

# Despite Negativity in Our Media, Scientists Say There is Universal Human Bias for Positive Words

By Peter Sheridan Dodds et al | [www.sciencedaily.com](http://www.sciencedaily.com) | Story is based on [materials](#) provided by [University of Vermont](#). The original article was written by Joshua E. Brown. *Note: Materials may have been edited for content and length.* Originally titled: "F-bombs notwithstanding, all languages skew towards happiness: Universal human bias for positive words"



Arabic movie subtitles, Korean tweets, Russian novels, Chinese websites, English lyrics, and even the war-torn pages of the New York Times – research examining billions of words, shows that these sources – and all human language – skews toward the use of happy words. This Big Data study confirms the 1969 Pollyanna Hypothesis that there is a universal human tendency to “look on and talk about the bright side of life.

In 1969, two psychologists at the University of Illinois proposed what they called the Pollyanna Hypothesis – the idea that there is a universal human tendency to use positive words more frequently than negative ones. “Put even more simply,” they wrote, “humans tend to look on (and talk about) the bright side of life.” It was a speculation that has provoked debate ever since.

Whether it's Arabic movie subtitles, books in Chinese, Spanish Twitter, German websites, or music lyrics in English—a study published in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, by scientists at the University of Vermont and The MITRE Corporation, found a clear positive bias in human language. In other words, we—humanity— “use more happy words than sad words,” says mathematician Chris Danforth who co-lead the new research. This graph shows distributions of perceived average word happiness from 24 sources in ten languages. Spanish is most skewed toward the positive and Chinese books the least—but all sources showed the same trend: humans tend to look on, and talk about, the bright side of life. The yellow and blue graphs, called histograms, each represent the 5000 most commonly used words from each source; yellow indicates positivity; blue indicates negativity.

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*Robert O'Leary, JD BARA, has had an abiding interest in alternative health products and modalities since the early 1970's, and he has seen how they have made people go from lacking health to vibrant health. He became an attorney, singer-songwriter, martial artist and father along the way and brings that experience to his practice as a BioAcoustic Soundhealth Practitioner, under the tutelage of the award-winning founder of BioAcoustic Biology, Sharry Edwards, whose Institute of BioAcoustic Biology has now been serving clients for 30 years with a non-invasive and safe integrative modality that supports the body's ability to self-heal using the power of the human voice. Robert brings this modality to serve clients in Greater Springfield (MA), New England and "virtually" the world, through his new website, [www.romayasoundhealthandbeauty.com](http://www.romayasoundhealthandbeauty.com). He can also be reached at [romayasoundhealthandbeauty@gmail.com](mailto:romayasoundhealthandbeauty@gmail.com)*