NEWS LESSON

Do You Change When You Change Language?



BEFORE YOU READ

1 Warm up

Talk about these questions with a partner.

1. Do you speak a second language? Do you feel different when you use it?
2. Which language do you use when you are angry, happy or tired?
3. What would you do if you found out a friend had lied on a CV?

2 Key words

These words are in the article. Write the letter of the meaning (A to H) in each box.

1	**translation**	☐	A	strong feelings, like joy, fear or anger
2	**honesty**	☐	B	decide something so there are no more questions
3	**values**	☐	C	ideas about what is right and important
4	**emotions**	☐	D	something that happens again in the same way
5	**comforting**	☐	E	always telling the truth
6	**limits**	☐	F	points where something stops
7	**settle**	☐	G	making you feel calmer and less worried
8	**pattern**	☐	H	changing words from one language into another

3 Read

Read the article and underline the key words from task 2. The paragraphs are numbered.

Some people feel like a different person in a second language. A new study asked whether their sense of right and wrong changes too.

1 Do you feel like a different person when you speak a second language? Many people say yes. Some feel funnier in one language, or braver, or more careful. Some feel that a part of them gets lost in translation. A natural question follows: does your sense of right and wrong change too?

2 A team of researchers set out to find out. In a study published in 2026, they worked with 106 people from Greece. All of them had Greek as their first language, and their English was upper-intermediate or advanced. Half did the whole study in Greek. The other half did all of it in English.

3 Everyone read four short moral problems. Two were about hurting one person to save others. Two were about honesty: whether to lie on a CV to get a better chance of a job, and whether to reveal a partner's infidelity. People said what they would do and how strongly they felt. They also answered questions about how important being a moral person was to them.

4 The results were not what some people expect. The language did not change what people decided. The Greek group and the English group made the same kinds of choices. There was one small difference in how people saw themselves. Those who used Greek said that being a moral person was more important to them than those who used English did. But the two groups did not differ in how far they said they would act on their beliefs. Some also reported stronger feelings in English, but those feelings did not change their choices.

5 The clearest pattern came from personal values. People who said that morality was central to who they are felt stronger emotions, and they were more likely to say no to lying or harming someone. This was especially true for the everyday honesty problems. Many people may stick to their guns, whichever language they use.

6 There are limits. Only 106 people took part, and all of them spoke Greek and English. The problems were imaginary, so we cannot be sure that people would act the same way in real life. Earlier studies gave mixed results too, so one study does not settle it.

7 Still, it gives a comforting answer. Your first language may feel like second nature, and your second may feel strange, but the core of who you are may travel with you.

Sources: Phys.org (from The Conversation), Speaking in a second language may shift your moral compass but it can't overpower it; Bilingualism: Language and Cognition, Moral identity and language jointly influence how bilinguals feel and decide. Picture: AI illustration.

4 True, false or not given

Circle **T** (true), **F** (false) or **NG** (the article does not say).

1. The study had 106 people in it. T F NG
2. Every person did the study in both languages. T F NG
3. The language people used changed their decisions. T F NG
4. The text says how old the people in the study were. T F NG
5. Earlier studies on this question gave mixed results. T F NG

5 Vocabulary

Complete the sentences with words from the box. Two words are not needed.

central	differ	forgive	imaginary	private	researchers	reveal

1. The two groups did not _____ in how far they said they would act on their beliefs.
2. For some people, being moral is _____ to who they are.
3. A true friend would never _____ a secret you asked them to keep.
4. The problems were _____ , so we cannot be sure that people would act the same in real life.
5. A team of _____ asked 106 people to answer four moral problems.

6 Verb forms

Write the correct form of the verb in brackets.

1. A team of researchers _____ out to find out. (SET)
2. They _____ with 106 people from Greece. (WORK)
3. People _____ what they would do. (SAY)
4. Only 106 people _____ part in the study. (TAKE)
5. The language _____ not change what people decided. (DO)

7 Language focus: prepositions

Complete the sentences with words from the box. Two words are not needed. A preposition is a small word before a noun. Learn it together with the word before it, for example depend on.

at	by	from	in	of	on	with

1. The study was published _____ 2026.
2. The results depend _____ the person who answers.
3. Honesty is one example _____ a value that many people share.
4. Many people agree _____ the researchers that language matters.
5. Some people are good _____ telling jokes in a second language.

SPEAK

8 Talk about it

Discuss in pairs or small groups. Give reasons for your answers.

1. Did the language change what people decided in the study?
2. Why do you think people felt stronger emotions in English?
3. Do you think you would give the same answers in your first language and in a second language? Why?

9 Role-play: which language for a difficult talk?

Work in pairs. Read your card, then have the conversation. Swap roles and do it again.

Student A · the team leader

Your company works in English. A colleague made a mistake with some figures and you need to talk about it. You want to speak English so the whole team can follow. Ask why your colleague disagrees, then look for a deal.

Student B · the colleague

You made the mistake and you want to be honest about it. You'd rather explain it in your first language, because you feel more like yourself. Say why, and suggest another way to do it.

Useful phrases

I'd feel more comfortable in my own language.

I don't feel like myself when I speak English.

That's fair, but the others won't understand.

What if we asked someone to translate?

Could we start in English and switch if you need to?

We're both trying to be honest, so let's find a way.

Afterwards, tell the class: which language did you choose, and did you reach a deal?

ANSWER KEY

2 Key words

1 H · 2 E · 3 C · 4 A · 5 G · 6 F · 7 B · 8 D

4 True, false or not given

1 T · 2 F · 3 F · 4 NG · 5 T

5 Vocabulary

1 differ · 2 central · 3 reveal · 4 imaginary · 5 researchers

6 Verb forms

1 set · 2 worked · 3 said · 4 took · 5 did

7 Language focus

1 in · 2 on · 3 of · 4 with · 5 at

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