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### Benefits of Learning a Second Language

In the article “Why Learn A Second Language” by Tamim Ansary, learning a second language is essential. Maybe you might learn how to order food in another language, but according to Ansary that should not be the ulterior motive. Throughout the article, Ansary stresses that learning a new language will help you learn a new perspective. Whether it is finding the word for a sensation you have all the time but can’t quite express it or breaking stereotypes you’ve had in your head, learning another language can help with that.

I agree that learning a second language can open your eyes to an entirely new perspective of life. Learning a new language can help you learn little quirks and more about one’s culture. In the first part of the article, “What’s in a word,” Ansary describes how each language has special words that describe a certain feeling. When Ansary was in Colorado with his Afghan cousins, he could not understand what his cousin meant when he said, “I’m feeling qukh” which described a certain feeling of itchiness after pulling away damp clothing from his skin. I’m sure there are words in my native language that describe a certain feeling, sensation, or mood. I also found that the Finnish word “Juoksentelisinkohan” which means “I wonder if I should run about aimlessly?” was oddly specific. But now that I know it, I’m looking for the right time to say it.

Ansary argues that learning a second language could be used to break the stereotypes you had in your head for a long time. He says: “In real life, Turks include men, women, and children, but in the network of English-language associations, Turk is fundamentally male—a brawny,

scimitar wielding male” (Ansary). When you learn a new language, you also learn about the culture of the people who use that language. And when you learn about their culture, you learn certain things about them that you never knew they practiced (as an example). In doing so you could learn to respect people of all kinds of cultures, ethnicities, and races.

The last point Ansary makes is that translation is simply not enough. We can use google translate, but we won’t ever understand the true meaning of a word unless we learn the context it is used in and more about the language it comes from. Sometimes the word you are looking for may not even exist in that language. I agree with Ansary that word for word translation takes a text out of context. At the same time, however, I think that for some purposes digging deeper it is not necessary. When you want to say you are full, or ask for a check, it is not necessary to go deep into what the word means.

From my perspective, learning a second language allows us to form relationships with people that we can benefit from and improve our lives. By learning a new language, you can realize how large the world is. It is important to note that English is not the only language we need to know. Other languages have existed centuries longer than English. I also believe that learning a new language can make you a better learner and sharper in academics. If you want to study abroad, knowing a second language is a great skill.