

English, 中文, Español: A Mix of Languages in Me

Shiyang C. Li 李师杨

I learn English for school and everyday life in the U.S.
From talking with others to learning new things,
everything slips out as English, English, English.
Everything is thrown at me as English, English, English.
When I communicate with my friends,
the words just spill out of my mouth.
Without English, I would have no friends in the U.S.,
learning would be very complicated,
and I would be practically fainting in the school hallways!
English may not seem important,
but it is the core to learning new things.
The words, descriptions, and even slang
are fascinating to learn and speak.
English words put a smile on my face and brighten it up.

我学中文是因为我的家人和亲戚都讲中文。
我很喜欢中文的发音，因为她的四声变化，
每一个音都有她的声韵之美。

我喜爱汉字，因为其中有无数隐藏的秘密，
吸引我一一探索。

我最喜欢的方言是东北话，因为我的家人和亲戚们都是东北人，
说起来“老好玩儿了！”

我喜欢中文，不光是因为她有一个一个独特的汉字，
还因为里面藏着中华文化的血脉与精神。

掌握这样一种特殊的语言让我无比骄傲与自豪。

在我的眼中，中国文化很特别，很有趣，我会不断地学习，
并且希望通过我的一言一行影响更多人。

Aprendí el español
porque creo que hablar otra lengua es muy interesante.
También, me gusta aprender sobre la cultura
porque es muy emocionante.
Cuando estoy hablando el español,
es muy diferente
y siento que estoy en otro mundo.
Soy única y orgullosa
porque en los Estados Unidos,
no hay muchos jóvenes que hablen el español muy bien.

Author's Note

The purpose of this poem is to tell people why I chose to learn these languages: English, Chinese, and Spanish. Languages are important to me because I unite different cultures and traditions all together when I am learning them. They are pronounced and written in various ways, each carrying unique traits and meanings within.

When I write in English, I just write in English about whatever comes to mind. When I write in Chinese, I think about the content mostly in Chinese. I borrow a little bit of English when my mind doesn't immediately think of a Chinese word. I also memorize many nice phrases, and when I write, I borrow some as my "guiding points" which serve as keywords and support the main topics. I then go back and revolve around the points to create a more detailed writing. When I write in Spanish, I first think about the content in English, and then translate it by myself into Spanish.

This Trilingual Poem is for the audience who are passionate and are interested in languages and cultures. I wrote this to communicate with others that speak these different languages, also as a celebration and recognition of the languages' importances. I am communicating and building connections with others across cultures, contexts, and disciplines through this poem. It is important to preserve this piece because it expresses how a multilingual child thinks and feels about each language.