

THE LINGUANAUT

AUTUMN ISSUE 2025



This artwork connects to language through the universal use of the heart as a symbol for emotion, courage and inner life across many cultures. By incorporating anatomical imagery, a scientific representation of the heart, it transforms a biological organ into an artistic metaphor, using the visual “language” of art to evoke feeling. In this way, the piece acts as a bridge between science and emotional expression.

Welcome to...

THE LINGUANAUT

Welcome fellow linguonautians!

We, the linguonaut team, are thrilled to present this autumn issue - a collection of our students' wonderful language-inspired articles. We hope you take the time to enjoy each piece and the passion and creativity that clearly went into each and every one of them.

In this magazine, you'll see explorations of cultural celebrations as well as deep dives into the etymology of world languages. We truly believe that this edition is a treasure trove of knowledge, so make the most of it!

Towards the end, don't miss our special pages on: podcast and book recommendations, a Q&A addressing your questions and a few exciting extra additions that we decided to add to the magazine this year.

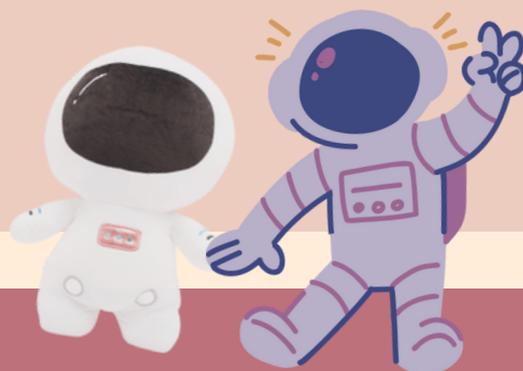
As you journey through this magazine, we hope it whets your appetite for linguistics and that it keeps you curious about everything language related. Keep on exploring the world of languages that we have at our fingertips, as these languages are what bind our communities together. Without these languages, nothing would be possible.

Every language lost is a loss of a community, a culture and a unique history. By reading, supporting, or contributing to the Linguonaut, you are helping to keep this linguistic diversity alive and thriving.

Thank you for being part of this community and we hope to continue this legacy passed onto us from the creators of The Linguonaut magazine.

Love from,

Katya, Annie, Sofia and Emma.





CONTENTS



- 1 **The symbology of a heart**
Nabeeha (8R)
- 2 **Introduction to The Linguanaut**
- 3 **This very page :)**
- 5 **Mid-Autumn Festival**
Isabelle (7M)
- 7 **The Origins of Language - Do You Know what Language is?**
Marie (7M)
- 9 **Shakespeare: How he Transformed English**
Shanaya (8H)
- 11 **Pohela Boishakhi: Bangladeshi New Year**
Tahrim (8R)
- 13 **Being Gujarati**
Heli (8R)
- 15 **The Development of Hebrew (and some multicultural turkeys!)**
Amelia (10W)
- 17 **Olé my Days, Keep Calm and Flamenco On**
Delanna (10M)
- 19 **A Brief History of Bangladesh: From Ancient Empires to Modern Nationhood**
Marwa (10R)
- 21 **Las palabras que no existen en inglés**
Rhea (10H)
- 23 **What are Creole Languages?: The Impact of Colonial Rule on Linguistics**
Venisha (10H)
- 25 **The Classical Treasure of India: Bharatanatyam**
Nidu (11H)



What Remains of the Languages we Inherit 27
Sahana (11W)

Justice Speaks All Languages 29
Saina (11R)

Languages Are Dying Out and Why This Matters More Than You Think 31
Emma (12A)

Colour Me Impressed: The Evolution of Colour Across Language 33
Vaia (12D)

A summary and Analysis of La Bella Susona 35
Samantha (13A)

How Air Shapes Speech 37
Sharvari (13C)

Loneliness is Loud 39
Khadijah (12C)

Imagine a Language Without Grammar... 42
Katya (12C)

Book and Podcast Recommendations 43

Film, Series and Documentary Recommendations 44

Linguistic Puzzles 45

Q&A 49

Lingo's Travels and a Thank You 50

Woah hi! The infamous Lingo here. I hope you like this issue!

Also, how many Lingos can you find in this issue. If you guess well, you might even win a prize...*





Mid-Autumn Festival

What is the Mid-Autumn Festival?

The Mid-Autumn Festival roughly takes place on the 15th day of the eighth lunar month and is a time for families to reunite. This popular event is mainly celebrated by Chinese and East Asian cultures. Also called the Moon Festival, it is a time for admiring the moon and giving thanks for the autumn harvest. Every year, hundreds of millions of people enjoy this festival by eating mooncakes and lighting lanterns.

What is the legend of Chang'e?

The Mid-Autumn Festival story centres on Chang'e, the Moon Goddess, and her husband, the archer Hou Yi. When ten suns scorched the Earth, Hou Yi shot down nine to the people. As a reward, he received an elixir of immortality, which he gave to Chang'e to keep. However, a villain tried to steal it, so Chang'e drank it to prevent this. She then floated to the moon, where she now lives eternally separated from her husband.

How do People Celebrate the Mid-Autumn Festival?

People celebrate the Mid-Autumn Festival by gathering with family to enjoy mooncakes, watch the full moon, and admire or carry lanterns. Other traditions include sharing a special dinner, making offerings to the moon, and enjoying a moon cake. Celebrations can include unique regional customs like the fire dragon dance in Hong Kong or barbecues in Taiwan.



1.The Food

The most popular dish to celebrate with is moon cakes. These delicious Chinese pastries are often filled with lotus seed paste, red bean paste, five kernel (nuts and seeds), Black sesame paste and a salted egg yolk, which is often placed in the centre of the filling, that represents the full moon. People also eat duck: a popular dish, especially in autumn, as it is thought to provide nourishment for the colder months; crab: hairy crabs are a delicacy, particularly popular in southern China, as it is the season for them to lay their egg; taro and sweet potato: these root vegetables are enjoyed in various sweet forms, representing a bountiful harvest.

2.Festivities

A common festivity is to make or admire lanterns. This is because they often symbolise good luck, prosperity, and a bright future. People admire and make lanterns for their symbolic meaning, cultural significance, and artistic expression, which can represent hope, good luck, prosperity, and new beginnings. Making lanterns is a creative and communal activity that helps preserve traditions, express individuality, and can be a way to let go of worries or make wishes. Another tradition is to go moon gazing as the moon is believed to be a symbol of reunion and happiness. Finally, some people write riddles on lanterns for other people to guess.

Isabelle, 7M

The Origins Of Language - Do You Know what Language is?

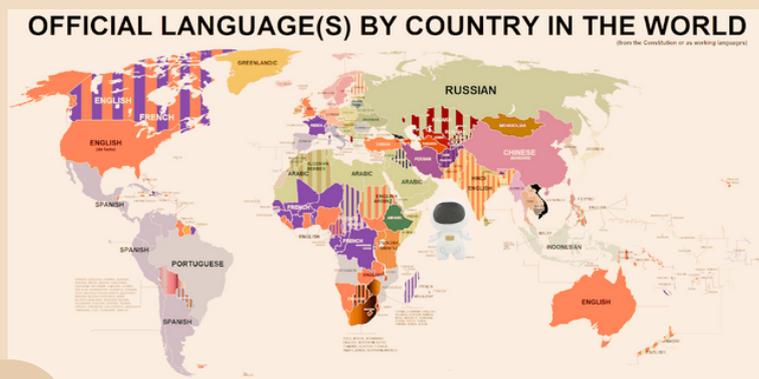
The deepest root of the word 'language' comes from the Proto-Indo-European word 'd̥ǵʰwéh₂s' meaning 'tongue, language, speech'. The latin word 'lingua' comes from this word and from that comes the Old French word 'langage' and thus, the Middle English word 'language'.

Where does language come from?

Language is said to have evolved from a combination of biological and cultural factors. The capacity of language is likely to have begun 200,000 to 150,000 years ago in what is now Africa. This incidentally coincides with the arrival of anatomically modern humans.

Earliest words: why them?

Some of the earliest words include 'I' and 'we' which have survived thousands of years. In addition, 'mother', according to research, was one of the 23 oldest





words, dating back to 15,000 years ago. Also, some early words are 'fire', 'bark', 'ashes', and, surprisingly, 'worm'. Historical linguists and philologists believe that the reason these words were some of the first ones is that they would be used to describe some of the resources or objects around humans then. However, the oldest words were probably lost to time as written language only began 4,000 years ago, but spoken language started some 10,000 years ago.

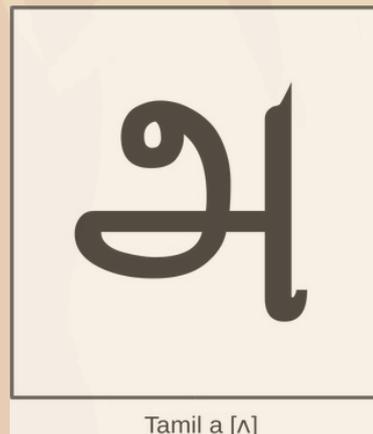
The oldest language which is still spoken today:

Research shows that Tamil is the oldest language, dating back to 300 years BCE and still spoken to the present day. Reasons for this are:

- The long extensive literary records with roots in the 'Old Tamil' - 300 BCE.
- Tamil has since been in continuous use, evolving from Old Tamil to Middle Tamil to Modern Tamil. This is unlike the Romance languages (e.g. French or Spanish) or the Germanic languages (e.g. German,

Dutch and English) which have branched into separate languages. However, it is hard to definitely prove that Tamil is the oldest as:

- It is possible that Tamil is far older than written evidence suggests but languages such as Sumerian (3500 BCE), Egyptian (3300 BCE) and Akkadian have earlier writings, meaning that it is impossible to tell if Tamil is older than them.



And now, the moment you've been waiting for... conclusion time!

So now you know some of the oldest words, languages et cetera, et cetera (another latin influence... what is the world coming to?) Which means... out with the old and in with the new!

Marie, 7M



Shakespeare: How he Transformed English

Whether it's a simple word like lonely, or a slightly less common one like swagger, all words have a history. We never think about who invented that word, or when it became part of the dictionary. We just use it without realising its significance. I'm here to change your perspective of words and how we use them in everyday life, for it just so happens that England's greatest bard shaped language as we know it today.

Between the 16th and 17th centuries at the peak of his career, Shakespeare started using words nobody had ever heard of in his plays and poems. The first ever new word he used in his work

was the word 'unaware', in his poem "Venus and Adonis". He also used words like 'addiction' in Othello and 'uncomfortable' in Romeo and Juliet. These are all normal words that we still use today, which shows us how deep his impact was on the English language and people. If social media existed, he would be the most followed influencer.

But why did he invent all these new words? Was it to confuse people? Was it to portray himself as unique? NO! Well, actually that may be one of the reasons, but the main one was much more simple than you would imagine. He invented all these new words to fill linguistic gaps, where he needed to express a certain

emotion or description. He also needed words to fit his 'blank space' syllable count. Shakespeare took advantage of the changes in language to create words that suited him, by adding prefixes or suffixes to a word. He was also one of the first to use slang words in his scripts, revolutionising the way people spoke to each other forever. He used slang words like 'in a pickle', 'heart of gold' and 'good riddance'.

I hope that you can now see that Shakespeare wasn't some old crazy writer, he was an icon. His plays contained rich, innovative vocabulary that we still used today. His plays changed language and marked a special point in history, where over 1,700 words were added to England's vocabulary forever.

