

# Re: Natural Language Praised

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*Source:* <http://sci.tech--archive.net/Archive/sci.lang/2005-12/msg00409.html>

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- *From:* [leuwarden@xxxxxxxxxx](mailto:leuwarden@xxxxxxxxxx)
  - *Date:* 5 Dec 2005 01:40:23 -0800
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Peter T. Daniels wrote:

> leuwarden@xxxxxxxxxx wrote:

>>

>> Peter T. Daniels wrote:

>>>

>>> (a) Latin never died; it survives in all the Romance languages.

>>

>> in this sense, nobody ever dies. that is some sort of metaphysics,

>> isn't it

>

> How absurd. You are not your father; but Spanish (for instance) is one

> of the many varieties of Modern Latin (aka the Romance languages).

No, please, it is not absurd, though of course it is not my opinion. I am more like my father than French is like Latin. And a biologist would probably confirm that with some ADN statistics.

>> yes. I believe that even the papal encyclicas are still published in

>> Latin, and in case of discrepancies, it is the Latin version that

>> counts. but I am not sure about that.

>

> I think this was changed very recently. (But look for a reversion under

> Pope Ratzinger.)

I know.

>

>>> (c) Latin can still be used as a spoken lingua franca at international

>>> congresses of Roman Catholics.

>>

>> yes, but the language no longer lives = changes + grows. it is

>> fossilized.

>

> Those enthusiasts in Rome and Helsinki continue to invent vocabulary for

> modern notions.

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I do not understand the reference to Rome and Helsinki

>

>> I have a little edition of Morgenstern's poetry with Latin translations  
>> that were made for fun and could be quoted to show that Latin \*can\*  
>> (your word) also be used for avantgarde poetic production

>

> Translated from what, Yiddish?

from German. I'd think he and Heine are Germany's most widely read poets, I mean people who are really read, not just analyzed in some university publication.

> That's not exactly "poetic production,"

no, it is not.

> but there's no reason poets couldn't write in Latin today. Just as  
> generations of English schoolboys had to compose Greek and Latin verse.

???

you know, poetry that is not spontaneous in its origin is nothing.  
Rhyme and white space around it are really not what matters.

>>> (d) The situations of Hebrew and Latin were almost identical until late  
>>> in the 19th century.

>>

>> ????

>> you wouldn't forget that the two languages did not have the same  
>> official standing?

>

> What does that have to do with anything?

The fact that one had for ages been paraded by scholars and the other survived by the skin of its teeth would show in many ways; I was questioning your meaning of "identical".

>

> Antisemitism is indeed one of the reasons for the thriving of Hebrew  
> literacy for some 1500 years when it was no one's native language.

Of course.

>

>>> Virtually every Jewish male studied Hebrew to at

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- >>> least some extent, although their native languages were always something
- >>> else.
- >>
- >> but that would have been more or less voluntary, whereas Latin was
- >> obligatory only for the very few who could afford a university degree.
- >
- > Your contrast is inapt. Hebrew was all but compulsory for every boy of
- > whatever station (have you seen \*Fiddler on the Roof\*?)

No. My ideas are from what I read in Golda Meir's autobiography, where this problem is sometimes mentioned

- > and even
- > available for some girls (have you seen \*Yentl\*?).

No. (I had better admit that I do not like film)

- >
- >> in language mastery the motivation is of basic importance, because a
- >> language is not a rational (phenomenon? thing? set? affair?) and
- >> cannot be learnt in a purely rational way.
- >
- > Absolutely correct. One of the reasons for learning a language is what
- > sociologists call solidarity or cohesion.
- >
- ..
- >>
- >> I asked a girl here on the net who lived in Israel, and I once asked a
- >> tourist in the Madrid subway, and both told me that Hebrew had become
- >> an everyday language in Israel. when asked, the tourist in the Madrid
- >> metro told me that kids playing football in the street in some Israeli
- >> town would speak Hebrew to each other
- >
- > Of course Hebrew is the everyday language in Israel! Where could you
- > have gotten any other idea?

!!!

I thought it was impossible to revive. I thought people would learn it to pass some exam, but that each would privately continue speaking in his own language.

The Russians tried to impose Russian all over, but had to give up. Franco tried to impose Spanish and succeeded more or less, so that now there is a reaction trying to revive the languages that he had more or less forbidden. I thought people could not be obliged to learn a language. In addition, Israel was very poor, had to cope with immigration plus war.

- > However, the influence of Biblical Hebrew is
- > minimal, because Israel is aggressively secular; the only people who
- > study Scripture seriously are the various stripes of Ultra-Orthodox, who

> don't \_speak\_ Hebrew

!!?? then what do they speak?

grammatim@xxxxxxx

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• *Follow-Ups:*

- ◆ ***Re: Natural Language Praised***  
◇ *From:* Peter T. Daniels

• *References:*

- ◆ ***Re: Natural Language Praised***  
◇ *From:* leuwarden
  - ◆ ***Re: Natural Language Praised***  
◇ *From:* Joachim Pense
  - ◆ ***Re: Natural Language Praised***  
◇ *From:* leuwarden
  - ◆ ***Re: Natural Language Praised***  
◇ *From:* Peter T. Daniels
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