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A self-taught method for learning English in the non-aligned movement era

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Abstract

Formerly known as Anglo-Saxon, then as British English, nowadays it has become the lingua franca of the modern world and in deed everyone's language. However, the so called British version of English has lost its primacy to American and become fairly outdated with its clumsy anachronistic orthography and spelling. Moreover, the Angles (viz. Engles or Ingles) are no more exclusive proprietors of the English language, how much less the authorities to be referred to for the correctness of its spelling, grammar, and lexicology.

Keywords: American, British, lingua franca, anachronisms, new orthography

Introduction

From the 50's through 60's to 70's of the 20th century Radio (known as Wireless) was the most powerful mean of global communication, comparable to the Internet of 21st century. Since the air is the only medium with no boundaries, radio waves are capable of reaching the interested parties across the country borders anywhere in the world. The utilization of radio sets with short wavelengths frequency bands enabled a tolerably good reception of radio programs without serious impediments and virtually free in every corner of the earth. What one needed was solely to obtain a radio set equipped variable wavelength bands for more versatile reception, viz. short-wave, middle-wave and long-wave bands. At that time a good radio receiver was something of an invisible almost magical screen comprising the whole world packed in an exclusively audile dimension.

Radio as medium and learning tool

I was born on January 26th 1953 in the former Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia which was the only east European country non-aligned to eastern power block. The same date January 26th is honored as the Republic Day of India, viz. the date on which the Constitution of India ^[1] (adopted previously by the Constituent Assembly on 26th November 1949) came into force on 26th January 1950. India or Bharat in native Hindi language is defined by the Constitution as a Sovereign Socialist Democratic Republic.

My parents came from the *Ivanković Selo* (viz. Ivankovic Village) in the province of *Cordon*, neighboring with *Lika*, the province where my countryman Nikola Tesla the father of radio technology was born. My mother Nada née Tesla (not directly related to Nikola Tesla) was born on March 29th 1931 in a small hamlet *Tesla* (named after her ancestors from father's side), one of 9 hamlets constituting the Ivankovic Village (named after the ancestors and forefathers of mine from my father's side). Nikola Tesla is now credited with

being the first person to patent radio² technology. On June 21, 1943, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in favor of Tesla³ as "the father of the radio" rather than Guglielmo Marconi who had received the Nobel Prize in Physics in 1909 for his contributions to the development of the radio. The court's decision was based on Tesla's lectures of 1893 and possibly due to the fact that the Marconi Corporation had sued the U.S. government for royalties for using radio patents during World War I.

It came through an initiative of the Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru and the Yugoslav President Josip Broz Tito that a forum of developing countries termed the Non-Aligned Movement was established in 1961, in Belgrade, Yugoslavia, promoting the principles of Afro-Asian economic and cultural cooperation agreed earlier at the Bandung Conference, Indonesia, in 1955, against imperialism, colonialism, neocolonialism, aggression, occupation, domination, hegemony, and block politics. Thus Yugoslavia unlike the countries aligned to eastern power block became an open country free to adopting the contemporary cultural and technological influences from the advanced western countries. During the fading 50's and the beginning 60's popular music personalities were Louis Armstrong, Nat King Cole, the Platters, and other greats of American jazz and rock music, soon to be succeeded by the craze of British beat-boom with the newly arriving Beatles, the Rolling Stones, Jimi Hendrix and many other pop-stars.

My parents obtained a big vintage multiband radio manufactured by the Electronic Industry Niš RR 520 (see the image provided below) featuring original Philips vacuum electron tubes for excellent reception. It had additional two short-wave frequency bands apart from standard long-wave and middle-wave bands, so there were at the disposal round the clock for 24 hours a day innumerable stations for an avid listener to follow as I was at the time, with world-wide programs in many unfamiliar oriental tongues like Hindi,

Arabic, Iranian Farsi, Afghan Pashto, Burmese, Vietnamese, Chinese, Japanese, etc., apart from well-known western languages.

An Image of the Authentic Radio Receiver from the 60's
Vintage Radio Zavodi RR Niš RR 520



Fig 1

In elementary school there was no other option for learning foreign languages save to learn Russian. However, Russian had no appeal to me due to its similarity to our own tongue coupled with quite a difficult version of Cyrillic alphabet. Besides, I became curious to know what the songs I heard on radio were about. My aunt Maria Tesla (viz. the sister of my mother) presented me with an illustrated bilingual dictionary of English with essentials of English grammar which I consulted as the first aid set. Later I often used to visit the British Council and the American Center libraries to find more reliable written information on language, grammar and literature, and even obtained some books⁴ on the subject from Britain directly. And I found Wright's Grammar⁵ quite convenient, since they utilized the graphemes *ž*, *dž*, *š*, *tš* (used regularly also in Slavic official orthography to represent Slavic phonemes, except for *tš* which is substituted by single grapheme *č*) for phonetic transcription of Middle English.