Shanaya, 8H



Pohela Boishakhi: Bangladeshi New Year

Bangladeshi New Year, known as Pohela Boishakhi in Bangla, is one of the greatest festivals the country celebrates. My article will walk you through some of the traditions we follow on the day, as well as some information on the national holiday.

Pohela Boishakh marks the Bangladeshi New Year, a celebration that blends language, culture, and history into one dazzling moment of national pride. Unlike the United Kingdom, Bangladesh follows a solar calendar, which aligns with the rhythms of nature rather than the Gregorian system. This makes Pohela Boishakh fall every year on April 14th, marking the start of a new harvest cycle and a symbolic fresh start for the nation. The festival's origins trace back to the Mughal Empire, when Emperor Akbar introduced the Bangla calendar to help farmers and merchants keep track of taxes

and harvests. Over time, that seemingly simple administrative system transformed into a deeply cultural event, one that now represents renewal, unity, and joy.

Today, Pohela Boishakh is more than just a date on the calendar; it's an emotional reset button for millions. Streets bloom with banners in bright reds, oranges, and whites, echoing themes of purity and passion. From the smallest village to the busiest corners of Dhaka, people prepare for weeks, cleaning their homes, decorating entrances with alpona (floral floor art), and rehearsing songs and dances that celebrate Bengali identity. Even the language of the festival — filled with rhythmic greetings, poetic slogans, and lyrical chants — reflects the beauty of Bangla itself, a reminder that culture lives not just in traditions, but in the words people speak.



WHAT IS DONE ON THE DAY?

On Bangladeshi New Year, language, colour and culture intertwine in one of the most expressive celebrations of the year. The day begins with cheerful greetings of “Shubho Noboborsho!” – a phrase that carries more than just “Happy New Year”; it echoes renewal, respect, and shared hope. Clothing itself becomes a language of symbolism: women wear red and white sarees, where red stands for vitality and joy, and white for peace and purity. Men don crisp white panjabis with splashes of red, while children brighten the scene in vibrant salwar kameezes and kurtas.



As the morning sun rises, streets transform into moving art – filled with song, rhythm, and laughter. The famous Mangal Shobhajatra parade sweeps through cities and towns, with giant masks and colourful motifs, communicating unity, resilience, and the spirit of the people without uttering a single word. Food plays its own expressive role too: the crackle of ilish maach bhaja (fried Hilsha fish) served with rice, the comfort of bhortas – mashed spiced vegetables like potato and aubergine – and the slow-cooked richness of mangsho (mutton curry) all tell stories of tradition and togetherness. Finally, the sweetness of payesh and chomchom ends the day on a note of warmth and celebration – a delicious punctuation mark to Bangladesh’s vibrant linguistic and cultural identity

Tahrim, 8R





સ જ



Being Gujarati

At HBS, being Indian is something many of us share and take pride in. But India is more than just one identity—it's a blend of hundreds of unique cultures, each with its own traditions, festivals, and stories. That's what makes it so rich and beautiful.

Gujarati culture includes amazing food—dhokla, thepla, jalebi, and so much more. Even though many of us are vegetarian, our food is full of flavor, color, and variety.

We also deeply believe in gods like Krishna and Ganesh, whose stories and values shape our daily lives.

While we celebrate major festivals like Diwali and Holi, one of the most special celebrations for us is Navratri. It's a nine-night festival where families and friends gather to dance in honour of our goddesses—who we see as mother figures, which is why we call them "mata." One example is Ma Umba, who is deeply loved in our community. During Navratri, we wear traditional outfits like chaniya cholis and spend hours dancing, laughing, and enjoying the night. It's my favourite time of year because I get to celebrate with my cousins, running around the hall and dancing to well written music.



Heli, 8R

An abstract illustration in shades of brown, tan, and black. It depicts a person's profile on the left, a laptop with a white bunny sticker on the keyboard, and a hand holding a white document. The background consists of large, overlapping organic shapes.

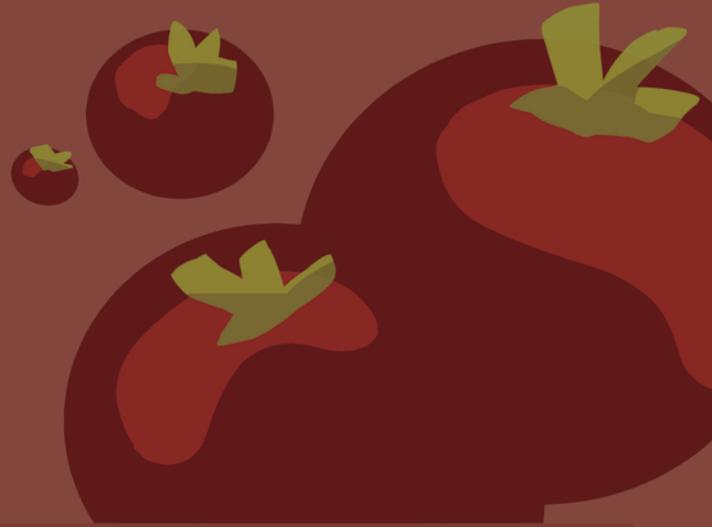
The Development of Hebrew (and some multicultural turkeys!)

Hebrew is the only example of a language that underwent a successful, large-scale revival. After ceasing to be spoken at all from about 200CE, it survived only as religious liturgy for nearly 2,000 years. Modern Hebrew became an official language in British-ruled Palestine in 1921 (along with English and Arabic), and then in 1948 became an official language of the newly declared State of Israel. As of 2024, approximately 9 million people speak Hebrew as their first or second language.

As a vernacular language (mother tongue - not learned later in life), Hebrew declined after the Roman destruction of the Temple in 70 CE, and soon was only spoken by scholars. In the late 1800s, a revival movement began, driven by figures such as Eliezer Ben-Yehuda, who dedicated himself to bringing Hebrew back into common use. However, the only usage of Hebrew had been in religious scriptures, and its vocabulary was limited to very archaic concepts. The Torah, of course, doesn't contain a word for 'cupcake' or 'homework' or 'breakdancing'.

Ben-Yehuda's challenge was to construct a functional language that was recognisably Hebrew - but capable of expressing the realities of modern life. His solution? Copy someone else. Many new words were borrowed from or coined after European languages, especially English, Russian, German, and French.

Ben-Yehuda published the first Hebrew dictionary in 1908, which contained מילון, or 'milon', the Hebrew word for dictionary. It's difficult to imagine the process of reinventing a language, so here are a few examples that you might find especially delightful:



A tomato is עֶגְבָּנִיָּה (agvania) in Hebrew, and there are two particularly prominent theories as to how that came about. In Italy, the word for tomato is pomodoro. Someone misheard this and recorded it as pomo d'amore, meaning 'love fruit'. Alternatively, it was nicked from the German 'liebesapfel' (literally 'love apple', meaning a candy apple). Either way, after some sort of etymological mishap, 'agvania' literally translates to 'the love thing'.

A school is בית ספר ('house of books')
A turkey is תרנגול הודו ('India chicken')
Ladybug is פרת משה רבנו ('Moses' cow'). In English, 'lady' is a reference to the Virgin Mary, so Ben-Yehudah referenced a famous Jewish figure instead.

In many ways, Hebrew blurs the line between a natural and constructed language. Its rapid development reveals the kinds of linguistic shifts that shaped other languages, such as English, in distant centuries.

Side note: it's fascinating that in many languages, the humble turkey is named after a country it is most certainly not found in. In Greece 'γαλοπούλα' literally means 'French bird'. The word for a turkey in Portuguese is 'peru', French 'dinde' means 'from India', and in some Arabic dialects, the bird is called dīk rūmī (ديك رومي) meaning 'Roman rooster'. The linguistic confusion seems almost global!





Olé my Days, Keep Calm and Flamenco On

When most people picture Spain, they imagine twirling long, red skirts, guitar strings vibrating in the heat, and heels striking the floor in perfect rhythm. The well-known dance of flamenco is more than a tourist cliché. It's a symbol of identity, protest, and survival.

Originating in Andalucía, in the southern part of Spain, flamenco grew out of the many cultures: Romani people, who arrived in Spain around the 15th century, brought musical traditions that merged with Arabic, Jewish, and local folk influences. Rather than a single dance, flamenco is actually a trio: cante (song), baile (dance), and toque (guitar). All three are needed for an authentic performance.

What's fascinating is how real the music is. Flamenco singing often sounds strained or emotional and this isn't by accident. The style emerged during periods of persecution, when the Romani community faced discrimination. Their music became a voice for grief, resilience, and pride. Even now, the emotion you can hear in the singer's voice, known as 'duende', is central. It's difficult to translate, but roughly means a deep, almost spiritual intensity that makes your skin prickle.

The dance itself reflects this emotional depth. Movements are sharp, precise, and powerful. Dancers use their shoes like percussion, with rhythms called 'zapateado'. Meanwhile, the guitarist follows the dancer – not the other way around – creating a spontaneous energy. Unlike classical ballet, flamenco is less about perfection and more about storytelling.

In recent years, flamenco has evolved, blending with jazz, pop, and even hip-hop. Purists may frown, but this combination keeps the tradition alive. Rather than remaining frozen in time, flamenco continues to adapt just as Spanish culture does and balances heritage with change.

So next time you hear the clapping, stomping, and cry of '¡olé!', remember you're not just watching a dance. You're witnessing centuries of history, migration, struggle, and celebration, all being channelled through rhythm and movement.

Delanna, 10M



A Brief History of Bangladesh: From Ancient Empires to Modern Nationhood

Ancient and Medieval Foundations

The roots of modern Bangladesh stretch back over two millennia. The first major indigenous power to govern the region was the Maurya Empire (circa 320–185 BCE). After its decline, the kingdom of Samatata emerged in southeastern Bengal, later becoming a tributary of the powerful Gupta Empire (circa 319–540 CE). In the 7th century, Samatata was absorbed into the loosely controlled territories of Emperor Harsha.

From the 8th to the 12th centuries, the Buddhist Pala Empire established dominance over Bengal. Renowned for its intellectual and cultural achievements, the Pala era marked a high point in Buddhist scholarship. Eventually, the Hindu Sena dynasty rose to power, only to be overthrown by invading Muslim forces led by Muhammad Bakhtiyar Khalji in 1204—an event that opened the door to Islamic rule in the region.

Under the Delhi Sultanate (1206–1526), Bengal was integrated into a larger Muslim empire. However, in 1341, the Bengal Sultanate declared independence under Fakhruddin Mubarak Shah, ushering in a period of territorial expansion and immense prosperity. Foreign visitors from Europe and China referred to Bengal as one of the richest lands for trade. In 1576, the region was conquered by the Mughal Empire, becoming the Bengal Subah—its most economically powerful province. Bengal earned titles such as the "Paradise of Nations" and "breadbasket of India," due to its global export of muslin, silk, and ships.

By the early 18th century, Mughal decline led to semi-independence under the Nawabs of Bengal, with Murshid Quli Khan founding the dynasty in 1717.

Colonial Exploitation and the Rise of Nationalism.

British colonial rule in Bengal began in 1757, after the East India Company defeated Nawab Siraj-ud-Daulah at the Battle of Plassey. This victory marked the beginning of British dominance over India. Bengal's economy, once thriving, was devastated under colonial rule. British policies led to deindustrialisation, the collapse of the textile industry, and widespread poverty. The Great Bengal Famine of 1770 killed over 10 million people, one of the worst man-made famines in history.

Following nearly 200 years of British rule, the Partition of India in 1947 created the borders of modern Bangladesh. The eastern part of Bengal became East Bengal, the most populous province of the newly created Pakistan, located over 1,000 miles away from West Pakistan.

