

Opinion

The Translinguistics Chip Is Saving America, And Soon It Will Save The World

A new technology looks to unite the world using language. Will it be just another Esperanto? Or does it actually have the potential to bring us all together?

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Illustration by Herbert R. Sim

English is not my first language. It's not second either. I start learning English around the time I had my first child, and I have been English speaker for over a decade, ever since I move from Hawaii. However, English definitely is not easy for me yet. I struggle still with different grammars and understanding regional dialects.

My son is American. He go to American school and use English at home. I teach him culture of Hawaii and family tradition (even cooking!) but he never want to take time to

learn the language. When we visit family back in Kauai, my son never can understand what people say.

Every day, I go to work place and see coworkers from different countries. Some speak no English, others just barely. It is hard for them; no matter the quality of their work, they never have shot at higher position, at ambition and new opportunity.

Last year, I took big risk. I decide to get translinguistics chip surgery. All my colleague tell me that putting chip in brain is too dangerous, too invasive, but I was curious. I went to the operation and I felt no pain.

It felt like a switch had flipped in my brain.

When I spoke to the surgeon and the technicians, I didn't have to translate my thoughts from Hawaiian into English anymore, nor did I have to translate in my head what the doctor said in order for me to understand her. I was just thinking of what to say in Hawaiian and it naturally came out of my mouth in English. The same goes with my writing. For those first few paragraphs, I deactivated my chip in order to demonstrate my natural level of English. But now that I have the chip activated, I am able to communicate my ideas in English as if I was a native speaker.

Last year, after receiving my implant, I was able to leave my factory job and finally utilize my literary skills as a technology reporter for the Times. This position allowed me to dive deep into research regarding language, culture, and currently, the translinguistics chip.

That brings me to my punchline: The Translinguistics Chip is saving America, and soon it'll save the world.

While many Americans will say that implanting a chip (built by a private company) in your brain seems like an easy way to give away your privacy, independence, and freedom, in reality, the chip does the exact opposite. One of the greatest limitations of our economic freedom in America is the information gap between businesses and consumers. Through highly technical rhetoric and useless jargon, many industries such as banking, auto, real-estate, and healthcare are able to rip off clueless customers and empty the wallets of less educated clients.

However, with the translinguistics chip, that problem is resolved using the language personalization feature. All the buzzwords and industry-specific vocabulary get converted into sentences that the user can understand, allowing for more transparent transactions and less business manipulation.

Another problem that I've mentioned before, and that I see every day at work, is the language barrier. America is a nation of hard-working, educated immigrants, which means for much of the workforce, English isn't our first language. Many times, immigrants with graduate degrees receive entry level positions due to the harsh language barrier they face in the work environment.

With the translunguistics chip, immigrants don't have to worry about the limitations of language anymore, and it allows for greater diversity in managerial positions in many companies. It also opens the door to an entirely new world of international trade. All facets of business, education, entertainment, and many other industries would be able to gain international outreach without having to deal with the language constraint. Everyone around the world will be able to feel connected in a completely new way, no matter what language they're speaking.

Now I know what you're going to say. We've seen this before; in a religious context, the Tower of Babel was built by a united people, but ended up dispersing the population into many languages. And only a century ago, Esperanto looked to unite the world under a single shared language, but ended up being abandoned. Instead, English has become a growingly universal language, with many nations adopting it as an official language.

But there's a problem with this. With languages like Esperanto and now English, smaller languages like Hawaiian, Maori, Welsh, and Catalan¹ struggle to survive, and thus causes certain cultures to perish. What we constantly forget is that language isn't just a dictionary of words; it's tied to culture, family values, and personal identities. If we use one language over another, we end up embracing linguistic superiority, which stems from colonization practices and even racism. Well-known linguist and cognitive psychologist Steven Pinker once pointed out that "all languages have equal expressive power as communication systems. When it comes to linguistic form, Plato walks with the Macedonian swineherd, Confucius with the head-hunting savage of Assam."

Languages should all be put on the same playing field just as people are. With the translunguistics chip, that's actually possible. Everyone would be able to communicate, and no language would have superiority over another. Cultures like mine, my Hawaiian heritage, my family traditions, would not be at threat, and with the chip, my mainland American son will finally be able to connect with his grandparents in Kauai.

¹ Ross Perlin, "Radical Linguistics in an Age of Extinction," September 22, 2014, <https://www.dissentmagazine.org/article/radical-linguistics-in-an-age-of-extinction>.

The earliest generations of humans were all connected under one language. They tried to build the Tower of Babel² together but their mindset, like the building they planned to construct, was a monolith with no diversity and flexibility. Subcultures are so pivotal to our world; they enable us to share differing opinions and build a diverse planet where people can gain new experience and insights wherever they go. With this chip, we can learn from each other without having to feel divided by our words. All around the world, people could finally feel connected; all it takes is just one chip per person. It has already united so many Americans, and I am excited to see what it can do to change the world.

² Colleen Cancio, "What If Everyone on Earth Spoke the Same Language?," HowStuffWorks Science (HowStuffWorks, June 30, 2020), <https://science.howstuffworks.com/science-vs-myth/what-if/what-if-everyone-spoke-one-language.htm>.