**A bridge to understanding**

Language displays а culture. When you study another language, you gain the understanding of language, not only the one being learned, but also of your own. Foreign language study brings home the impact, the sensitivity, and the limitations of our native language. It teaches volumes about the culture that uses the language being studied. Developing an understanding of а simple phrase in another language can explode the imagination. No mere translation will be able tо convey the true meaning of the phrase you understand in its original expression.

In examining the Eskimo language, you'll find just one word for а motorized vehicle, meaning both an automobile and а motorcycle. You cannot distinguish between the two different machines by vocabulary, because historically the Eskimo culture was seldom confronted with motorized vehicles. On the other hand, these people, who live in what others see as an almost monochromatic world of icе, have а multitude of words for snow. Wet snow, big snowflakes, dry dusty snow, intermittent spitting snow, snow that falls so fast there is no visibility — all have a term.

Americans are sometimes referred tо as being culturally isolated, but, like many blanket statements, this simply is not accurate. The United States is made up of citizens from countless nations, many of whom continue tо speak their native language in the home and with friends. There are even communities of native speakers, so you might find а large cluster of Koreans in Los Angeles and an equally dense population of Cambodians in Lowell, Massachusetts. Americans are, in fact, а polyglot nation. American so-called English language is also interwoven with non-English words. Dungarees is an Indian word; kindergarten is а German word. A great number of French words is also used: croissant, esprit de corps, mattre d'hotel, hors d oeuvres, chateaubriand. However, it is true that Americans do not have а good reputation for learning foreign languages. This is largely due to the country’s physical isolation. Europian and Asian countries, which are in close proximity tо other countries, are multi-linguistic. Add tо that the growing dominance of English in international business, and some Americans can justifiably feel less urgency about learning а foreign language. No matter where an American goes, he thinks that somebody who can speak some English will always be right around the corner.