This geographical divide fueled economic, political, and cultural tensions from the outset.

Early efforts at reform—such as land redistribution and renaming the Awami Muslim League to the more secular "Awami League"—signaled a push for autonomy. However, discrimination against Bengalis in government, military, and civil services persisted. Despite East Pakistan generating most of the country's export revenue through jute and tea, it received a disproportionately low share of public investment and aid. Intellectuals like Rehman Sobhan and Nurul Islam articulated what became known as the "Two Economies Theory"—arguing

that East and West Pakistan functioned as economically separate entities. Cultural repression, including the banning of Bengali literature and music, intensified nationalist sentiment. The 1952 Language Movement, where students were killed demanding Bengali be recognised as an official language, became a pivotal moment in Bangladesh's struggle for self-determination.

Liberation and the Birth of Bangladesh

By the 1960s, tensions had reached a boiling point. Sheikh Mujibur Rahman emerged as the leading voice of Bengali nationalism, advocating for a federal parliamentary system through his Six-Point Movement. After the devastating Bhola cyclone in 1970 and the central government's inadequate response, discontent deepened. In the national elections later that year, Mujib's Awami League won a landslide in East Pakistan but was denied power by the West Pakistani leadership.

On 7 March 1971, Mujib called for civil disobedience. The Pakistani military responded with Operation Searchlight on 25 March, launching a brutal campaign of mass violence. Mujib declared independence on 26 March 1971, sparking the nine-month Bangladesh Liberation War. The conflict, marked by genocide and mass displacement, ended with the surrender of Pakistani forces on 16 December 1971, and the birth of Bangladesh as an independent nation.

Post-Independence Challenges and Growth

Bangladesh's early years were marked by turmoil. The Mujib government faced economic collapse, famine in 1974, and increasing authoritarianism. Mujib was assassinated in 1975, and power shifted to General Ziaur Rahman, who introduced economic reforms, founded the Bangladesh

Nationalist Party (BNP), and promoted regional cooperation through the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC). After Zia's assassination in 1981, another military leader, Hussain Muhammad Ershad, ruled for a decade, implementing infrastructure development and declaring Islam as the state religion.

Democracy was restored in 1991, initiating a political rivalry between Khaleda Zia (BNP) and Sheikh Hasina (Awami League)—a period often referred to as the "Battle of the Begums." Hasina's government, first elected in 2008, oversaw impressive economic growth but was also criticized for human rights abuses, suppression of opposition, and electoral manipulation.

Her landslide victories in 2014, 2018, and 2024 were marred by allegations of fraud. A student-led uprising in 2024 forced Hasina to resign and flee, leading to the formation of an interim government led by Nobel Peace Prize laureate Muhammad Yunus.

A Rising Nation

Despite political upheavals, Bangladesh has emerged as one of the world's fastest-growing economies, thanks largely to its booming textile industry—now the second-largest globally. Economic reforms and liberalization since the 1980s helped reduce poverty from 80% in 1971 to under 19% in 2022. Bangladesh has matched or surpassed neighboring India in several human development indicators and leads globally in the number of certified green factories.

The country has also demonstrated its humanitarian leadership, sheltering over a million Rohingya refugees fleeing genocide in Myanmar since 2017.

From ancient empires to a dynamic and growing republic, Bangladesh's story is one of resilience, struggle, and transformation. Its journey continues—shaped by its people, history, and an enduring spirit of independence.

Las palabras que no existen en inglés

Cada idioma tiene su propia manera de ver el mundo. Hay palabras que solo existen en un idioma porque describen algo muy especial para la gente que lo habla. En español, existen muchas palabras que no tienen una traducción exacta al inglés, y eso las hace aún más interesantes.

Una de mis favoritas es 'sobremesa'. En muchos países hispanohablantes, después de comer la gente no se levanta de la mesa enseguida. Se quedan charlando, riendo y disfrutando del momento con la familia o los amigos. En inglés se puede decir 'after-dinner conversation', pero no suena igual. La palabra sobremesa muestra lo importante que es compartir el tiempo con los demás.

Otra palabra muy curiosa es 'vergüenza ajena'. Significa sentir vergüenza por lo que hace otra persona, aunque tú no hayas hecho nada. Por ejemplo, cuando alguien canta muy mal en público, pero tú sientes la vergüenza como si fuera

tuya. Es una emoción que muchos de nosotros conocemos, pero el inglés no tiene una palabra específica para eso. También me gusta mucho 'estrenar', que usamos cuando llevamos algo por primera vez. Puede ser ropa, zapatos o incluso un coche. En inglés se dice 'to wear for the first time', pero 'estrenar' tiene una sensación especial, como si el momento fuera importante.

Hay otras palabras que describen cosas muy concretas, como 'madrugar', que significa levantarse muy temprano, o 'friolero', que se usa para una persona que siempre tiene frío. Son palabras pequeñas, pero reflejan aspectos del carácter o de la vida diaria de las personas.

Una palabra que me parece poética es 'duende'. En España, se usa para hablar de un sentimiento mágico que se siente con el arte o la música, especialmente en el flamenco. No se puede traducir bien, porque duende no es solo talento; es algo más profundo, una emoción que toca el alma.



Y finalmente, está ‘desvelado’, que describe a alguien que no puede dormir porque algo le preocupa o le emociona. Es una palabra que todos hemos sentido alguna vez, y tener un término para él hace que la experiencia sea más humana.

Estas palabras muestran que el español no es solo un idioma, sino una forma de entender la vida. Cada palabra refleja una emoción, una costumbre o una parte de la cultura. Y eso es lo bonito de aprender lenguas: descubrir cómo otras personas nombran las cosas que nosotros también sentimos.

Rhea, 10H



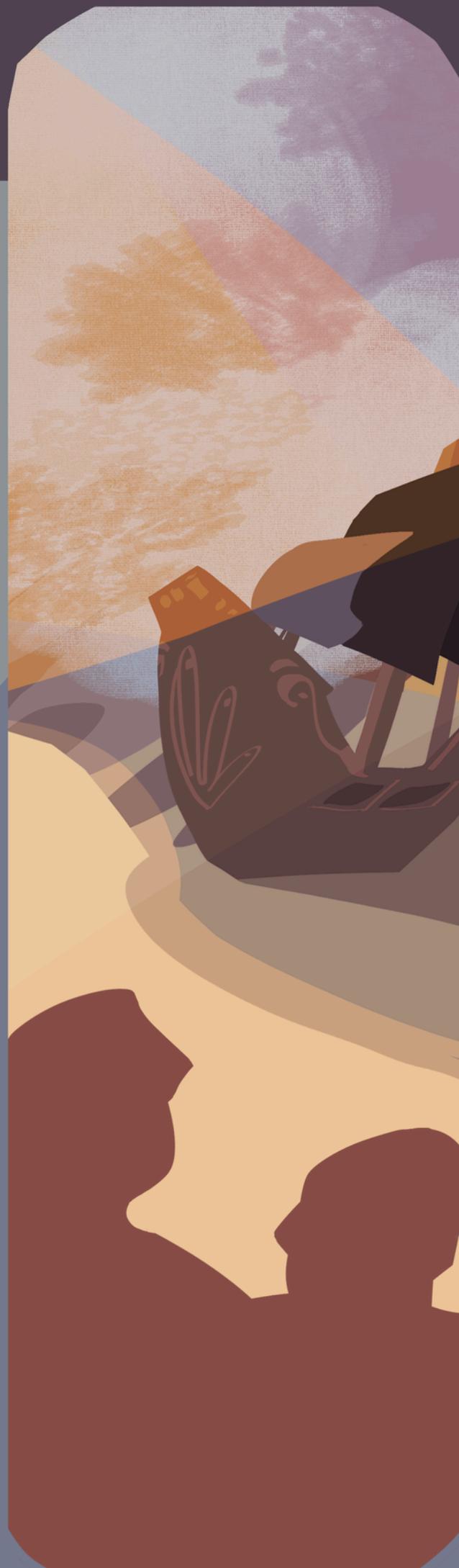
What are Creole Languages?

The impact of Colonial Rule on Linguistics

When European powers set out to conquer the world, they didn't just grab land and treasures, but they changed the way millions of people speak to each other. In some cases, entire languages were oppressed through harsh policies and punishments. However, sometimes the impact was a little different. The languages of the oppressed and the oppressor have mingled together (or rather, forcibly blended for maximum efficiency) to form different types of Creole.

Origins of Creole

Creole Languages were developed when different ethnic groups were forced together and had to invent a way to communicate effectively, notably under colonial rule. First, 'pidgins' were set up which were the stripped-down versions of various languages with common, basic words and simple grammar. They were used for short interactions between people of different cultures, simply enough to haggle in the shops or provide directions. Over time, the pidgin gets gradually more stable. Vocabulary expands, grammar starts to settle down, and you see more consistency. Suddenly, children are learning the pidgin as their first language and, in just a few generations, there are native speakers, making the pidgin now a Creole Language.



The Origins in a Colonised Context

Colonial settings create the conditions necessary for creole formation. Africans and indigenous people now had to communicate with Europeans, demanding fast practical communication. This urgency sped up the leap from pidgin to creole. European colonists set the stage for most creole languages. Conquering lands, the transatlantic slave trade and mass migration all had their impact. French gave Haitian Creole most of its vocabulary and English did the same for Jamaican Patois, while Spanish colonisation led to Papiamentu. While the words often came from the colonising, it was really the colonised who added their own spin to creole, adding expressions and idioms, experimenting with grammar and structure, making the languages much more full.

Cultural Identity

While it is easy to see Creole Languages as something that was

forcibly created out of necessity and oppression, they have evolved into symbols of identity and resistance, helping enslaved and colonised people keep in touch with their roots and improve their future. Haitian Creole, for example, was vital in the independence movement as it allowed leaders to connect with those who didn't speak French. Jamaican Patois carries ideas of African spirituality like obeah (traditional healing) which just doesn't translate into colonial languages.

Today, Creole Languages have millions of native speakers but there is still little awareness of these beautiful languages that have risen through times of unimaginable oppression and trauma. UNESCO encourages us to research Creole, or even learn a language itself in the hope of a better understanding of them, allowing us to see Creole Languages as fully developed cultures, not just offshoots or simplified versions of European tongues.

Venisha, 10H

The Classical Treasure of India: Bharatanatyam

Bharatanatyam, one of India's oldest and most revered classical dance forms, traces its origins to the sacred temples of Tamil Nadu. For over 2,000 years, it has been a form of spiritual offering, performed by devadasis who dedicated their lives to serving the deity through music, dance, and ritual. Its principles are drawn from the *Natya Shastra*, the ancient Sanskrit treatise on performing arts attributed to Bharata Muni. The name itself reflects its core elements: bhava (expression), raga (melody), tala (rhythm), and natya (dramatic performance). Through intricate mudras, hand gestures, expressive abhinaya, facial expressions, and precise rhythmic footwork, Bharatanatyam communicates stories from Hindu mythology, especially the Ramayana and Mahabharata.

The dance is enshrined in the sculptures and carvings of temples such as Chidambaram Nataraja Temple and Brihadeeswara Temple, which depict postures and movements from Bharatanatyam. While no direct visual records exist of its earliest performances, these artistic representations, alongside literary references, provide invaluable insight into the dance's evolution. Over time, Bharatanatyam moved beyond temple precincts to the royal courts of South India. Dynasties like the Cholas and Pallavas patronized the arts, promoting Bharatanatyam as both a devotional practice and a refined cultural performance for the elite. In this context, the dance evolved to highlight technical brilliance, while retaining its spiritual essence.



