

Re: Foreign Languages– A Waste of Time.

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On Sun, 18 Jun 2006, expatriateauthority@xxxxxxxxxx wrote:

I take the whole diatribe as sarcastic, making fun of narrow–minded people who are unable or unwilling to learn foreign languages. But just for the sake of the argument, I'll take one statement out and comment it as if it were serious:

English speakers who have been yelling abroad at the natives who did not understand them, have actually had a very powerful effect. People have not rebelled, but began speaking English more and more.

People **do** rebel. In the entire world with the possible exception of Europe, U.S. nationals are frowned upon and called names ("Gringo", "Ami", ...). They seem to be more frequently victims of terrorist attacks than nationals of other countries of the rich North, even though some of these other countries were colonial powers until quite recently. This concentration of hatred and contempt on one specific nation in the North has a number of different reasons. The habit of **some** U.S. nationals to take their way of life as granted in other countries, for instance by yelling at people who do not speak or understand their language, may be one of the factors that have contributed to this situation.

So the illusion has become a reality. The world today is becoming more and more of an English–speaking place and foreign languages have become less and less useful for international travelers.

Perceiving a foreign nation as occupiers, invaders or oppressors has seldom or never inhibited taking over their language. Why should it be different in this case where the invasion is with different means than, say, in the Roman Empire?

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Helmut Richter