The leading western radio broadcasters, viz. Voice of America, Radio Free Europe, BBC, etc. in addition to obligatory world news and various informative programs did offer the new releases in music industry of both USA and Europe. One of the most impressive musical programs was the famous "Jazz Hour" presented by Willis Conover beginning with Duke Ellington's "Take the A Train" as the theme song of the program. Before it and after the news, there was coming in the air a marvelous program I admired the most titled "Words and Their Stories" in Special English which comprised 1580 words, including the 6 simplest parts of speech, the 8 most well-known bodily organs, 32 science terms, 3 common expressions, and 5 word prefixes. As for the rock music, Radio Free Europe was the first to bring the latest releases to the Eastern Europe audience. I can recall that Radio Free Europe was the first to broadcast Jimi Hendrix 1966's smash hit "Hey Joe" as well as his revolutionary 1967's "Purple Haze" at the time of release in Britain. In the same year appeared famous "Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band" by the Beatles, and at the end of the year "Their Satanic Majesties Request" by the Rolling Stones". In 1968 Radio Free Europe even broadcasted a demo-tape (viz. a shorter

version than the officially issued version of the song) of the mega-hit "Jumping Jack Flash" by the Stones.

American vs. British

Nevertheless, the acoustical impression on listening American vs. British programs differed markedly.

Although BBC was famous for a wide variety of feature programs from all domains of human activity, from science to music and entertainment, their programs and the language used were distinctly "British", viz. too local, rustic, isolate, and fairly anachronistic. Contrary to the official standard usage of language, even the British proponents of rock music following their American rhythm and blues idols do use far more lively slang and up-to-date street speech of US provenance, abandoning Received Pronunciation and Royal English, as inferior to modern US expressions.

Thus, for example, rock musicians like the Rolling Stones (cf. *I can't get no satisfaction*)⁶ never pronounce the contracted verbal form *can't* conformed to the Royal English rules viz. *kahnt*, but always *kant* instead. In the same manner the words adopted into English from French, e.g. *France*, *dance*, *lance*, are pronounced *Frans*, *dans*, *lans*, rather than copy the distinctly French spelling *Frahns*, *dahns*, *lahns*. And the Royal English distinct feature of "dropping one's R" at the end of the word sounded to me as a kind of child talk or lisping defect in comparison to the American firm manly predominantly retroflexed rhotic pronunciation.

The so called English is a permanently changeable category as is seen in the very name of its language and the ethnic related to, viz. ancient *Angles* changed to *Engles* > *Engle-land* contracted to *Eng-land* due to obvious haplology (the loss of one of two identical or similar adjacent syllables in a word), but near our time changed into *Ing-land* (consequently, in Italian the name of the country is spelled *Inglia-terra*, viz. *Ingle-land* "the land of the Ingles"). Even worst there is a complete losing of the proper ethnic name which is substituted by *English-men*, what about *English-women*, and *English-children* as well, not to mention anachronistic orthography succeeded from French through Norman invasion⁵ of Britain ever since 1066.

American spelling restoration

Under such circumstances, taking inevitably into consideration the English (under the guise of British) atrocities and crimes during their unscrupulous colonial exploitation of the peoples of India, China and many other nations and countries, including Americans who themselves were forced to resist the ruthless British colonial rule, there is no reason in the world whatsoever to follow any more the British English grammatical rules and anachronistic practices. In the contemporary context of language usage American is far more modern, scientific, realistic and what is there of utmost significance, the proper spelling restoration of the words inherited from classical languages, viz. Latin and Greek.

Let us see how it works in practice. In American all the Latin agent nouns ending in *-or* but which are spelled in British English as *-our* are successfully restored to their original forms, e.g. *color*, *favor*, *labor*, *neighbor*, etc. instead of old ones adopted from awful French orthography as *colour*, (cf.

French *couleur*) *favour* (French *faveur*), *labour* (French *labueur*), *neighbour*, etc.

Similarly, the classical words ending in *-rum*, adopted into British from French in the form *-re*, for example *centre*, *scepter*, is justifiably modified to *center*, *scepter*, since the final *-e* is a mute phoneme (viz. unpronounced), hence there is absolutely unnecessary to be written after one's "*-r*" at all.

Analogously, there is no reason to follow French model of spelling of the compound words having as final member the morpheme *-ment*, e.g. French *juge-ment* > British *judge-ment*, but American is *judg-ment* only.

There are many other misspellings as doubled consonantal suffixation e.g. *marvel-lous*, *label-led*, *label-ling*, etc. which are absolutely superfluous and unnecessary.

There is no need to proceed with any other item, for the examples quoted perfectly illustrate the proper linguistic and scientific point of view.

Spatial vs Temporal

Besides the spoken or spatial aspect of language communication (viz. its contemporary usage in a global environment of spoken communication), there exists a necessity to cover also the written or temporal dimension of communication, for English as the lingua franca is founded entirely on classical Greek and Latin terminology and lexicology being unable to dispense with.

Therefore, the American restored orthography does perfectly communicate with the classical languages and their authentic orthography across the time-scale of over two millennia.

The advantage of American orthography is apparent even to those who do not speak English very well for they can perfectly understand scriptures visually due to the classical words written in their proper form. Hence, the American reform spelling brings the benefits to all those using it as a second language and as lingua franca in international affairs.

Conclusion

Increased worldwide communication through radio, television, and the Internet tends to reduce regional variation of English. Thus American orthographic restoration of classical words to their authentic forms is not only welcome, but it is an absolute necessity, in order to dismiss forever the British rustic vulgar medieval corrupted habits of writing and pronouncing classical words in a non-classical manner.

Dedication

This paper is dedicated to the loving and lasting memory of my mother Nada (née Tesla) Ivankovic, who passed away on February 18th 2016, just 40 days before her 85th birthday.

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