

Amy Tan's essay "Mother Tongue" talks about how language and identity are connected, especially for someone like her who grew up in a Chinese American family. She explains how she uses different types of English in her life. For example, she uses formal English when giving speeches or writing, but a simpler English when talking with her mother.

Tan shares stories about how people often judged her mother because of her "broken" English, thinking she wasn't smart. This made Tan feel embarrassed about her mother's English when she was younger. She even had to pretend to be her mother on the phone to get better service.

Over time, Tan realized that her mother's English, though different, was still powerful and full of meaning. She began to appreciate how this English shaped her own way of seeing the world and writing. Tan eventually decided to embrace all the types of English she grew up with, using them in her stories to connect with readers and share her cultural background. The essay shows how important language is in how people see us and how we see ourselves.