

Dear Mr Cucerzan,

My name is Josh Hayes. I am a Year 9 student in Mr Thompson's English class. I am writing to you about the text "Miscomunicado" that you wrote. Earlier this year, my English teacher, Mr Thompson, gave us all an excerpt of this text to read for an assignment, and I found it really interesting. I also really liked your writing style. I felt that I deeply agreed with the things you wrote about, and in this email, I am going to share my opinion on some of the parts that I liked most.

Starting off, when you wrote about how sometimes "words don't queue up on your tongue fast enough" and you then make a mistake and have to come up with an explanation, I thought about how I experience something similar very often. In fact, writing this letter now, I know exactly what I want to say, but I just keep pressing the backspace key because I can't quite get it right. I think that speaking is like a piece of dough that I'm trying to mould into the right shape, but it keeps breaking into pieces, and then I have to put them back together and try again. That's what I thought of when I read what you wrote — the dough is like what you're trying to say, and when you stumble and say the wrong words, it's like the dough is breaking into pieces, and then you have to put them back together by trying to form an explanation.

As someone who is trying (and failing) to learn Russian, this is something that I experience whenever I speak the language. (Side note: do you have any tips on how to pick up a language a bit faster? People recommend Duolingo, but it is not that great, especially now that AI has basically overrun it — but that's another subject.)

In the section of the text titled "Honeymoon Period", you talk about how learning multiple languages is like having different pairs of glasses to see the world through, and how wearing two at the same time is difficult but an inevitable part of life. Again, when I read this, my brain instantly linked back to learning Russian. As a speaker of English, my first language, and for most of my life until recently the only language I have ever known, I found the transition to a whole different language really difficult.

How does this relate to what you said? Well, if I were to think of both English and Russian as pairs of glasses, I feel like to really understand what people are saying to me in Russian, I can't just have my pair of "Russian glasses" on by themselves. Instead, I need to have both the English and Russian glasses on to get a true understanding of what I'm being told. I have to be translating from Russian to English mid-conversation in my head, and that, I feel, is the uncomfortable part. Have you ever felt like that with the many languages I've been told you speak? When you learn other languages, is there ever a stage where you need to translate between languages in your head mid-conversation?

Another way that I interpreted the glasses analogy was that when you speak a different language, you see the world from a different perspective. I mean this both figuratively and literally, since the grammatical systems of different languages actually do have quite an

impact on how you speak about life. Through languages, or as you say, the different pairs of glasses, you also get exposed to a tsunami of different cultures, traditions, and ways of life. In short, I think the glasses analogy is just the tip of the iceberg when it comes to languages giving you different ways to see the world.

Before I finish this email, I'd like to ask, what is your opinion on AI? So many people now use it to just write everything for them, which can be quite gutting to see for someone like yourself, who is such a good writer. Personally, I think that it is a good tool but very powerful and possibly dangerous if used for the wrong things — as many say, with great power comes great responsibility.

Wishing you a great rest of the year and a Merry Christmas!

Sincerely,
Josh Hayes

(Student of Mr Thompson's Year 9 English Class)