

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

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- *From:* "Jens S. Larsen" <jens_s_larsen@xxxxxxxx>
 - *Date:* 19 Apr 2007 01:15:24 -0700
-

phoglund@xxxxxx:

On Apr 18, 9:05 pm, "Jens S. Larsen" <jens_s_lar...@xxxxxxxx> wrote:

phogl...@xxxxxx:

Internet is certainly plurilingual, but de facto, the
Anglophone part
of it is more "international" than the rest of it.

If you call it imperial in stead of international, you can drop the
quotation marks.

Well, here on Vulcan we avoid emotionally loaded expressions. :)

They are both emotionally loaded, even if differently for different
people. To my mind, imperialism really has a worse name than it
deserves.

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After all, different people have different ways
of abusing English. Besides, visitors from other speech communities
normally invade English language forums only if there are no
comparable forums in their own language

I don't really think so. There is this cargo cult aspect to English as
such – people who have learnt English want to try and use it, because
the very fact of using it feels thrilling and interesting.

The more cargo cult aspect, the less impact from the usage of non–

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native speakers.

Even now, English has incorporated ungrammatical expressions from the pidgin or interlanguage of non-native speakers. "Long time no see", for instance.

They must be remembered as chunks, exactly because they are grievously ungrammatical. I wouldn't call that "incorporated".

But language change is arbitrary too. It has to work with what's there beforehand, but apart from that, people are free to do with it what they want. So, if they want to sound cool, who do they imitate? Non-Americans imitate American English, but who do the Americans imitate? Hint: Where does "cool" in that sense come from?

I am afraid I cannot follow your reasoning.

Americans snob downwards. "Cool" is originally a way of playing jazz. Are you snobbing downwards if you use a way of talking that is influenced by computer literacy?

....

I don't say it explains everything, but I do think that one language for everybody is not a miracle solution. Latin American countries have fought great, often destructive wars among themselves despite the fact that they all speak the same language (with the exception of Brazil, of course).

Sure, but how many of them speak a language _they feel they own_? I believe that's the important aspect in this connection.

The same aspect would be very valid in an Anglophone world. The Irish and the Latin Americans might feel uncomfortable about speaking English (much of the English-language literature of Ireland is actually about this discomfort) but relatively few Irish take the

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trouble of returning to Irish, and AFAIK even fewer Latin-Americans learn Quechua, Aymara or Mapuche for cultural-nationalist reasons.

The other choice for Quechua, Aymara and Mapuche speakers is usually Spanish, I believe. But we're perfectly in concord, it seems, about the role of ownership to language.

Jens S. Larsen

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