Eventually, the colonial era brought challenges. British rule disrupted temple patronage, and the devadasi system came under scrutiny. Bharatanatyam was often misrepresented as immoral, leading to a decline in practice. Yet, the early 20th century saw a remarkable revival. Pioneers played pivotal roles in restoring Bharatanatyam's dignity. Rukmini Devi emphasized artistic and spiritual expression, refining costumes and stage presentations to suit modern audiences.



Balasaraswati preserved the traditional sadir style, highlighting its emotional depth, while Krishna Iyer advocated socially and legally to support the dance's resurgence. Institutions like Kalakshetra Foundation, founded by Rukmini Devi, became centers for teaching Bharatanatyam globally. Personally, the bani, or style, of Bharatanatyam of which I train in is the Kalakshetra bani, characterised by its graceful lines, geometric precision, and emphasis on linear movements, combined with subtle yet expressive abhinaya that brings stories to life with clarity and elegance.

Today, Bharatanatyam continues to captivate audiences worldwide, celebrated not only as a classical art form but as a testament to India's cultural heritage. From temple sanctuaries to international stages, it embodies devotion, artistry, and storytelling, echoing the voices of generations of performers who kept this tradition alive. Its journey reminds us that Bharatanatyam is more than dance - it is a living bridge between spirituality, expression, and human emotion.

Nidu, 11H



What Remains of the Languages we Inherit

Whenever people migrate, they take their culture with them: their cuisine, their religions and their languages. But what happens to a language once its speakers are settled in the new country? After all, there won't be many reasons to use a language from halfway across the world, and focusing on teaching English to your children ensures they get a good grip on the language. On the other hand, many parents clearly want to pass down their languages to their children or why else would there be 40 schools in the UK teaching Tamil alone?

To try and understand exactly how languages are passed down I conducted a survey answered by 60 different students attending HBS (Thanks to those who answered the survey!).

The first section of the survey was on how much of the language the respondents already understood. I first asked how well the participants could understand the language when listening to it, which is known as being a passive speaker. 88% of respondents reported being able to understand conversations most of the time, while a further 8% could understand some words and sentences, meaning a total of over 90% had some understanding of their language. As shown by Mr Mahajan's article last issue, being a passive speaker makes it easier to learn the language in the future. In addition to this 86% of the respondents, well over four fifths, could always have a basic conversation in their heritage language while an additional 10% could do it in some situations. However, the number of people who could always hold a complex conversation (at a similar level to a year 8 MFL student) in their language dropped to 65%, with a further 10% claiming they could sometimes hold a complex conversation. Still, it's an impressive number of people. Reading and writing was a different matter. Even counting those limited to writing at a basic level (26%), less than half the respondents could read or write in their language.

This is unsurprising, considering there wouldn't be many uses for Tamil or Hindi literacy in London.

The second section of the survey focused factors that affected how likely it was for the language to be passed on. The first factor was Intergenerational transmission. Almost 80% of the respondents stated that their parents often or always spoke to them in their native language. On top of that 59% of parents made active efforts to teach the respondents their language, such as buying textbooks. So far, so good. But of course, teaching someone a language is pointless unless they actually want to learn it. 57% of respondents replied that they were interested in learning the language with a further 32% showing some interest making a total of 89%. However, less than 58% of respondents took steps to learn the language. Considering that many of us already have some knowledge of our languages, we could all take more steps to gain a better understanding of these languages, even if it's just learning a few more words.

Before we conclude, I have to make a disclaimer: this survey could have been made more accurate, for example by ensuring people weren't underestimating or overestimating their proficiency in their language. But still, I hope the results were an interesting insight into the transmission of languages in the diaspora!

Sahana, 11W



Justice speaks all languages

न्याय सभी भाषाओं में बोलता है

टोक्यो की अदालत की खामोशी में, माली के गाँव की मिट्टी में बने न्यायालय में, न्यूयॉर्क के चमकते कक्षों में—शब्द भले ही अलग हों—न्याय, अदालत, justice—लेकिन धड़कन एक जैसी है। भाषाओं के पार, अक्षरों के पार, इतिहास या मानवीय सीमाओं के पार, न्याय की पुकार हमेशा एक जैसी रहती है। कानून के स्वर अलग हो सकते हैं, लेकिन उसकी आत्मा अडिग है।

यह उन लोगों से फुसफुसाता है जिन्हें मौन रहना पड़ा, उन ताकतवरों के खिलाफ चीखता है जो बिना विवेक के शक्ति का दुरुपयोग करते हैं। स्पेनिश में यह कहता है *justicia*, अरबी में *al-'adl*, मंदारिन में *gōngzhèng*, और स्वाहिली में *haki*। अलग-अलग ध्वनियाँ, अलग-अलग लिपियाँ, लेकिन संदेश वही है: आप देखे गए हैं। आपकी सुनी गई है। आपकी अहमियत है।

सोचिए, लागोस की माँ जिसे उसके बच्चे की आवाज़ नहीं सुनी गई; बर्लिन का प्रवासी जिसकी हक़ीक़तों को कुचल दिया गया; ब्यूनस आयर्स का किसान जिसकी ज़मीन जबरन छीन ली गई। न्याय शायद धीरे आता है, कभी-कभी अधूरा लगता है, लेकिन जब वह आता है, वह स्पष्ट और अनमोल होता है। यह एक मरहम है, एक सच्चाई है, एक वादा है। और जब यह बोलता है, तो दिल तुरंत इसे पहचान लेता है—सभी भाषाओं, अक्षांशों और देशांतरों के पार।

न्याय किसी एक संस्कृति या क़ानून का नहीं है। यह वह शांत गरिमा है जो समानता की माँग करती है, वह साहस जो अत्याचार के खिलाफ खड़ा होता है, वह दया जो सुधार करते हुए भी क्षमा करती है। यह सीमाओं से परे है क्योंकि यह मानव हृदय की देन है। जब हम इसे महसूस करते हैं, तो आँसू आते हैं—कानून के लिए नहीं, प्रक्रिया के लिए नहीं, बल्कि इस मान्यता के लिए कि दुनिया ने, चाहे थोड़ी देर के लिए ही सही, हमारी मानवता का सम्मान किया।

और इसलिए, चाहे रोम में कलम से लिखा जाए, काठमांडू में धूप और धुएँ के बीच फुसफुसाया जाए, या मिसिसिपी के किसी छोटे शहर में ध्वनि यंत्र से सुना जाए, न्याय वही भाषा बोलता है। इसे अनुवाद की ज़रूरत नहीं। यह समझौता नहीं करता। यह बस है: शाश्वत सत्य कि जो सही है, वह महत्वपूर्ण है, और किसी व्यक्ति की गरिमा कभी मोल नहीं हो सकती।

उस क्षण जब न्याय को महसूस किया जाता है, दुनिया एक साथ छोटी और विशाल लगती है। सीमाएँ मिट जाती हैं। भाषाएँ शांत हो जाती हैं। एक ही धड़कन हमें जोड़ देती है—एक सत्य, एक पुकार, एक कानून: न्याय, सबसे ऊपर, सभी का अधिकार है।

Justice Speaks All Languages

In the hush of a courtroom in Tokyo, in the dust of a village tribunal in Mali, in the polished chambers of New York, the words differ—*hō*, *adalet*, *justice*—but the heartbeat is identical. Across tongues, across alphabets, across borders drawn by hand or by history, the call for fairness transcends syllables. Law may wear many accents, but its soul is unshakable.

It speaks in whispers to those who have been silenced, in shouts against those who wield power without conscience. In Spanish, it says *justicia*. In Arabic, *al-'adl*. In Mandarin, *gōngzhèng*. In Swahili, *haki*. Different sounds, different scripts, yet the message remains the same: You are seen. You are heard. You matter.

Consider the mother in Lagos whose child's voice was ignored by bureaucracy; the migrant in Berlin whose rights were trampled; the farmer in Buenos Aires whose land was taken without consent. Justice may arrive slowly, imperfectly, but when it comes, it carries a clarity beyond words. It is a balm, a reckoning, a promise. And when it speaks, hearts recognize it instantly, across all languages, latitudes, longitudes. Justice is not the province of a single culture or a single legal code. It is the quiet dignity that insists on equality, the courage that defies oppression, the mercy that forgives even as it corrects. It transcends borders because it belongs to the human heart. When we finally feel it, tears come—not for law, not for procedure, but for the recognition that the world, however briefly, has honoured our humanity.

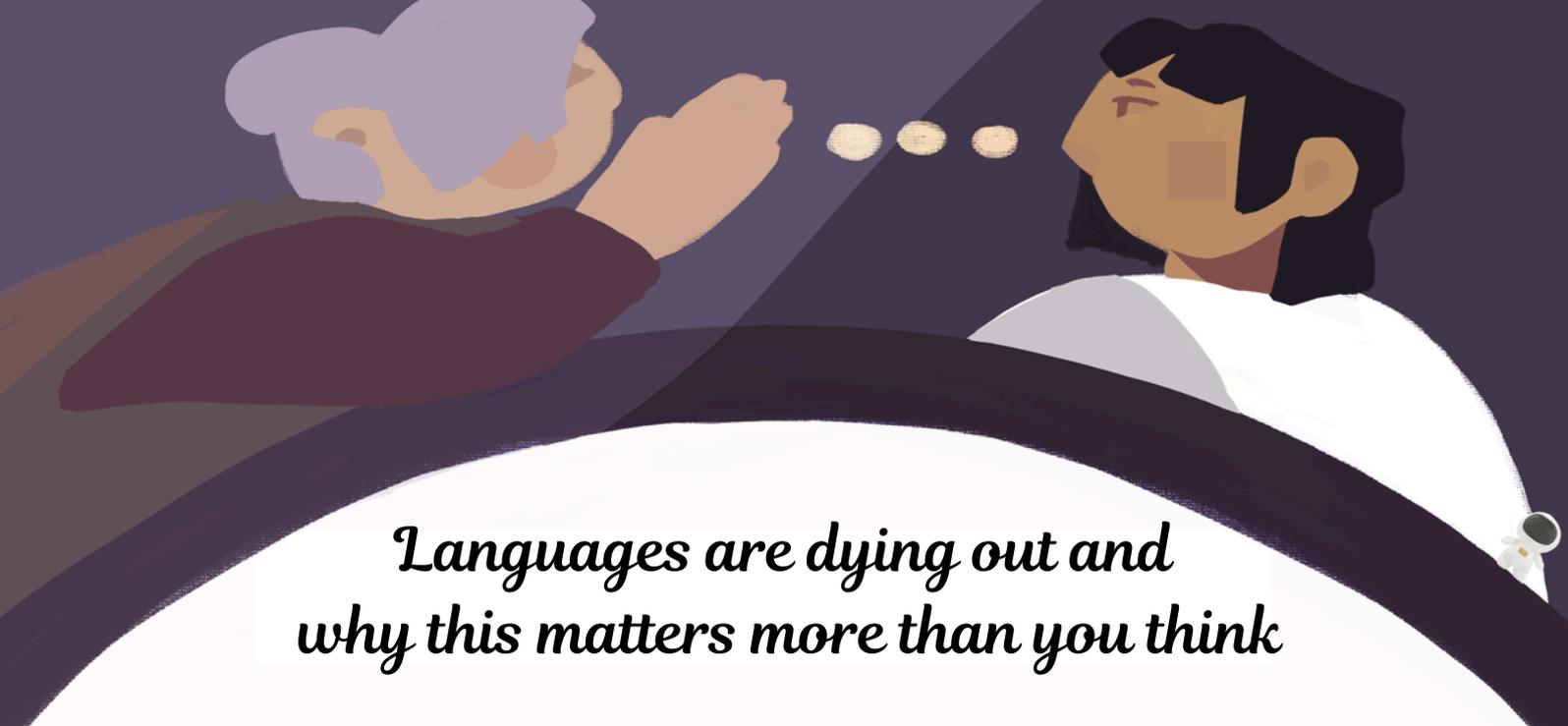
And so, whether inscribed on parchment in Rome, whispered over incense in Kathmandu, or broadcast through a speaker in a small town in Mississippi, justice speaks the same language. It does not need translation. It does not negotiate. It simply is: the eternal truth that what is right matters, and that the dignity of a person is never negotiable.

