Identities at Odds: The Incongruity Between Language and Gender Diversity

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Description

Language is one of the most crucial aspects of what makes humans human. As a social species, we are innately destined to seek, form, and participate in community, something only made possible with the incredible wealth of expression language provides us. Yet, due to historical and etymological variances, the conveyance of certain ideas can be greatly facilitated or impeded depending on the language in which said idea is being communicated. One contemporary example of this challenge is the ever-expanding vocabulary for LGBTQ+ concepts. Namely, when it comes to gender diversity, the ease with which certain identities can be vocalized varies greatly by language. For example, in English, non-binary individuals can use "they/them": common and accepted genderless pronouns. In French, however, the categorization of all objects, human or inanimate, into male (*il*) or female (*elle*) makes non-binary identities far more difficult to express, with potential implications in harming one's own self-perception.

This was the impetus for creating my microfilm: to show first-hand with the languages themselves how expanding the tongues we speak can also expand our capability for self-expression and actualization. I created this as part of my broader investigation on the sociolinguistic benefits of multilingualism to the LGBTQ+ community, and attest that the short-form nature of this content helps distill a relatively complex topic into a meaningful takeaway for the viewer. Furthermore, by promoting language learning within queer spaces, we are able to foster a more global interconnectedness: one that goes beyond national or linguistic identity, and focuses on the intense human instinct to seek, form, and participate in community.

References

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