

# Language as a Creator of Reality

*How the words we use shape thought, feeling, and possibility*

Language is often seen as a tool for communication. Yet, at a deeper level, it is also a tool for creation. Research in linguistics and neuroscience suggests that the words we use influence how we perceive the world. The concept of linguistic relativity proposes that language shapes thought patterns, while studies in neuroplasticity show that repeated language, especially self-talk, can strengthen neural pathways over time.

In education, this becomes particularly important. A child described as “behind” may begin to see themselves that way. A child seen as “developing” remains in motion, open to growth. Words participate in forming reality.

One simple yet powerful example is the word *decide*.

When we explore its structure, the prefix *de* can suggest removal or separation, while *cide* appears in words associated with cutting off or destruction (such as pesticide or genocide). While modern usage doesn’t consciously carry this intent, reflecting on language in this way invites awareness. When we say “I have decided,” there can be a subtle sense of closing down alternatives.

Compare this with the word *choose*. To choose often feels more open, more intentional. It suggests selection rather than elimination or participation rather than restriction.

We do not need to strive for perfection to focus on developing awareness. When we begin to notice the words we use (both externally and internally) we create space to shift them and in doing so, we may also shift how we think, feel, and respond.

For educators and parents, this awareness becomes a powerful lever. Language can move a child toward contraction or expansion, shame or curiosity, limitation or possibility. Learning, at its core, is not only cognitive; it is relational, emotional, and energetic. And language sits at the heart of it all.

## LISTENER INTEGRATION ACTIVITIES

### 1. Word Awareness Practice (3–5 days)

- Notice the words you use frequently:
  - decide
  - should
  - have to
  - can’t
- Pause when you say them
- Gently explore:
  - *Is there another word that feels more aligned?*

### 2. Language Reframe List

Create two columns:

#### Common Word Aligned Alternative

Decide                      Choose

## Common Word Aligned Alternative

Should	Could / Prefer to
Try	Will / Am learning to
But	And

Invite children or students to co-create this list.

### 3. Feel the Word Exercise

- Say a word out loud: e.g. “decide”
- Pause and notice:
  - How does it feel in your body?
- Then say: “choose”
- Compare the sensation

This builds **embodied awareness of language**, not just intellectual understanding.

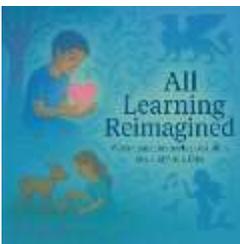
### 4. Family or Classroom Language Agreement

Co-create a shared intention: “In this space, we use language that supports growth, respect, and possibility.” Let children contribute their own words and meanings.

### 5. Reflection Prompt

- What words were spoken to you growing up?
- Which ones shaped how you see yourself today?
- What words do you want to carry forward... and which are you ready to release?

“Science is beginning to show us that words shape neural pathways and behaviour...and many ancient traditions have long suggested that words carry vibration and intention. Perhaps these perspectives are not in opposition... but simply different ways of describing the same truth.”



To listen to an interesting podcast on Language as a creator of reality go to <https://bbsradio/alllearningreimagined>.

Recorded on to the 28<sup>th</sup> February 2026. See below for ideas to promote language use in any educational settings. Enjoy!