In that moment of recognition, the world is small and vast all at once. Borders dissolve.

Tongues fall silent. A single heartbeat unites us:

one truth, one
call, one law:
justice, above
all, belongs to
everyone.

Saina, 11R

An illustration at the top of the page shows two stylized figures. On the left, a person with purple hair is shown from the back, with their hands raised as if gesturing. On the right, a person with dark hair is shown in profile, looking towards the first person. Three small white circles are positioned between them, representing a conversation or thought process. The background is a dark purple gradient.

Languages are dying out and why this matters more than you think

Over 7000 languages are spoken today but this statistic is plummeting rapidly, with a language dying every two weeks - around 25 languages per year! Consequently, a shocking 40% of our languages are endangered, causing experts to predict that 50-90% could be gone by the end of the century. But why does this even matter?

Language plays such an integral role in our lives, however, its importance is often overlooked for louder debates, such as those about technology and AI. Ironically, language is how these discussions are made possible, since without language, communities wouldn't be able to come together to discuss and deliberate over different ideas. Despite this, there is little concern about the rate at which our languages are dying out.

Not only do languages allow us to communicate but they also help shape how we think and perceive our world. Additionally, language is part of humanity's diversity. Therefore, knowing many languages is not only a valuable asset but it is also a way to educate yourself further, as each language provides a new, unique perspective on the world. With the death of each language, a part of our community dies with it. This may not seem significant to you right now but the diversity that we cherish so much in today's society is under the threat of cultural

homogenisation. This is where smaller cultures are overpowered by more dominant and widely used languages, such as English or Mandarin. Furthermore, minority language speakers already face social exclusion, a prime example being the limited availability of languages on services as small as touring schemes or as big as healthcare. If we sit idly by and watch these languages die out at the rate that they are, we might as well be encouraging inequality by feeding into the mindset that only dominant languages and cultures have the right to be seen and accommodated to.

Additionally, each language holds its own unique history meaning that when one dies, so does the knowledge that it has gained over its lifetime. Once again, this reduces cultural and intellectual diversity as we lose access to another world of perspective.

So how can you and I help with this crisis?

Using a language is key to its survival, so if you do speak more than one language, make sure to use it everyday as frequently as you can. However small of an effort you may think you are making, it is making a huge difference to the longevity of that language you are using. Furthermore, you can record speeches, songs and vocabulary in different languages



that you find interesting, before they disappear, creating a mini archive of linguistic treasures for yourself and future linguists. Utilising technology to preserve these documents is another great way to contribute to the survival of languages, as it makes them more accessible to language-loving enthusiasts like yourself.

Protecting languages is not something that we should be taking lightly as it isn't just about saving linguistic systems and words. It's about protecting the identities and communities that these languages create,

Emma, 12A

as well as the knowledge and connections that they introduce into the world. Everyone of us has an important role to play in this endeavour and by reading this article, you've already taken a step towards the preservation of language, culture and history.



Colour Me Impressed: The Evolution of Colour Across Language

Everything around you has its own colour. Thanks to science, we generally know that anyone with typical colour vision can see the same colours as each other - leaves and grass are green, soil is brown, the sea is blue, etc. But if this universality of colour vision is true across the human race, why did Homer in his *Odyssey* describe the sea as “wine dark”? Why label the sky in broad daylight as “bronze” instead of blue, or a wave as dark red?

For a while, a number of theories circulated around the linguistic sphere, and some linguists even wrongly speculated that the Ancient Greeks were colourblind (an idea largely stemming from William Gladstone’s 1858 book on Homeric works, in which he described their “organs of colour” as being “but partially developed”). There has been some modern corroboration for this theory of colourblindness, such as the work of Lindsey and Brown in 2002, where they posited that the more common lack of distinction between colour terms for blue and green in languages surrounding the tropics may have been due to photovoltaic damage to the eyes from the sun. However, in 1969, a theory nothing short of revolutionary in the linguistic study of colour emerged, published by Berkeley researchers Berlin and Kay.

In their study, Berlin and Kay set the parameters for the definition of a ‘basic colour term’ (BCT) - namely that it had to be monolexic (one word), salient to speakers of the language (thus being used very frequently and comfortably within the language), separate from other colour terms, widely applicable to a number of objects, and that the term must be a word in its own right (not the name of an item that is said colour). They then applied these parameters to assess the differing numbers of BCTs across languages, and found an interesting pattern, particularly in languages with fewer BCTs than English (>11): there seemed to be a set order in which BCTs entered into existence.

The two linguists proposed that the hierarchy began for every language with two BCTs, black and white (or alternatively light and dark). Then came the introduction of red, then green or yellow, next blue, then all other BCTs like purple, pink, orange, grey and brown. For example, if a language had 3 BCTs, they were almost always light, dark and red, like in Wobé. This then went on to be corroborated by many further studies, such as the simulations run by Loreto, Mukherjee and Tria, and is now accepted widely by the linguistic community. Despite this, it still begs the question of why this colour hierarchy exists in the first place.

Overall, one could argue that it is due to two inseparable factors: the inclination of humans to discuss subject matters which are warmer in colour (thus BCTs like red and yellow evolving before green and blue), and the role that necessity of communication of colour, due to the development of industries and trade, plays.

Warm colours tend to have more dedicated BCTs than their cooler counterparts across languages. In English, for instance, we have five for warm colours (almost half of all our BCTs), whilst cool colours have only three, meaning that we are able to communicate much more efficiently and accurately surrounding warm colours. In a way, this is technically the point - items, people, animals, food and all the other things that humans typically discuss are all warm in colour, and thus it is far more important to have a widely recognised term to quickly refer to the colour of these everyday subjects than to something cool coloured, like the sky. In fact, researchers at Smithsonian tested this by mapping colours from a database of 20,000 images - which all had clear backgrounds and foregrounds - onto a set of 80 colours, from which they found that the objects in the foregrounds of the images were more likely to be warm coloured,



whilst the backgrounds were more likely to be cool coloured. Thus, it was illustrated that subjects which tend to be second thoughts, filler noise overshadowed by another, are generally associated with cool colours. Hence, we have less reason to talk as frequently and in as much detail about them, leading to their colours emerging much later on in languages.

Trade and industrialisation also played major roles in the emergence of some basic colour terms flat out. In the ancient world (as evidenced by Homer's seemingly wacky choice of colour descriptors, as well as in the lack of blue in ancient Hebrew, Hindi, Chinese and Arabic texts), words for blue in were particularly hard to come by. However, thanks to their manufacture of blue makeup from the lapis lazuli stone, Ancient Egyptians did have a BCT for the colour. This evidence of industry informing language about colour can be seen even today in the fact that the languages of non-industrialised societies, such as the Hadzabe tribe of Tanzania, tend to have significantly less BCTs than those of industrialised societies, averaging out at between 3 and 6.

The evolution of a BCT can thus be said to be driven primarily by a necessity to discuss certain colours, a view supported by Lindsey and Brown, who stated that "changes in the pragmatic utility of colour terminology within a culture, under the pressure of advancing technology, were a crucial factor governing increases in color lexicon complexity", as well as

Plotkin, who commented on the relationship between the economic importance of certain dyes in a nation's history and the birth of a new BCT. This importance of industrialisation in the evolution of a language's colour terminology is also likely why modern languages which have their roots in older civilisations (Greek, Slavic languages, Hindi, Italian and Hebrew for starters) tend to have 12 BCTs - one step above what is considered a "full" set of BCTs. As for trade's importance, England is a prime example. The BCT "purple" came about far earlier than natural (according to Berlin and Kay's hierarchy) largely due to colonisation by the Romans who had somewhat of a fascination with the colour, and the BCT "orange" came after the fruit itself, introduced to England by the Spanish and popularised by Italians who had taught rich Englishmen how to grow their own oranges in specialised 'orangeries'.

Of course, languages will never stop evolving. As long as time moves on, and we keep speaking and writing, as long as we keep inventing new slang, new technology, new fields of research, our understanding and categorisation of the world into the neat strings of letters that we call words will continue to deepen. Maybe one day, hundreds of years into the future, archaeologists will dig up your belongings and call a blue shirt or necklace by a name that is simply alien to us here in the present. Who knows! But, for the time being, stay vibrant, and live your life in technicolour.

Vaia, 12D



A Summary and Analysis of La Bella Susona

In the 41004 postal code, the very heart of Seville, behind the sunlit patios and bright azulejos of Seville's Barrio de Santa Cruz, a quiet, narrow street called Calle Susona holds one of the city's oldest and tragic legends. Here, stood the family home of Susona Ben-Suson, where the legend took place.

Seville in the late 15th century was a city of contrasts and conflicts. Jewish merchants, scholars, and artisans lived sometimes precariously alongside Christians and Muslims. By the time King Ferdinand II of Aragon and Queen Isabella I of Castile came to power, the Jewish were under threat. The Spanish Inquisition began rooting out dissent, enforcing people to convert to christianity. These 'conversos' were looked upon with suspicion, with some Christians fearing that they secretly hoped to restore Judaism one day.

Among those affected was Don Diego de Susona, a wealthy merchant and one such doubted 'converso'. Fearing for his life and the safety of his people, he began plotting a rebellion to preserve his position and community. Susona, Diego's daughter, was renowned for her beauty and intelligence, and she

had fallen deeply in love with a Christian nobleman who had strong connections to the royal court. In a moment of fear and devotion, she revealed her father's secret plans to her lover, urging him to intervene. What may have been an act of love became a tragic betrayal. Her father and the conspirators were arrested, tried, and executed, and Susona was left to live with the consequences of her actions for the rest of her life.

Consumed by grief and guilt, Susona withdrew entirely from the world. She became bedridden, her days marked by silence and sorrow. However even in death, she sought to preserve a reminder of her remorse. In her will, she requested that her skull be displayed above her house, a stark and haunting testament to the weight of her choices. For generations, it hung there, serving as a cautionary symbol, before a small ceramic tile replaced it in modern Seville. The story of La Susona continues to captivate, told by locals and reimagined in plays in 'el teatro de la maestranza', Seville and ruminated by those who have seen the beautiful tiles inspired by this story.

La Susona's tale mirrors the cultural

and historical fabric of Seville itself. It reflects the city's multicultural past, its fragile coexistence of Jews, Christians, and Muslims, and the tensions that arose when fear and intolerance overshadowed community and trust. The legend embodies the moral complexity of human choice, showing how love and loyalty, desire and duty, can collide with devastating consequences. Her actions also illuminate the limited yet significant agency of women in her time, preserving a female perspective in a period dominated by male authority.

The physical elements of her story are prominent symbols. The street where she lived, the house that displayed her skull, and the alleys of the old Jewish quarter all serve as living artifacts of memory, connecting modern Seville to its layered past. Walking through these streets today, one is reminded that the city's beauty and charm exist alongside a history shaped by impossible decisions, cultural tension, and moral reckoning.

