

Re: Who castrated Esperanto?

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- *From:* craoibhin66@xxxxxxxx
 - *Date:* Fri, 20 Feb 2009 03:35:47 -0800 (PST)
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On Feb 20, 11:58 am, Iain <iain_inks...@xxxxxxxx> wrote:

On Feb 20, 5:17 am, Horace LaBadie <hwlabadi...@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx> wrote:

In article
<7bb3a0b2-2be0-4f13-b4a7-a9f5dc6ff...@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx>,

Iain <iain_inks...@xxxxxxxx> wrote:

On Feb 19, 11:30 pm, Iain <iain_inks...@xxxxxxxx> wrote:

On Feb 19, 11:03 pm, Horace LaBadie

<hwlabadi...@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx>
wrote:

In article
<65339a0c-d3f5-4a6e-a2a5-01444a378...@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx>

Iain <iain_inks...@xxxxxxxx>
wrote:

In English,
for
example,
there is
hardly any

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advantage
in having
"autobiography"
when "life
story" will
suffice.

Well, yes, there is. They
mean different things.

Expand.

And even if they
didn't, why use two words
when one will do?

Exactly!

Ok I see your point.

Presumably you meant: why use a phrase containing two
words when a one-
word phrase will suffice?
The problem there is merely that it needs to be learned.
The three words "own life story" are closer to the cradle, and
"autobiography" is one thing more to learn.

--Iain

As learning division is one more thing to learn after subtraction, but
it makes things simpler. It's a bit idiotic not to learn new words,
especially useful ones.

Still missing the point. We're not talking about the wisdom of

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forgetting English words. We're talking about how the smallness of Esperanto's vocab is jolly nice.

Trying to limit the vocabulary of Esperanto is a losing battle. If Esperanto is used as a language of general human-to-human communication, it will necessarily become more and more similar to natural languages and evolve in the same way they do. This will involve the adoption of learned borrowings from the common vocabulary of Western culture and, increasingly, from English (giko "nerd, geek" is a case in point).

Contrary to the sort of linguists criticized by Piron, I do not think Esperanto is somehow laughable, stupid, ridiculous or scary. But on the other hand, I don't think Esperantists usually grasp how preposterous the idea is that it could be possible to design a language which is easier than national languages because it does away with universal characteristics of natural languages. It is not possible. That language will inevitably develop many of those trappings which make your average national language a kind of inside joke – idiomatic expressions, specific cultural references and so on. Thus, the people who are told that you only need to master Zamenhof's grammar to count as full-blood Esperantists are being had. The fact is, that Esperanto is by now a language with a cultural package and a history, very much like any national language.

I don't think it is a bad thing. I think that if anything it makes Esperanto more interesting as a subject of study, in the same way that national languages are interesting. But for people like you – and they are found among opponents and proponents of Esperanto alike – the idea of Esperanto as something fundamentally different from national languages seems to be an axiom, and the thought of Esperanto as essentially a natural human language with all the trappings, bells and whistles of one is equally unsettling.

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