

TEDx Talks Review

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1. How language shapes the way we think

Speech can transfer complicated ideas between people. This means that the languages that we speak affect the way we think and interpret certain things. In a way, language shapes our realities.

The example of the Australian aboriginals using cardinal directions is quite interesting and really did make me think about how much certain concepts of language can change how we perceive the world. In their reality, it's very easy for them to tell which way cardinal directions are because it's a concept taught to them through the basics of their language from birth. Language can mean having different skills.

While these aboriginals have an entirely new concept to it that most other languages don't, some other languages lack things that most other languages consider normal. They don't count things, for example, so they would have a harder time when it comes to matching numbers between object, like 8 penguins with 8 ducks.

Another example of concepts of language shaping the interpretation of reality can be found in people whose language identifies between light and dark blue who can notice the difference faster if it changes between the two, whereas other people won't notice it as fast or wouldn't react as surprised by it because it isn't a categorical change to them.

There were a few other examples that I found very interesting, and I agree this is a real thing that happens. From my personal experience I know that Chinese doesn't have a single word for "yes". They give confirmative answers through the use of verbs. If you ask someone if they are the person you're looking for, they'd react with "I am" instead of "yes" and if you ask someone if they want to do something, they'd react with "I do" instead of a "yes".

2. Teach girls bravery, not perfection

From what I've noticed among my classmates, they tend to view this video as a feminist speech. While I believe that feminism is important, I believe in gender equality. Equality in every way. Most feminists these days though seem to want more than equality, they want to tip the scales in the other direction.

However, when it comes to the message in this video, I agree with the sentiment. There is a general divide between the way girls and boys are raised and taught to act, and this does in fact affect what kind of jobs they end up doing. However, as a perfectionist male myself, I relate to the things mentioned as examples of girls being afraid of imperfection. I can't help but feel that it is a bit generalizing of both girls and even more so, boys. There are tons of people, regardless of gender, suffering from perfectionism. It is indeed a gift and a curse at the same time.

When it comes to the proposed solution of treating and raising girls and boys the same, I do agree. That is how equality between genders should be.

3. How culture drives behaviours

Confront, complain, conform, these are the three ways Julien claims you can deal with other cultures. To me it appears that generally as a people we tend to accept cultural differences and tend to lean towards the conform part.

However, when it comes to a personal level when you actually meet someone of a different culture face to face, there can still be a lot of misunderstandings because everyone's views on things are shaped by the culture they are used to. The way someone reacts to something may offend someone else if they don't know their reaction is seen as normal in the other person's culture.

I know this as well from personal experience in China, where it is polite and proper dining etiquette to slurp while eating noodles or something like that, and even a compliment to the chef if you burp after a meal. Throughout most if not all European countries, this is seen as rude and people might even be offended if you do it. However, if you don't do this in China, it could be interpreted as rude as well. Most restaurants that serve westerners sometimes are used to this, but if you go to more remote locations it could get the chef angry at you without you even knowing what you could've possibly done wrong.

As for the second part of this video regarding equality of result versus total equality, I mostly stand by what I said about the previous video. I believe a perfect system would be perfect equality. I do however, understand that in order to get there, we may need equality of result to do it first. It may suck if you're the one being negatively affected by it, but as a society we will eventually benefit from it.

We do need diversity as it will not only make sure more people are treated equal, but also that future problems are looked at from more possible angles for a potentially better solution.