La Susona is a woman whose actions shaped history, yet she is remembered more for her guilt and sorrow than for heroism. Her story highlights the limited agency of women in 15th-century Spain, even within wealthy or influential families, and illustrates the complex tension between activity and passivity: while she made a pivotal choice in revealing her father's plans, she was forced to endure the consequences under the strict social and religious constraints of her time. In doing so, her legend preserves a rare female perspective in a historical period largely dominated by men, showing how women navigated the dangers of faith, politics, and love.



Samantha, 13A



How Air Shapes Speech

Being able to roll my 'r's never felt like a superpower, until first going to primary school, and sitting in a class of people where, save one or two students, nobody could say my Marathi name with enough 'r' in it. This was of course incredibly hard for a four year old to explain to other, equally baffled, children, to whom this strange, car revving sound was decidedly impossible to make. 13 years later, I've gotten closer to understanding this apparent mystery, and the answer lies behind the science of linguistics.

Languages from all around the globe naturally have a variety of distinct sounds, and the environment in which humans are attempting to communicate can have a significant impact on how phonology develops. For instance, languages spoken in colder regions, such as those belonging to the Germanic, Eskaleut (including Eskimo, spoken in regions near the Arctic circle, eg parts of Canada, Greenland and Russia) and Uralic (containing Hungarian and Finnish) families, tend to have more consonant clusters within syllables, than languages spoken in more tropical climates. Languages from the Indo-Aryan, Dravidian, Afroasiatic and Austronesian are in general more 'sonorous' than their more temperate counterparts, as having a medium of warmer and more humid air to traverse when speaking has caused several fascinating adaptations.

37 As warmer air means that sound is more likely to get distorted whilst travelling, due to the tendency of the energetic particles to do little jigs

(known as eddies) rather than staying still, tropical and subtropical languages are spoken louder and with fewer obstruents (sounds such as 'k', 't' and 's'), since these are the sounds which are most likely to get lost in transmission. Instead, they prefer vowels and sonorants - which include nasals ('m', 'n'), glides/semivowels ('y', 'w') and liquids ('r', 'l') - as these are least likely to get distorted by the air.

Moisture from air has also been found to correlate with where the most tonal languages, such as Cantonese and Vietnamese, evolved. It has been speculated that the humidity is largely responsible for keeping vocal chords 'flexible' enough to voice subtle differences in pitch and vowels, whereas languages from drier regions sound more clipped, as native speakers learn to differentiate between a greater inventory of consonants than vowels.

Acoustic adaptation is also evident in many indigenous languages spoken in forest regions, where lower frequency (pitch) sounds and vowels are favoured, as they are less likely to get absorbed by dense foliage. In high altitude regions, also ejectives appear disproportionately often, as it's theorised that the lower air pressure makes it easier to make these abrupt sounds. Certain areas have also developed whistled registers to complement spoken languages, as seen on the Canary Islands and other coastal regions, since whistling is capable of being heard ten times farther than spoken word, due to the nature of the sound.

Languages are constantly adapting and changing to accommodate for their surroundings, as well as our physiological evolution (humans only developed the jaw structure to pronounce 'f's and 'v's in the Holocene epoch, when diets shifted to softer foods!), and it's fascinating to view them through the lens of science, to try to puzzle out these differences. However, just because many languages are different, doesn't mean that we can't learn to speak with them practice - and it's important that we try, so that we can share in the beauty of all languages.

Sharvari, 13C

Loneliness is Loud

We often praise the beauty of language – how it connects us, enriches culture, and bridges distance. But we speak far less about its harsher side. For many immigrants, language is not a bridge but a barrier, one that quietly isolates even in a crowded room.

Arriving in a new country means being displaced twice: first by the change in place, then by the unfamiliar words that make everyday life feel like a test. Misunderstandings, hesitations, and the inability to express oneself fully create a subtle but painful distance from others.

Instead of recognising this struggle, society often deepens it by talking around newcomers or excluding them entirely. The result is a loneliness rooted not in lack of ability, but in lack of shared language among other factors.

My short story 'Loneliness is Loud' explores this through the lens of a young Somali immigrant faced with such loneliness.

Loneliness is Loud

Loneliness isn't quiet. It isn't a forlorn blue or an ever-consuming noir. Loneliness is laughter and squeals and smiles. It's the brightest orange and most vivid magenta. It is boisterous and ballsy. While I here despair, it is the stretch of coast beyond which an ocean away my motherland lies, bejewelled by bullet casings beneath which my loved ones buried reside. It is the clash of the deep brown of my skin, imbued by the legacy of wandering nomads across stretching savannah and desert plains, against London's sprawling expanse of grey. Loneliness is a reminder of the once endless possibilities that'll now forever remain beyond my grasp. It is ever-pervading, tormenting, and cruel in its

mission to metastasise misery... loneliness is the only friend I've made in this cold and dark country.

I chuckle. To think that I once longed to step on British soil. Back when my cousins and I would sit by the harbour and listen as sailors boasted their travels.

"I walked streets paved with gold," one exclaimed.

“I watched as cold blankets paler than their skin covered the ground for miles,” another replied, his chest puffed with obtuse ignorance.

And like the child I was, I watched on, eyes as wide as the digsi* my hooyo** cooked canjeero*** on, with wonder. Knowing now the London I’ve seen, its grungy dim-lit alleys and its misanthropy, I wish I could tell them:

It’s not gold that paves the streets but soot and grime.

Fatigue weighs heavy on my bones as I make way to my meagre flat. Sometimes, I stand at its centre—the kitchen to my left, the bathroom two steps to my right, and my thin mattress beside me—and I spread out my arms, tracing the walls enclosing on me with my fingertips. Like a bird trapped in a cage, I am stuck, unable to fly away.

Though, I am one of the lucky ones. I have a roof over my head, and I work in a restaurant, washing dishes alongside other young men like myself. Different shades and hues paint our skin, but I see in our eyes the same disturbance. A heavy sadness hides beneath our stares.

The man I am today would be a stranger to the boy who arrived here last year. His excitement would pale in the face of my apathy and self-pity. His face would twist in disgust at the abandoned prayer mat, the cigarette butts piled in a corner, and the lingering smell of nicotine trapped in the air. Even now, as a slice of bread toasts on a pan, I can’t help but reach out for a cigarette.

I inhale deeply, satisfaction melting my anxiety as the hot smoke, sharp and dry, bites at the back of my throat. A bee-like buzz sets over my mind, overpowering the swarm of thoughts usually harassing me, and I’m lulled into a sense of comfort—albeit temporary.

Wafts of smoke coil like ribbons, drawing pictures against the wall. In this trance, I see figures wrapped in smoke and fleeting. I make out a boy with a bright smile, but soon he fades, and a column of smoke, tall and imposing, sets over him. It twists before a serpent rises and wraps around my throat like a noose. Choking silently, I watch cloud-like fumes settle across the horizon of my ceiling ominously—obscuring the light in dark haze. Raindrops pool beneath my eyes before falling gracelessly.

The blaze from the stove and my cigarette blend together, engulfing the room in a scorching embrace akin to the thick, unrelenting heat of a Somali summer day. Sweat beads at my skin, transporting me back to Saharan memories. In these torturous moments, I find myself a semblance of solace.

I almost forget that loneliness is watching—smiling, vivid, loud.

*Digsi: a round flat pan or pot

**Hooyo: mother

***Canjeero: a pancake-like flatbread



Khadijah, 12C

Imagine a Language Without Grammar...

Well, I can't. I'm one of the editors of this very magazine and upon answering a seemingly simple question for our Q&A section (see at the back of the magazine) I accidentally overshot my one-paragraph limit and wrote a whole article. Whoops. Anyway, the question I was answering was 'Is there a language with no grammar at all?' and here is my not-so-brief-and-full-article-length response.

The short answer is no.

Grammar is the system of rules that allows any language to be meaningful. Without it, communication would be random and people couldn't reliably (if at all) understand each other. It's just not possible. Imagine playing a game without a single rule, without a single word said before you start playing it. How successful do you think that would be?

I've seen a lot of misconceptions online about languages that don't have grammar. Thus, I've compiled a mini list of such languages to show (a) how quirky grammar can get in some languages and how no grammatical assumptions should be made just because we have a certain grammatical concept in English and (b) that all languages retain some level of grammar.

Pirahã

The Pirahã language is a language isolate spoken by the Pirahã people in the Amazonas, Brazil. Another regular in the niche of grammar-less languages for quite a few understandable reasons:

- **No recursion:** This means that it lacks embedded clauses, which some linguists consider to be a fundamental part of a human language. This means that sentences are generally shorter and simpler. Generally.
- **Lack of numbers:** The language does not have words for numbers, so instead of using exact numbers, they use relative terms like 'few' and 'many'. This is largely because their language and culture are based on what can be directly seen, heard and experienced, so abstract concepts like numbers are not relevant. Furthermore, being an indigenous group, they largely care about their short-term survival, so storing large quantities of belongings/food is not a familiar concept to them.
- **Limited colour terms:** Pirahã lacks specific colour words, only referring to colours as 'light' or 'dark' or 'like blood'

Yet, Pirahã still has grammar as there are still inherent, consistent rules governing how words combine including word order patterns, words indicating question, negation or emphasis, and pronouns and verbs.

Walpiri

Walpiri is an Australian Aboriginal language spoken in the Northern Territory. It does have grammar, but it's highly unusual compared to most languages and it is reported that speakers are not even able to repeat back a sentence with the same word order:

- Free word order: The subject, object and verb in a sentence can be rearranged without changing the meaning, so word order is largely determined by pragmatic factors (like topic and focus) rather than grammatical roles.
- Non-configurationality: This means that the traditional hierarchical sentence structure (e.g. noun phrase + verb phrase) found in English isn't a primary feature. Subjects and objects can be syntactically discontinuous and often omitted entirely (known as null anaphora).
- Limited verb roots and extensive derivational morphology: This is a lot of fancy words to describe the fact that Walpiri has a relatively small amount of verb roots (around 100, whilst English about 10,000) and a huge amount of preverbs and suffixes to build up a wider vocabulary.

Walpiri is often misunderstood to be a language without grammar, but the truth is that its grammar is just very different and challenges assumptions to what a language must have.

All this grammar... I'm just glad I know sign language. It's pretty handy.



Katya, 12C

Pidgin

A pidgin is a simple language made from other languages, used by people without a common tongue. Pidgins have no native speakers but can become full languages, known as creoles after time. What this means is that, whilst it still has grammar, it is usually much simpler than in 'full' languages. Pidgins are fascinating as they reveal how humans naturally create rules to make communication possible, even from scratch.

Some examples of Pidgin English in West Africa:

- How bodi? How you dey? (How are you doing today?)
- How far? (Hey, Hi)
- I no no (I don't know)
- Wahala (Problem/trouble)
- K-leg (Questionable)
- I wan chop (I want to eat)
- Butta my bread

(answered prayers)

PIDGIN

Language-related recommendations!

Since you've read this far in our magazine, we're sure you're eager to explore more about linguistics, language, and culture. While you wait for our next issue, here are a few of our top recommendations:

Books

Eats, Shoots and Leaves by Lynne Truss

An interesting take on the importance of punctuation, showing (through jokes, real examples, and witty commentary) how small marks like commas and apostrophes can completely change the meaning of sentences (e.g., "eats, shoots and leaves" vs "eats shoots and leaves") and why good punctuation matters.

The Mother Tongue by Bill Bryson

A lively, funny exploration of the history, quirks, and oddities of the English language, written in Bryson's signature conversational, humorous style.

The Unfolding of Language by Guy Deutscher

Explains how languages constantly change over time (through mistakes, shortcuts, creativity, and everyday speech) showing how complex grammar can evolve from simple, messy beginnings. A more technical one than the rest, but no less fascinating!

