

Unit I Case

"Cochlear implants" will allow some children born deaf to learn to speak, *if* they are immersed in oral language. This will mean that some or even many of deaf children will no longer grow up as native speakers of ASL (American Sign Language). So ASL may die out; it will become a "dead language" like Latin, which no one speaks as a native.

If language influences thought, then it is likely that native speakers of ASL think differently than native speakers of English. So if ASL died, an entire, unique way of thinking would die with it. If, on the other hand, language does not influence thought, then nothing really unique will be lost when ASL dies.

Exam 1 Case Essay Question: What, if anything, will be lost if ASL dies out due to cochlear implants? Exactly how, if at all, does ASL likely influence the thinking of ASL speakers?

Note: See the Exam FAQ for exact grading standards

Is translation possible?—Individual homework and group exercise

Due: In class, Thursday, 26 January

1. Homework

Start by selecting *three* English words. Using an interlanguage dictionary, find the most common translation of each.

Next, investigate the English word. Look up its full meaning in a (big) dictionary, look up synonyms in a thesaurus, and collect some common phrases that use it.

Do the same for the non-English word. Look up all its meanings, synonyms, uses. You won't be able to do this with an online dictionary—they don't have enough information. It's going to require a trip to the Reference collection of the library. Ask a librarian for help if you need it.

Finally, compare the ranges of meaning for the English and non-English words. Answer these questions: What meanings do they have in common? What meanings are different? ("What?" Question.) How might those differences make a difference ("So What?" Question.)

Record your evidence (the meanings of the words) and your conclusions (your answers to the above questions) for all three English words, and hand it in in class.

2. Group project

After doing your homework, meet as a group. Share results. Select the *two* best—the two that show the most interesting similarities and differences. Make a poster that effectively communicates the similarities and differences, and be ready to explain your poster to other people in the class.