Saumik Alam

English Freshman Composition

September 1, 2022

Nidhi Ghandi

­­­­­­­ Prompt: What parts of Tan’s essay resonate with you most? Why?

The personal narrative *Mother Tongue,* written by Amy Tan, discusses the English language to be “broken” and “fractured”, when spoken by a foreigner. The foreigner in most circumstances is deemed to be not seen as the standard White American. Tan’s essay chews over an internal conflict of the multiple types of English that were spoken over her life. The English that she had learned through the courses of academia and the English, that’s crooked and foul to the taste when seen in the presence of others without any familiarity.

 *Mother Tongue* brings out so many bells within my memory, it resonates a lot of truth if you’re a child born from foreign descent, a child who’ve immigrated from home to foreign soil in other case Mati, a word for soil from the language Bangla. Tan unravels a frustration that I take to home, the difficulty of not being taken seriously because of one’s innate ability to speak a language differently from what society expects.

 Tan demonstrates there is no correct type of English. Throughout the essay, Tan explains through many of her personal experiences recounting the multiple English’s she had used. One core demonstration is the difference of speaking the same language between herself and her mother. One might say Amy Tan’s ability to articulate English is the correct way to speak. However, her mother’s ability to articulate might never be seen to be clear but in most cases of speaking, “broken” it’s clearer to someone who would really put the effort into understanding Amy’s mothers’ words. In result respecting the language barrier between, “proper” and “fractured.”

Furthermore, the discussion between the stockbroker and Tan’s mother and the difference of exchange between the stockbroker and Amy Tan. The discussion follows with Amy’s mother speaking in the informal home English with the stockbroker before her daughter Amy gets involved with the stockbroker who refuses to understand the informal English and discriminates her mother by simply not complying to the questions that were brokenly spoken to the broker by Amy’s mother. On the other hand, when the English is spoken in a business formative manner, when Amy Tan hops onto the scene for her mother who’s avidly frustrated, the tone is extremely strict. The English language demonstrated changes from informality to formality, where Tan is shown demanding answers to lost money, seeking answers from the broker. Within this scene, there is a switch up of understanding between the broker and the two individuals the broker has spoken to. The broker was more compliant towards Amy with an English that wasn’t pictured to be derogatory while, Amy’s mothers exchange was shown to be extremely distasteful as if someone added way too much salt into a cooked meal.

*Mother Tongue* by Amy Tan illustrates a switch up of spoken English of proper and improper. The piece allows its readers to understand that its normal to use the many types of English because there’s nothing to be embarrassed for. The intertwines with one’s roots meanings that we can’t forget our origins neither should the speakers feel ashamed by the way they speak and use the English language.