Babel: Around the World in Twenty Languages by Gaston Dorren

A fascinating tour through twenty of the world's most widely spoken languages. Its highly accessible chapters designed for curious non-linguists are an INCREDIBLE way to begin to explore linguistics with little prior knowledge.

Podcasts

The History of English (English)

Traces the development of the English language from its Indo-European roots to the present day, explaining how history, culture, and contact with other languages shaped the words we speak today.

Dear Teenage Me (Hindi)

Guests read heartfelt letters addressed to their younger selves, reflecting on growing up, identity, mistakes, and lessons learned within the cultural context of Indian adolescence.

Chinese Lore Podcast (English, about China)

Explores Chinese myths, folktales, and cultural history through engaging storytelling and scholarly insight.

Deutsch Warum Nicht (German)

Caters to levels A1 to B1 (great for GCSEs!) and follows the adventures of student Andreas and his invisible companion.

Eine Stunde History (German)

Explores different events, figures, and themes from world and German history, often showing how the past shapes the present.

Duolingo French/Spanish/German Podcast.

I KNOW IT'S DUOLINGO, but it's surprisingly good. They explore short stories/events with a 50-50 split of English and the relevant language and is actually quite interesting. SUPER recommended for GCSE student.

Espanol con Juan (Spanish)

A very interesting Spanish-learning podcast, particularly for A-level students. Juan speaks in SUCH an understandable way, without being too slow or too fast, and humourly explores aspects of Spanish culture and history.

Becoming Niguirí (Spanish)

He's a native Spanish speaker, she's English but speaks fluent Spanish and they're best friends sitting in a living room, creating a podcast in Spanish about relatable Spanish culture. Very natural speech, so great for A-level students.



Films, series and documentaries

The Lion Skin - Persian

This is one of the most famous newer Iranian TV series, fully in Farsi. It's about a father, who, 15 years ago, had been arrested for kidnapping. He's finally been released, and has a chance to see his daughter. However, after a trip to the North of Iran, she goes missing. Through this series, you can learn a surprising amount of information about the Iranian justice system!

Madrasapattinam - Tamil

A love story of the daughter of an English governor and a villager in Tamil Nadu and tells the difficulties they have to face to be with each other (ie language barriers, taste differences, different cultures).

Coco - In English, but explores Mexican culture

How could we not include this nostalgic and heartwarming animated movie into this list, exploring the world of Día de los Muertos in Mexico.

The Legend of the Blue Sea - Korean

A very famous, gripping and enterntainging K-drama, exploring both ancient and modern Korean Culture.

Das Leben der Anderen (The Lives of Others) - German

The current Y12s' A-level film, but a highly recommended one at that! It's about a Stasi agent who, while surveilling a couple in East Berlin, begins to sympathise with them and changes his views on the dictatorship.

Arrival - English

Louise Banks, a linguistics expert, along with her team, must interpret the language of aliens who have come to Earth in a mysterious spaceship. A more linguistic-y recommendation here!

Утомлённые солнцем (Burnt by the Sun) - Russian

The story follows a decorated Soviet Officer whose idyllic family summer is shattered when an old friend returns as an agent of Stalin's secret police, leading to tragic betrayal during the Great Purge. The film offers a gripping, human-level view of life under Stalin's totalitarian regime and has even won an Oscar for 'Best Foreign Language Film'.

Тіні Забутих Предків (The Shadows of Forgotten Ancestors) - Ukrainian

It tells the tragic and poetic story of Ivan and Marichka, whose love is doomed by a long-standing family feud amidst the mystical traditions and folklore of the Hutsul people, deeply revealing the richness of Ukrainian folklore.

LINGUISTIC PUZZLES

Molistic

Toki Pona

Toki Pona is a constructed language, created in 2011 by the Canadian linguist Sonja Elen Kisa. Her aim was the language to be a minimal language, undervaluing the empty and abstract communication such as the ones of politicians and bureaucrats and pointing more directly to the concrete human life experiences. Therefore, the language makes use of only 123 words, with roots coming from different language families.

What follows is a list of some words and expressions in Toki Pona and, out of order, their English translations:

kiwen suno jelo, tomo tawa telo, jan Powi, ilo suno, telo jelo, jan ilo, jan toki, supa lape, supa moku, ma tomo, wile moku, tawa, nasin linja, wile pona, telo kiwen, lipu toki, wile lawa, linja lawa, tomo moku, linja kiwen

prophet, well-intentioned, hair, lantern, ice, robot, boat, thorn, hungry, Boris, book, piss, city, bed, orthodoxy, movement, restaurant, dominant, dinner table, gold

1. Do the right associations between the words and translations.
2. Give the translation of all the simple Toki Pona words used in the compounded words and expressions of this problem.
3. How would you translate literally the name of the language?

Imagine that you have heard these sentences: Jane is molistic and slatty.

Jennifer is cluvious and brastic.

Molly and Kyle are slatty but danty.

The teacher is danty and cloovy.

Mary is blitty but cloovy.

Jeremiah is not only sloshful but also weasy.

Even though frumsy, Jim is sloshful.

Strungy and struffy, Diane was a pleasure to watch.

Easy though weasy, John is strungy.

Carla is blitty but struffy.

The salespeole were cluvious and not slatty.

1. Then which of the following would you be likely to hear?

_____ a. Meredith is blitty and brastic.

_____ b. The singer was not only molistic but also cluvious.

_____ c. May found a dog that was danty but sloshful.

2. What quality or qualities would you be looking for in a person?

_____ a. blitty

_____ b. weasy

_____ c. sloshful

_____ d. frumsy

Japanese Braille



Braille is a tactile writing system, based on a series of raised dots, that is widely used by the blind. It was invented in 1821 by Louis Braille to write French, but has since been adapted to many other languages. English, which uses the Roman alphabet just as French does, required very little adaptation, but languages that do not use the Roman alphabet, such as Japanese, Korean, or Chinese, are often organized in a very different manner!

To the right is a Japanese word written in the *tenji* ("dot characters") writing system. The large dots represent the raised bumps; the tiny dots represent empty positions.

karaoke

1. The following *tenji* words represent *atari*, *haiku*, *katana*, *kimono*, *koi*, and *sake*. Which is which? You don't need to know either Japanese or Braille to figure it out; you'll find that the system is highly logical.

a. _____

b. _____

c. _____

d. _____

e. _____

f. _____

2. What are the following words?

g. _____

h. _____

3. Write the following words in *tenji* characters:

45 samurai _____

j. miso _____

Aragonese

In the Iberian Peninsula, there are several languages, apart from Portuguese and Spanish (Castilian), that share the same romanic origin, such as Catalan, Galician, Mirandese, Asturian, Leonese and Aragonese. The list below brings a list of words in Aragonese, their plural forms and their translations to . Seguem algumas palavras em aragonês com suas traduções para o português e suas formas no plural:

valley	<i>bal</i>	<i>bals</i>
stool	<i>banquet</i>	<i>banquetz</i>
hole	<i>clot</i>	<i>clotz</i>
stone	<i>cantal</i>	<i>cantals</i>
awake	<i>concordau</i>	_____
chocolate	<i>chicolat</i>	_____
union	<i>chunta</i>	_____
unhanded	<i>deixau</i>	<i>deixaus</i>
eclipse	<i>eclix</i>	_____
cicada	<i>ferfet</i>	_____
character	<i>personache</i>	<i>personaches</i>
fish	<i>peix</i>	<i>peixes</i>

Write down the missing words.

Ancient Greek

Consider these phrases in Ancient Greek (in a Roman-based transcription) and their unordered English translations:

- (A) *ho tōn huiōn dulos* _____ (1) the donkey of the masterō
 (B) *hoi tōn dulōn cyrioi* _____ (2) the brothers of the merchant
 (C) *hoi tu emporu adelphoi* _____ (3) the merchants of the donkeys
 (D) *hoi tōn onōn emporoi* _____ (4) the sons of the masters
 (E) *ho tu cyriu onos* _____ (5) the slave of the sons
 (F) *ho tu oicu cyrioi* _____ (6) the masters of the slaves
 (G) *ho tōn adelphōn oicos* _____ (7) the house of the brothers
 (H) *hoi tōn cyriōn huioi* _____ (8) the master of the house

1. Match the Ancient Greek phrase (A-H) with the corresponding English translation (1-8).

2. Translate into Ancient Greek:

- a) the houses of the merchants

- b) the donkeys of the slave.

Note: the letter *ō* stands for a long *o*.

Kazakh

Several phrases have been translated into Kazakh (written in Roman script here), but the translations are given in random order. Some of the words are missing.

- | | | |
|------------------------|------------|-----------------|
| a. one and five | _____i. | _____ ben elüw |
| b. one and eight | _____ii. | bir men bes |
| c. three and two | _____iii. | bir _____ segiz |
| d. four and seven | _____iv. | elüw eki men on |
| e. seven and fifty | _____v. | _____ men elüw |
| f. eight and fifty | _____vi. | otiz ben _____ |
| g. thirteen and thirty | _____vii. | tört pen žeti |
| h. thirty and two | _____viii. | üş _____ eki |
| i. fifty-two and ten | _____ix. | on üš pen otiz |

1. Match each phrase with its correct translation and supply the missing words.

2. Translate into Kazakh:

- | | |
|--------------------------|-------|
| a. five and thirty-eight | _____ |
| b. ten and four | _____ |
| c. seven and fifty-three | _____ |
| d. thirty-eight and five | _____ |

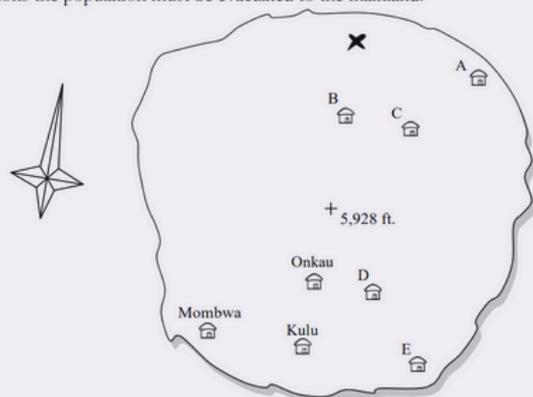
Note: *ı, ö, ü, ı* are specific Kazakh vowels. The letter *ž* has the sound of *s* in the word *usual*.

! Kazakh language belongs to the Central Turkic groups of languages. It is the official language and principle native language of the Republic of Kazakhstan. It is spoken by about 6,5 million people in Kazakhstan and about 1,5 million people southern Siberia, northwestern China and northwestern Mongolia.

Manam

Manam Pile ("Manam Talk") is a Malayo-Polynesian language spoken on Manam Island off the coast of Papua New Guinea. Manam is one of the most active volcanoes in the world, and during violent eruptions the population must be evacuated to the mainland.

N



Below, a Manam islander describes the relative locations of the houses above.

- Onkau pera kana auta ieno, Kulu pera kana ilau ieno.
- Mombwa pera kana ata ieno, Kulu pera kana awa ieno.
- Tola pera kana auta ieno, Sala pera kana ilau ieno.
- Sulung pera kana awa ieno, Tola pera kana ata ieno.
- Sala pera kana awa ieno, Mombwa pera kana ata ieno.
- Pita pera kana ilau ieno, Sulung pera kana auta ieno.
- Sala pera kana awa ilau ieno, Onkau pera kana ata auta ieno.
- Butokang pera kana awa auta ieno, Pita pera kana ata ilau ieno.

