

Everything *has been figured out,*

Me Tarzan; You Jane

Everyone knows that the English language has an enormous amount of words. The best way, some feel, to solve this vocabulary-laden equation is to simplify its terms by embracing a lower common denominator tongue - Globish. In fact, Globish (a portmanteau formed from the words Global English) is light English without the cholesterol of cumbersome spelling, vocabulary, idioms, and pronunciation.

Globish owes its genesis to Madhukar Cogate, who in 1998 built a simplified version of English predicated upon a subset of high-frequency vocabulary. In 2004, Frenchman Jean-Paul Nerriere, after a Eureka moment, took up Cogate's language mission vigorously and published a French language book entitled Parlez Globish.

Subtitled, "Don't speak English; parlez GLOBISH !," Parlez Globish approaches English with a business angle in conformance with Nerriere's past employment with I.B.M. In short, Globish is all about making dollars with English as the tool. In fact, Nerriere's main intent is on curbing the influence of "Coca-cola English" throughout the world.

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Nerriere's favorite examples involve slang-laden English to show off the superiority of Globish. For example:

* 'This erstwhile buddy of yours is a weird duck who will probably put the kibosh on all of our good ideas.'

In Nerriere's decaffeinated Globish the speaker utters instead:

* 'Your old friend is too strange. He would ruin all our efforts.'

Of course, that is what good native English communicators would do anyway - come down to the level of the person they are conversing with and strip away the slang and idioms.

The Linguistic Big Tent

While some bemoan the pollution of cherished English, there is no doubt that a less straightjacketed version can help the millions now learning English.

In terms of simplified spelling, what does a Globish sentence look like? Well, the sentence:

* 'Two fine cats quickly went to the city'

is rendered, in Globish,

* 'too faain kaets kwikli went tu thuh siti ...'

Note that capital letters are only used for abbreviations and periods become triplets. Spelling is a phonetic free-for-all.

Steven Donahue investigates the devolution

Can native English speakers understand Globish?

At New York's JFK airport I overheard a Korean and Japanese conversing in what was at first an indistinguishable tongue to me. Fortunately, like listening to Scots jabbering at a pub, I was eventually able to tune in my ear enough to comprehend this new dialect of English.

Of course, the appeal of Globish is that it fits perfectly with the economic fad of Globalization: Learn English quickly and make a ton of dough just as fast. Its proponents claim it can be learned in a mere 182 hours. While the expansion of Globish may offer its users a method of simplified communication, advocates should note that in the more than a hundred years since Esperanto's invention, it has failed to become the lingua franca of global business. The same fate may await Globish as well.

But, It Works

As an experiment, I had two classes attempt to fill in the original and Globish version of a cloze of the beginning and end of Lincoln's Gettysburg Address. Two additional classes attempted to write down versions, which I dictated slowly during class. Comparisons of the results are in the graph on the next page.

Naturally, in both fill-in-the-blanks and dictation, Globish students reigned supreme. This outcome is to be expected with a simplified vocabulary. But it brings home an important lesson: while instructors need to stretch students, it is vital to also communicate on level.

The Death of BBC English

The overthrow of British Received Pronunciation (BBC English) was indeed inevitable. More powerful than an arsenal of nuclear-tipped warheads, Globish, a nouveau hybrid language now threatens Anglo-American linguistic dominance of the business world.

Henceforth, English is fired; Esperanto is expired; Interlingua is tired; however, Globish is now allegedly wired for the world of the third millennium. Perhaps, the Frenchman, Sartre, summed the Globish phenomena best when he quipped: "Everything has been figured out, except when to stop mangling English."



except when to **STOP** mangling English.” — Jean-Paul Sartre

of English to a simpler, international form known as Globish

RoadRunner Globish



Sample Text Choose words from the list at right

Original Version

Fourscore and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent a new nation, conceived in liberty and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal [and] this nation under God shall have a new birth of freedom, and that government of the people, by the people, for the people shall not perish from the earth.

(1)_____ and (2)_____ years ago our (3)_____ (4)_____ (5)_____ on this (6)_____ a new nation, (7)_____ in liberty and (8)_____ to the (9)_____ that all (10)_____ are (11)_____ equal [and] this nation under God (12)_____ (13)_____ a new (14)_____ of freedom, and that government (15)_____ the people, (16)_____ the people, (17)_____ the people (18)_____ not (19)_____ from the (20)_____.

Globish Version

In 1776 a new nation started in America. The nation is free and all people is equal. The nation believes in God. The United States is a government by the people and will not die or disappear from the globe.

In (1)_____ a new (2)_____ (3)_____ in America. The nation is (4)_____ and all (5)_____ is equal. The nation (6)_____ in God. The United States (7)_____ a (8)_____ (9)_____ the people and will not (10)_____ or disappear (11)_____ the (12)_____.

1776
started
people
nation
is
government
globe
from
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die
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believes
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seven
proposition
perish
of
men
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Fourscore
forth
for
fathers
earth
dedicated
created
continent
conceived
by
brought
birth

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Steven Donahue is features editor for Language Magazine. For more go to <http://www.jpn-globish.com>.