

What would happen if there was only one language in this world? According to Mizuno Yoshiaki a professor of Meiji university, in the future all the languages will unify into one. This was said in 1971, but currently English is considered as the universal language. I am studying hard for my future because it would be much easier to communicate with each other if we all shared the same language. Will there be less misunderstanding? Will there be less conflict?

Last summer I had an opportunity to speak in English but I failed. I participated in a program by the City Board of Education. I thought I was prepared. However, when we went to the History Museum, I couldn't explain much. I had the knowledge but I didn't have the confidence. I thought if it were not for the language barrier, I'm sure I could have spoken more with more confidence. However, was that only because of the language barrier? I regretted not being proactive.

Actually, there is more to this story. This year in the early summer, the opportunity to speak English came up again. An acquaintance of my mother came to visit from the United States and I was a little nervous. I decided to talk even if I failed but I actually understood what she was saying. I noticed that she was listening carefully to me so I just said what I wanted to say. This time I was able to connect even though my English was not perfect. I noticed myself not feeling the barrier. We were joking and having fun. I was happy that I wasn't overly worried about my English skills anymore.

Through this experience I noticed something more important. As I said before, I am studying English hard and I believe it is very important. But... we have to remember English is just a tool to communicate with others. Without smiles, can we really make friends? Without love, can we make people happy? Without feelings, can we really connect to each other? We are humans not because we speak languages but we exchange feelings through languages.

In conclusion I want to say, what is important is NOT the unification of languages but the connection between hearts. We CAN and SHOULD understand each other by feelings. If the whole world could share these feelings, I think many of the world's conflicts would come to a stop.

I will keep studying English. I want to be a bridge between people, between countries, and between hearts. I want to help build a peaceful world through overcoming the barriers set by languages with feelings.

吉松 春絢

鹿児島市立谷山中学校

The Universal Language