



Calling Cats in Different Languages

Cats are fascinating creatures known for their independence, yet they form strong connections with humans. One man recently explored this by calling over cats using different languages as he traveled across countries. Each call was as unique as the culture it came from. The result? Heartwarming and hilarious reactions from cats who either responded to familiar sounds or simply ignored the attempt. Let's dive into this experiment, what he learned about calling cats in different languages, and how cats' responses varied across cultures.

The Man Behind the Experiment: Testing Cat Calls Around the World

This global experiment aimed to answer a key question: Does language or tone affect how cats respond to a call? People call cats in ways familiar to their culture. In English, a soft "here, kitty kitty" or a "pspsps" usually does the trick. But what happens when you switch it up to "meow-meow" in Chinese or "kit-kat" in German?

The experimenter quickly discovered that cats respond differently to specific sounds, tones, and languages. Some cats seemed intrigued by the varied calls, while others displayed classic "cat aloofness," walking away or ignoring the sounds.



How Cats React to Calls in Different Languages

Calling a cat involves subtle changes in tone and pitch. These often reflect specific cultural styles that cats in certain regions recognize. Here are some unique cat calls from around the world:

1. English: “Here, Kitty Kitty” or “pspsps”

In English-speaking countries, people use “Here, kitty kitty!” or “pspsps.” The gentle, repetitive sound catches cats’ attention and appeals to their curiosity. The affectionate “kitty” invites them over in a friendly way, making it a staple call for English-speaking cats.

2. French: “Minou, Minou” or “Minette”

French speakers call cats with “minou” or “minette,” endearing terms that sound gentle and melodic. These words reflect the affection French people have for cats, and their soft tones often attract cats’ attention.

3. Japanese: “Nyanko” or “Neko-chan”

In Japan, people call cats with “nyanko” or “neko-chan.” The “nya” sound mimics a cat’s meow, creating familiarity. Japanese cats often respond to this sound, as it resembles their own language.



4. Arabic: “Bis-bis” or “Bs-bs”

In Arabic-speaking countries, “bis-bis” is a common way to call cats. This short, repetitive sound mimics a gentle whisper, effectively catching cats’ attention without startling them.

5. Spanish: “Mishi” or “Michito”

In Spanish-speaking regions, people call cats with “mishi” or “michito.” These affectionate nicknames create a comforting sound that cats respond to, especially in Spanish-speaking households.

6. Italian: “Micio” or “Micetta”

Italians use “micio” for male cats and “micetta” for females, affectionate terms with soft sounds. Italian cats often respond to these calls, drawn in by the familiar, melodic language.

7. German: “Miez-miez” or “Katze-katze”

Germans call cats with “miez-miez” or “katze-katze.” Derived from the word “Mieze,” this rhythmic sound engages cats’ attention, fitting well with the German language’s tonal patterns.

8. Russian: “Kis-kis”

In Russia, “kis-kis” is a popular call for cats. This high-pitched, repetitive sound resembles a soft meow, easily drawing a cat’s attention in Russian-speaking regions.



9. Chinese: “Miao” (喵)

In China, “miao” mimics a cat’s natural meow. This onomatopoeic word provides familiarity, helping cats feel at ease and encouraging them to come closer.

10. Turkish: “Pisi Pisi”

In Turkey, “pisi pisi” has become a common call that reflects the country’s love for cats. The gentle, inviting sounds of this phrase appeal to cats, who often respond positively.

11. Portuguese: “Bichano” or “Gatinho”

Portuguese-speaking people, especially in Brazil, call cats with “bichano” or “gatinho.” These affectionate terms create a warm tone that cats recognize, strengthening their bond with humans.

12. Greek: “Psipsina” or “Psipsi”

Greek people use “psipsina” or “psipsi,” a whisper-like tone that attracts cats. Many Greek cats respond quickly to this term, showing the comfort it provides.

13. Polish: “Kici-kici”

In Poland, “kici-kici” is commonly used to call cats. Its sing-song quality makes it easy for cats to recognize, and Polish cat owners find it effective for gaining their pets’ attention.



14. Dutch: “Poes-poes” or “Poesje”

In Dutch, people call cats with “poes-poes” or “poesje,” derived from the Dutch word for cat. These affectionate calls use gentle repetition, making them easy for cats to recognize.

Why Do Cats Respond Differently to Language?

This experiment shows that language and cultural sounds play a surprising role in how cats react. Each culture has developed calls that cats in that region recognize through repeated exposure. The familiar sound patterns within each language provide comfort and encourage cats to respond.

Tone and pitch also matter. Cats often respond more to how something is said than the actual word itself. A soothing, inviting tone attracts cats, while harsher tones may cause them to retreat. This could explain why certain cats only respond to familiar tones and pitches, even if they don't fully “understand” the word.

Global Reactions to the Cat Calling Experiment

The man's videos, shared online, sparked curiosity among viewers worldwide, inspiring others to try calling cats in different languages. Many pet owners observed similar results, with cats showing heightened responsiveness to familiar cultural sounds. Others simply



enjoyed engaging with their pets through this fun, cross-cultural experiment.

Tips for Calling Cats Effectively

To make cat-calling more effective, here are some tried-and-true tips:

1. Keep Your Tone Soft: Cats respond well to soft, soothing tones that make them feel secure.
2. Use Repetitive Sounds: Repetition helps reinforce familiarity, so using repeated sounds like “pspsps” or “minou-minou” often works wonders.
3. Imitate Cat Sounds: Mimicking a “meow” or “miao” signals familiarity, prompting the cat to come closer.
4. Observe and Adjust: Some cats might not respond to certain sounds. If one call doesn’t work, try another until the cat seems interested.

Speaking the Language of Cats

Calling cats in different languages reveals that cats recognize region-specific sounds. Embracing these cultural nuances strengthens the connection with our feline friends and enriches our bond with them. So, the next time you’re traveling and spot a cat, try the local call—it might surprise you how well it works!

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References

Here are some general sources and references you can explore to understand feline behavior, animal communication, and the cultural differences in pet vocalizations:

1. Feline Behavior

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- Nicastro, N., & Owren, M. J. (2003). Classification of domestic cat (*Felis catus*) vocalizations by naive and experienced human listeners. *Journal of Comparative Psychology*, 117(1), 44-52.

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- Herzog, H. (2011). *Some We Love, Some We Hate, Some We Eat: Why It's So Hard to Think Straight About Animals*. Harper Perennial. This book discusses various cultural perspectives on animals and may provide insights into regional differences in pet communication.

4. Cat Reactions to Vocal Cues and Tone

- Saito, A., Shinozuka, K., Ito, Y., & Hasegawa, T. (2019). Domestic cats (*Felis catus*) discriminate their names from other words. *Scientific Reports*, 9(1), 5394. doi:10.1038/s41598-019-40616-4. This study shows cats' ability to recognize their names, hinting at how tone and familiarity influence their response.



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