

Wordworth's Newsletters

Words of Wisdom from The Words Workshop



Wordsworth says ... Some foreign words just don't translate into English

There are more than a quarter of a million words in the English language. However, to think that the English language alone can express everything there is to be said would be very wrong indeed.

Here are a few examples of instances where other languages have found the right word and English simply falls speechless.

1. Mamihlapinatapei - *Yagan* (indigenous language of Tierra del Fuego)

This word is said to describe the wordless, yet meaningful look shared by two people who both desire to initiate something but are both reluctant to start.

2. Jayus - *Indonesian*

A joke so poorly told and so unfunny that one cannot help but laugh.

3. Tartle - *Scottish*

The act of hesitating while introducing someone because you've forgotten their name. Although we're sure we'd all prefer that sort of embarrassing moment to remain nameless and preferably unnoticed!

4. Prozvonit - *Czech*

This word means to call a mobile phone and let it ring once so that the other person will call back, saving the first caller money. You know, what your teenagers always do when they want a lift home from somewhere.

5. Cafuné - *Brazilian Portuguese*

The romantic act of tenderly running one's fingers through someone's hair.

6. Schadenfreude - *German*

Quite famous for its meaning that somehow other languages neglected to recognise, this refers to the feeling of pleasure derived by seeing another's misfortune. For example, when you see someone fall over and you can't help but laugh. Be honest, we've all done it!

7. Torschlusspanik - *German*

Translated literally, this word means "gate-closing panic", but its contextual meaning refers to "the fear of diminishing opportunities as one ages". With all of us being 21, this is something we at The Words Workshop obviously can't relate to.

8. Wabi-Sabi - *Japanese*

Much has been written on this Japanese concept, but in a sentence, one might be able to understand it as "a way of living that focuses on finding beauty within the imperfections of life and accepting peacefully the natural cycle of growth and decay". All very spiritual but, to be honest, we just like the word!

9. L'appel du vide - *French*

"The call of the void" is this French expression's literal translation, but more significantly it's used to describe the instinctive urge to jump from high places.



10. Ya'aburnee - *Arabic*

Both morbid and beautiful at once, this word means "You bury me". A declaration of one's hope that they'll die before another person because of how difficult it would be to live without them.

For more examples of untranslatable words go to: www.matadornetwork.com.

Wordsworth's jargon buster ...

Some of you old-timers may remember 'Wordsworth's management speak to avoid' where Wordsworth tried to de-code management jargon into plain English. Well, we thought the parents, aunts, uncles, grandmas and grandpas out there might appreciate a little teenage jargon busting.

This month's word is:

'Bredren'

This is a deliberate mispronunciation of the word brethren, which is plural for brother or a male in the same kinship group, i.e. race, profession, etc. Today's teenagers tend to use it as a way of referring to good friends or instead of the word 'mate'. For example, "Good morning bredren. How are you on this fine day?" or, more likely, "Yo bredren, how's it hanging?"

Wordsworth will be bringing you more like this over the next few months, however if you want to swot up go to www.gotateenager.org.uk for more teenage jargon busting.



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