used by smaller or bigger communities, some of them are similar or completely different from the other ones, but all have the same purpose - communication. When we were born we already started learning how to communicate, repeating after our parents and learning the language they use. Some of us wonder how it all started and how our ancestors learned to communicate with each other. So how did they actually invent language and how did it develop?

Scientists still don't know exactly how, when and by whom the first language was created because spoken language doesn't have physical evidence. Therefore they had to study indirect evidence, like ancient human remains, the development of the brain and the structure of the human body. Some estimates suggest that language may have emerged between 50,000 and 200,000 years ago, although the exact date remains uncertain. At first early humans used simple gestures, sounds, facial expressions and body movements to cooperate, help and understand each other. Gradually, as people's brains and speech organs developed, communication became more complex. People started to associate particular sounds with specific objects, situations or actions. Later sounds developed into more complex words or phrases with their specified meaning shared among people from the community who used it.

The human population spread across the world, so each part had their own communities with their own languages. Over time, other factors also influenced how people were speaking in certain regions. War, occupation, emigration and many others changed and shaped the way people speak. For example, the English language developed through migrations and invasions, beginning with Germanic tribes (Angles, Saxons and Jutes) in the 5th century. The Norman Conquest of 1066 introduced many French and Latin words connected with law, government and the military. Later, the British Empire expanded English vocabulary with words borrowed from languages such as Hindi, Arabic and Native American languages. World Wars I and II introduced military terms and slang, including radar, jeep and AWOL . During the Cold War and modern conflicts, new expressions such as iron curtain, proxy war and drone strike became part of everyday English.




Michele Frolla, 3 Ways to Seamlessly Integrate Language Learning into Your Daily Life [online], https://www.theintrepidguide.com/how-to-integrate-language-learning-into-daily-life/(Accessed 23.11.2026)

Languages come from different language families. They have the same ancestral language but due to migrations, separations and colonisations over thousands of years they were divided into other languages which started to evolve differently and independently, each of them changing their sound, grammar and vocabulary, while still belonging to the same language family. For example: Indo-European (includes: English, Spanish, French, Hindi and Persian), Sino-Tibetan (includes: Mandarin Chinese and Tibetan), Niger-Congo (includes: Swahili, Yoruba and Zulu), Austronesian (includes: Tagalog, Malay, Hawaiian and Maori).

Language still evolves. New words appear as we develop and invent new objects, old words disappear because we have stopped using them and some words gain different meanings. People who live in different regions might use different or sometimes the same language, which can also divide into dialects. With technological development, new styles of speaking also appeared. People may use informal language, shortened words or internet slang online or in real life. Slang is mostly popular among teenagers. They may use it to express themselves, emphasize their individuality or to show belonging to a specific social group. But it's not just a way of communication, it's related to biology and human brains. Neuroscientists investigated why using slang feels so satisfying. Evidence points to key neural effects with regard to emotional intensity, the activation of reward pathways, the link to memory and social identity and release of key neuromodulators.

We may not even realize how helpful and useful the invention of language is because we take it for granted and don't even notice and think about the years of evolution behind it. What we have to remember, though, is that without it the development of human civilization would be completely different.

Page design: Daria Grygorowicz

# *Understanding in misunderstanding: a few words on Sofia Coppola's "Lost in translation"*

Author: Tomasz Pogorzelski

No more than fifteen minutes. That is how much time the dialogues between the two main characters of "Lost in translation" add up to. In a movie with a runtime of 102 minutes, and one that focuses primarily on the relationship between the protagonists no less, this seems strange, to say the least. Recalling the movie a little while after seeing it for the first time, it is truly astounding how much seems to be said with so few words. The brevity of dialogue in this film, combined with its atmosphere is what shapes its meaning. Sofia Coppola, through introducing layers of misunderstanding and miscommunication arrives finally, and ironically enough, at a point of profound understanding.



Woman smoking and man with drink at bar. (n.d.). [Photograph]. In Reeling Reviews. Retrieved 24 November 2026, from https://www.reelingreviews.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/lostintranslationpic.jpg

Charlotte and Bob's first meeting is rather unremarkable - they make small talk at the bar of the hotel they are staying at. They joke about mid-life crises, whiskey, and insomnia. In short, the viewer has no reason to believe their conversation is in any way profound, or that it should lead to a deep connection between the characters. Nevertheless, Coppola manages to sneak into this casual conversation the main problems and themes that will bring the protagonists together. In particular, their mention of their marriages and their careers introduce the viewers to the pair's main insecurities in life.

