

Re: Anyone conversant in English (was: Tagalog) here?

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  - *Date:* 18 Apr 2007 05:32:32 -0700
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phogl...@xxxxxx:

Jens S. Larsen:

phogl...@xxxxxx:

Padraic Brown wrote:

Could be -- but the misuses of ESL users won't become Standard. They will always be the subject of how \_not\_ to use the language.

You are being very unrealistic now, my friend. The language will become increasingly tolerant of irrelevant solecisms which do not

That looks like an instance of "language" used in the sense of "speech community".

Make it speech community then. The point is, that the speech community which will matter will be the Internet community.

It's not monolingual.

"Bad" English has been the most widely spoken language of the world, and now that there is the Internet, that sort of bad English will also be the kind of English that most people will encounter in written form.

Why would any great number of native English-speakers go to

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international forums? Most of them live in big countries anyway, and they have to be influenced before puberty in order to make any considerable impact.

As long as large numbers of people speak non–auxiliary English outside the net, chances are that those will continue to set the standards within the writing community of the Internet. Tolerance to those who can't or won't comply with all details of the standard won't necessarily change the standard. In the case of English, \_ex\_change of standards is actually more likely to happen some time.

I wouldn't be that sure. The continuous exposure will inevitable influence usage among those non–auxiliary speakers too.

\_When\_ they finally put themselves under that influence, won't that raise their linguistic awareness too?

It's really the English–speakers, not the abstraction of English language, that are globally dominant. We can be rather sure the dominance won't last forever, but it's difficult, maybe impossible in principle, to predict when and how the demise will happen.

I would say that it is quite thinkable that the dominance of English will "last forever" in the sense that English might oust national languages in several countries where it is strictly a foreign language now and become the most widely spoken native language for generations to come – i.e. that the dominance of English will only end when English breaks apart into several distinct standard languages. And with all these communication technologies connecting people in English, it does not look very probable that that would ever happen.

You don't think the examples of Hebrew and Irish are forerunners of the future standard of global language planning?

I would not personally be terribly surprised if, for instance, Germany would turn into an Anglophone country in the end. Nobody here will live to see the day that the last native speaker of German passes away, but my point is that English will probably last as THE dominant language long enough to oust even a language such as German. Even in Finland, the prevailing linguistic attitudes do suggest that a shift from Finnish to English as community language is not entirely

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unthinkable.

You know, sociolinguistic surveys have been conducted on this. At least in Denmark, it's characteristic that monolinguals are much more prone to agree to a statement like "It would be better if we all spoke only English" than ESL-speakers are. When the goal is within reach, people begin to hesitate.

I don't say it is a very happy or promising possibility, because nationalistic strife, resentment, and wars will certainly survive the global shift to English, and nationalisms will if anything become even more repulsive and barbaric, because there will be no native languages and literatures to provide an outlet for national sentiment more civilised than skin-colourism and ethnic cleansing. The survival of violent "physical-force nationalism" in Ireland despite (or because of) the demise of Irish as well as the recent wars between the Serbo-Croatian-speaking peoples of ex-Yugoslavia are cases in point.

I don't think Basque fits well into that model... nor Luxembourgish, for that matter. Peter was right, you really are a misanthrope, though not for the reasons he indicated.

Jens S. Larsen

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