1. Onkau's, Mombwa's, and Kulu's houses have already been located on the map above. Who lives in the other five houses?

A: _____ B: _____ C: _____ D: _____ E: _____

2. Arongo is building his new house in the location marked with an X. In three Manam Pile sentences like the ones above, describe the location of Arongo's house in relation to the three closest houses.

Basque Numbers

Several multiplications have been written out in Basque. There are gaps in the last two lines.

- bi × bi = lau
 bi × bost = hamar
 bi × hamar = hoge
 hiru × bost = hamabost
 hiru × hamar = hogeita hamar
 bost × bost = hogeita bost
 bost × zazpi = hogeita hama
 bost zazpi × bederatzi = hirurogeita hiru
 zazpi × hamar = hirurogeita hamar
 lau × bost = _____
 _____ × hamar = laurogeita hamar

1. Fill in the gaps.

2. Write in figures:

- a) laurogeita hamahiru = _____
 b) hirurogei = _____

3. Write out in Basque:

- c) 39 = _____
 d) 77 = _____
 e) 80 = _____

Note: The letter *s* has the sound of English *sh*, *z* of *s*, *tz* of *ts* in cats. The letter *h* is mute.

! Basque is spoken by 500,000 to 600,000 people in France and Spain and by about 170,000 people in South America. It has not been proven to be related to any other language.

Question 2 - Japaneasy (10 marks)

Japanese is written using a variety of scripts including Chinese characters. But for the purposes of learning to read, and in the case of unusual words, it is quite common to use a phonetic system, *hiragana*. Shown below on the left are eight examples of simple Japanese words, with their pronunciation in a random order on the right. English meanings are also given but for information only – they play no part in solving this problem.

2.1. (4 marks) Use the table in the answer sheet to show how the words on the left correspond to the pronunciations on the right.

1. <u>あか</u>	A. <u>kita</u> 'north'
2. <u>さと</u>	B. <u>kao</u> 'face'
3. <u>でんき</u>	C. <u>denki</u> 'electricity'
4. <u>あさ</u>	D. <u>tsudo</u> 'every time'
5. <u>かつどん</u>	E. <u>asa</u> 'morning'
6. <u>かお</u>	F. <u>katsudon</u> 'pork and rice'
7. <u>きた</u>	G. <u>aka</u> 'red'
8. <u>つど</u>	H. <u>sato</u> 'village'

2.2. (3 marks) How would you pronounce the following Japanese words?

- (a) おでき 'eruption'
 (b) だん 'group'

2.3. (3 marks) How would you write the following words in *hiragana*?

- (a) satsu 'banknote'
 (b) kanten 'point of view'

Huli

The Huli language is a Trans-New Guinea language spoken in Papua New Guinea. Whereas our 'arabic' numbers assume 10 as their base, Huli's numerical system uses a different base from any other known language. The table shows, in random order, how Huli expresses the perfect squares (i.e. the squares of whole numbers: $1^2 = 1$, $2^2 = 4$, and so on) from 1-100.

A	ngui ki, ngui tebone-gonaga waragaria
B	mbira
C	ngui dau, ngui waragane-gonaga waragaria
D	ngaira-ni pira
E	ngaira-ni mbira
F	dira
G	maria
H	ngui tebo, ngui mane-gonaga maria
I	ngui ma, ngui dauni-gonaga maria
J	ngui waraga, ngui kane-gonaga pira

Q.3.1 Assign each of these Huli numbers its arabic equivalent in the answer sheet.

The next table shows four consecutive numbers written in increasing order; so $b = a + 1$, $c = b + 1$, and $d = c + 1$.

a	ngui ka, ngui haline-gonaga bearia
b	ngui ka, ngui haline-gonaga hombearia
c	ngui ka, ngui haline-gonaga haleria
d	ngui ka, ngui haline-gonaga deria

Q.3.2 Assign the first of these Huli numbers (i.e. #a) its arabic equivalent in the answer sheet.

1. Hungarians in a field (20 marks)

The Hungarian language is spoken by about 14 million people in Central Europe, either in Hungary or in one of the neighbouring countries.

The picture below represents a field divided into 49 squares (7 x 7), aligned with north at the top and east on the right. In some of the squares there are rocks, indicated by a black circle ●. There are four Hungarians – A, B, C and D – standing in the field, each in a different square not containing a rock, and each facing in one of the four cardinal directions (north, south, east, west). Each person makes some statements describing the positions of the rocks. For instance, A's first statement means "To the east (behind me) there is one stone." References to directions are to be understood as describing a single line in the field: "due east", "directly behind me", and so on. No directions describe a more complex spatial relationship.

		A	●			
		←				
		●	●	●		
●			●			●
		●		●		
			●			

Note: The Hungarian directions in this problem work much like English directions do, so it is safe to begin by basing your assumptions on what you know about English.

- A says: Keletere (mögöttem) egy kő van.
 Délre két kő van.
 Jobbra nincs kő.
 B says: Délre (balra) nincs kő.
 Északra egy kő van.
 Mögöttem két kő van.
 C says: Északra (előttem) nincs kő.
 Nyugatra egy kő van.
 Jobbra két kő van.
 D says: Nyugatra (jobbra) két kő van.
 Északra egy kő van.
 Balra nincs kő.

Q9. Complete the picture by showing which square is occupied by each of B, C and D and draw an arrow (like the one under A) to show the direction they are facing.

		A	●			
		←				
		●	●	●		
●			●			●
		●		●		
			●			

Sorry we have no red cucumbers (5 marks)

If you buy red onions and peppers, what colour are your purchases? The onions are red, but what about the peppers? Now consider the following French phrases and their translations:

oignons rouges	red onions
poivrons rouges	red peppers
oignons et poivrons	onions and peppers

N.B. You don't have to know French to answer this question, and even if you do know French, it won't be much of an advantage to you!

1.1 (2 marks)

Translate each of the following phrases into French maintaining the meanings indicated in the second column. (The French for 'cucumbers' is *concombres*.)

a. red peppers and cucumbers	[the cucumbers are definitely not red]
b. red peppers and onions	[the peppers may or may not be red]

1.2 (2 marks)

A dish is described as "Scottish beef and mushrooms". Can you determine if these statements are true:

- a. The beef is unambiguously Scottish.
 b. the mushrooms are unambiguously Scottish.

1.3 (1 mark)

Translate the dish described in 1.2 into French, preserving any ambiguities and certainties present in the English? (Here are the French words you need: beef = *boeuf*, mushrooms = *champignons*, Scottish = *écossais*.)

Our Q&A section!

Firstly, we would like to thank you all for your submissions and your interest, as well as for giving us some food for thought! As promised, you asked, and we delivered- we've attempted to answer some of your questions, though apologies if yours hasn't been answered (stay tuned for the next issue!), and we hope you find the answers as fascinating as we did!

Why does the English language have silent letters? What is the reason: you do not pronounce it anyway?

A range of reasons! It mostly has to do with their origins in different languages, such as French, Latin and Germanic/Flemish languages (for these, most notable is the introduction of a silent 'w'), but sometimes letters that were not silent in medieval English are now so, for ease - k-nee is harder to say than 'nee', but would have had the separation of the 'k-n' sound in the middle ages. However, there have also been some pretentious scholars over the years who have changed spellings deliberately during their standardisation, usually to reflect the roots of the word- for example, 'fault' was 'faut' for a really long time (from the Latin, then the French 'faute') until someone added the 'l' to reflect its origins in the Latin 'fallere'. The same happened with 'receipt' and 'debt'. While they're certainly annoying, they have deep historical and cultural roots.

Why do some words in English have a different pronunciation to their spelling? For example, you spell 'cliche' like cliche; however, you pronounce the 'ch' as a 'sh'!

It was largely a gradual shift in pronunciation over time, and also resulted from the mixing of dialects in England, as well as the introduction and influence of words borrowed from other languages from all the invasions over time! However, this also actually relates to a very interesting piece of social history called the 'Great Vowel Shift' that took place in the Middle Ages. In essence, through this, vowels ended up becoming pronounced higher in the mouth. This was due to the changing fashions of pronunciation, in particular as attitudes towards the French changed from becoming closely linked to the monarchy to being a common sworn enemy of the British people, and clashes of dialects due to rural-urban migration in search of jobs following incidents of the Black Death. Also, the development of the printing press meant a change in pronunciation as literacy increased. This means that people changed the way they spoke their language to fit with their perceptions of the written word, but also caused the standardisation of a specific snapshot in time of the pronunciation of words, in the very period that pronunciation underwent radical change. This standardisation has changed little even up to today- there is less difference between our and Stuart spellings, for example, than the Stuarts' and Chaucer's. Yet, accents have evolved, which has created a rift between pronunciation and spelling over time. It has also created differences in the pronunciation of words with the same vowel configurations (largely caused by the differing origins of these words), as languages and dialects are constantly evolving to match trends, spellings, and accents.

Which came first- sign language or verbal communication?

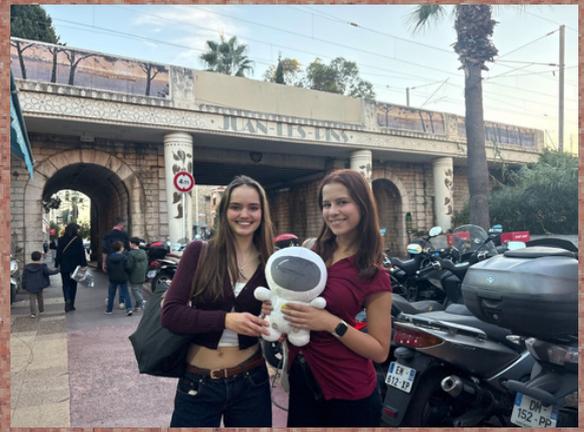
They've been around probably just as long as each other- if not sign language first! In the same way some languages are known to be very physically expressed with body language as well, sign language likely accompanied early forms of verbal communication that we may not even consider languages, like guttural sounds and the tonal inflections of early humans. This reliance on body language means that sign language may have evolved even earlier than speech- this is evidenced by taking into account the skeleton structures of early hominids with smaller brains and throat sizes. Whilst brains developed, throat sizes caught up less quickly, yet there was a need for greater communication. So, in the same way there are military forms of sign language today, there was likely to be a form of sign language, or at least a high reliance on signs, in the prehistoric hunter-gatherer periods, in order to communicate without disturbing an animal.

What is the maximum number of languages that the average human brain is capable of learning in an average lifespan?

The Guinness Book of Records cites a man named Ziad Fazah as being able to speak 58 languages. However, this likely depends on how his fluency was actually determined, as it is a very subjective opinion. There are records of some cardinals speaking around 30, and many more dialects. Many polyglots have varying levels of fluency in the different languages they speak, however, and it is difficult to actually keep these in a usable, working condition.

There is no fixed upper limit- try and learn however many you can!

Lingo's Travels



You may have seen Lingo, our linguistically-inclined intergalactic mascot, all around school. But did you know she's even been to France?

During the October half-term, Lingo took Katya and Annie (and definitely not the other way round) to the south of France, the Côte d'Azur, for an immersion camp. Lingo got to explore the charming town of Juan-les-Pins as well as Antibes, Cannes and Nice, all in one half-term trip (whilst also fitting in hours of french classes a day!). This just goes to show how learning languages opens the door to so many opportunities and experiences, so cherish the opportunity you have to learn them!

Thank you so much for reading this issue of The Linguanaut — we've had just as much fun making it as we hope you've had reading it. A HUGE thank you to everyone who submitted an article or artwork; they've all been wonderfully insightful. Until next time!

The Linguanaut Team (Emma, Annie, Katya, Sofia)

