

# On speaking a particular language in the presence of non-speakers

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Having grown up in a household where I didn't speak most of the languages my parents and their friends use, I'm quite accustomed to being surrounded by conversations in a language I have no chance of understanding. If people are more comfortable speaking in a particular language, I say let them.

Some people object to this on the grounds that "They might be talking about me." Guess what: They almost certainly aren't. It may hurt your ego to learn this, but it's the truth: You're really not that fascinating to other people. It turns out that over 99.99% of all conversations in the world do not involve you to any degree whatsoever. People speak other languages; get over it.

While we were stopped waiting for bicycle repair assistance on the way to the Company Picnic, my friend called to inform a new acquaintance who was going to meet us at the picnic that we were delayed. Since they both speak French natively and I wasn't involved in the conversation, they naturally used French.

Later, at the picnic, my friend's girlfriend remarked in Japanese what a hot day it was. (She's not Japanese herself but has been studying it for a while.) I dug deep into my brain to pull out what little Japanese remains there and managed to produce a few words of enthusiastic agreement. At which point my friend interjected, "No speaking languages I don't understand!"

I wasn't quite sure what to make of that remark, especially since he was speaking French in the presence of non-French speakers just a while ago.

(By the way, a few butt pictures are now up. That's my butt in the first picture and my friend's butt in the second.)

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