After two years of marriage, Charlotte still feels uncertainty and discomfort in her relationship. What is more, she feels isolated. The composition of the shots in which she shares the screen with her husband, John, display her emotional isolation by way of physical isolation. In the scene where John meets Kelly, an actress friend of his, Charlotte is framed between the two while they carry on with their conversation. This exemplifies just how lonely she feels even though she is right by her husband's side. Composition is again used to denote separation when Charlotte is visually cut off from John and Kelly by another character. When the married couple does share a conversation, it is hurried and one-sided - John talks at Charlotte as he chucks camera equipment into his bag to leave for a shoot.

Bob's story is, in its chronology, much different from Charlotte's. Whereas she struggles due to youth and lack of experience, for him, having already been married for 25 years, the source of his issues is quite the opposite. That is not to say his problems are unlike Charlotte's. Bob is also isolated from his loved ones both physically and emotionally. The interactions he has with his wife are phone calls and fax messages. In fact, Lydia Harris never appears on-screen. In this we see the physical dimension of their separation. When they do talk, the conversation centres on choosing the colour of the carpet for their house. Their words are mundane and carry no emotional weight.

It is because of their shared marital dissatisfaction that Charlotte and Bob are able to connect as well as they do. When they try to find emotional satisfaction in their marriages and come up empty-handed, their chance encounter in Tokyo is just what they need to feel understood. What is important in the depiction of their connection is that it is placed strictly outside of traditional relationship models. Coppola calls into question the idea that understanding is found only in long-term bonds. Instead, she suggests that true connection might just as well be found in transient encounters.



Bill Murray and Scarlett Johansson at a table. (n.d.). [Photograph]. In The Guardian. Retrieved 24 November 2026, from https://i.guim.co.uk/img/media/2c3cea87db9114ecb8f6a1ec2d1968817a199cb6/0_64_2000_1201/master/2000.jpg?width=1200&quality=85&auto=format&fit=max&s=7a77d04a8fb2c4588600288bef5a2f2c

The way that Charlotte and Bob approach their careers mirrors their approaches to marriage in that their backstories are completely different, but their struggles are similar.
Having recently graduated with a degree in philosophy, Charlotte is yet to find her purpose in life. When asked "What do you do?", her response is "I'm not sure yet". Interestingly, her uncertainty about her purpose and her future is underscored throughout the rest of her dialogue, especially during her first meeting with Bob. When the waiter asks what she would like to drink, her answer is similar to the one about her career - "I'm not sure". Her speech is characterised by the usage of filler words ("umm…", "oh…") and pauses, which add to the impression that she does not have a defined perspective on life.

On the other hand, it may be said that Bob suffers from too much experience and too much success. When Charlotte asks him about what he's doing in Tokyo, he responds with "getting paid two million dollars to endorse a whisky when I could be doing a play somewhere". This line clearly indicates that he feels burnt out and dissatisfied with his life as a famous actor. He resents the need to make money off of his craft by acting in commercials, preferring instead to fulfil his artistic ambitions on the stage. Here he also notices the difference in his and Charlotte's financial situations when he sarcastically comments on the money to be made with a philosophy degree.

Charlotte and Bob are both lost as to finding their purpose in life. Charlotte looks to the future with uncertainty. She doesn't know what she's supposed to be. Bob looks to the past with disappointment, wondering if the life he has made for himself is satisfying.

In the previously analysed examples, the viewer may expect misunderstandings to occur between Charlotte and Bob. However, it can be proven that their apparent differences are cause for understanding rather than the lack thereof. The most notable layer of misunderstanding is between the protagonists and the environment they find themselves in. The foreign language, unfamiliar culture, and towering skyscrapers of Tokyo push the two characters closer together. They become a source of familiarity to each other in a landscape completely unlike what they know.



Couple talking on a busy city street. (n.d.). [Photograph]. In Bustle. Retrieved 24 November 2026, from https://imgix.bustle.com/wmag/2018/08/27/5b8456ad7402d626f0fbe9fb_lost-in-translation-2.jpg

The film closes with one last layer of misunderstanding. Not between Charlotte and Bob, not between them and their surroundings, but between them and the audience. When they share their final goodbye, dubbed by fans the "secret goodbye", Bob whispers in Charlotte's ear. What does he say? Well, that is not for the viewer to know. Bob's barely audible murmuring cannot be interpreted. No matter how frustrating it may feel to be locked out of this last bit of dialogue, that is precisely how it is supposed to be.

All throughout the movie our protagonists struggle to find understanding in a foreign country, and even in conversations with loved ones. With each other is where they were able to find this understanding. The final scene is meant to represent the highest form of intimacy, one hidden from the microphones. It is an appropriate conclusion, and dare I say, the only appropriate conclusion, that the final words Charlotte and Bob share should be, so to speak, lost in translation.

Page design: Nadia Michalik

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