

# **What to Say and Write — or Not: A Vest-Pocket Language Primer**

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## **Abstract**

The impetus for this piece came from several newspaper and TV reports on celebrity Bill Cosby's harsh criticism of black Americans using substandard English. The article has a number of general purposes: to recognize language as man's greatest achievement, to applaud the huge diversity of languages, to further the appreciation of literature and the science of language, to impart information about English, and, no less, to treat of a few practical aspects of everyday language use, particularly for black Americans. Whereas black persons and their imitative peers, black or white, will sometimes suffer exclusion for the public use of substandard English, particularly if it is laced with obscenities and the like, it is suggested that little or nothing can be done to eliminate this practice aside from rejection by the workaday world and a realization that the practice usually results from the permissive times and inadequate upbringing, none of which, however, excludes the raising of the level of sensitivity to the proper time and place of use of less than standard English.

## **Introduction**

At the outset I express my admiration for high school teachers and college professors who daily strive to impart both the essentials and the niceties of English as well as for the researchers who aim to build a better foundation for the understanding and learning of languages. Lastly, I cheer those instructors in linguistics courses who struggle to make somewhat simpler a difficult subject. I know. I've been there. It is hard work.

The subject of language is vast; this article cannot possibly even come close to being exhaustive in dealing with any aspect. Furthermore, language is complex, and not every aspect can be made simple. But that is true of many things in life.

Grade-level evaluation of this material by Fry's Readability Graph and SMOG Readability Assessment indicates it is suitable for seniors in US high schools and all students in US colleges and universities. If persons younger, and with less education, can tackle it, more power to them. They will have a leg up on the success ladder

I hope the audience will be as wide as the subject is vast. However, if I had to select the most important segments of my readership, they would be, in this order, teachers of young people in high school and college and the parents of their charges. If young people of high school and college age are not introduced to many of the ideas contained in this article, they will likely be less than fully successful when they encounter "real-life" experiences. Period.

Besides, why not learn about language early in life? It is, after all, our most telling human trait. It is with us all every waking moment—and some sleeping moments also—and is needed to express our thoughts, our moods, our aesthetic side, our religion, and our noblest intentions.

## **The Nature of Language**

Language is like breathing; we do it without thinking very much about how it is done. We almost never give breathing a thought; neither are we usually conscious of our use of our native language. Of course, language differs from breathing in that it is not essential to physical survival. However, *civilized human life* utterly depends on language.

Anyone who teaches or writes about language is at an initial disadvantage of being disregarded, for the student or reader of those remarks has been speaking some language for most of his or her life and therefore cannot readily imagine that there is an expert body of knowledge about language lying well outside the boundaries of generally accessible information. Herein lies great danger. But here also is to be found a golden opportunity for the acquisition of new facts to be applied to one's language knowledge for the purpose of personal advancement.

Linguistic scholars have written volumes about languages in general, both living and dead. They know many details gleaned from writing samples and reconstruction techniques but almost

nothing about the origin of language, an event or events so buried in the obscurity of the past that we can do little more than speculate. That language is a phenomenon relying on community activity which apparently developed before the establishment of society is a puzzle not yet solved.

Nevertheless, or perhaps precisely because of our lack of knowledge about its origin, language is a fascinating subject. In most curricula, at least for US elementary and secondary education, it is a required subject of sorts, called, among other things, Reading (and Writing), or English, or Language Arts. Nowadays, even phonemics is touched upon.

It is sometimes difficult to discover the objectives of such courses. Many of my students in linguistics and German courses at the "elite" US colleges where I taught for decades had learned, or remembered, very few of the essential language facts they were allegedly exposed to in secondary school. Most thought English was a Romance language, and no one had ever heard of the Indo-European language family, of which English and German are members. Because of the relative simplicity of English grammar, foreign-language students often balked at learning complex paradigms and could scarcely imagine that the native speakers of those languages had mastered such detail. These same students often resisted in-depth instruction in English grammar as something "they knew already" and which required no refining.

## **Earlier Exposure**

To what language knowledge are our elementary pupils and high school and, thus, entering college students being exposed? A sincere effort is being made to equip them with useful, general language facts. Even some aspects of the history and archaeology of writing are also introduced in 6<sup>th</sup>-grade history including hieroglyphics, cuneiform, Hebrew, Greek, and Roman forms of the alphabet, and the Rosetta stone. Florida introduces hieroglyphics and cuneiform as early as 3<sup>rd</sup> grade. The Anglo-Saxon and Norman roots of English are touched on in world or ancient history, typically in the 6<sup>th</sup> or 7<sup>th</sup> grade, and also in English class, where root words are discussed. California is particularly complete in its curricular description of language matters.

Thus, a basis toward a knowledge of English language background is being laid in some school systems.

I do not wish to appear inconsistent in my support of language study, yet it is fair to observe that teachers are maybe becoming bogged down in offering samples of historical and theoretical details when they should be spending the bulk of their time teaching more pertinent material, namely, good spelling habits, punctuation, penmanship, and, above all, skill at expressing oneself clearly in speech and writing in standard English. There is much evidence that there is a desperate need for all of these in modern society. But Diane Ravitch, in her book *The Language Police*, reminds us that there is no standard US curriculum that includes certain required subjects and agreed-upon essential facts in history, literature, and other basic areas, a situation which poses problems in creating national tests of achievement and knowledge.

A sampling of US English-language arts content standards of five geographically large and populous states and one state of both small population and land area, located from coast to coast and from north to south, reveals uniformly high ideals of achievement. In developing reading skills, students are expected, among many other things, to apply what they have learned about word origins, to develop a wider vocabulary, to analyze literature, to understand that language usage is under the control of the individual but that it is also shaped by social, cultural, and geographical differences. Most telling is the stated objective that a student must adapt words and strategies to various situations and audiences.

## **Oral and Writing Skills**

Developing oral and writing skills entails handling varied sentence types including clauses of all sorts and learning to spell and punctuate correctly. In short, these curriculum guides make an honest effort to produce students who, presumably mindful of good manners and standard communicatory skills, could enter the world of business and professions and, if assiduous in their studies, succeed. Unfortunately, we know that many fail to succeed because they do not see the value of proper and careful language use. And let's admit it: Some people are less intelligent than some others, though all may find satisfying work in keeping with their intellectual ability.

Admittedly, some come from disadvantaged life circumstances, but the inspired and determined ones of that group can wrestle their way up. Their most effective crutch is language skills. A good beginning to expressing oneself effectively in writing is to learn to spell and punctuate. Never fail to look up words to ascertain their spelling and their precise meanings, even those about which you have little or no doubt. Treat punctuation as an important part of written meaning. If you can't correctly use the comma and the apostrophe, you will sink yourself from the start.

## **Language Study**

Language study involves a number of fields including history, sociology, and science. A phenomenon experienced by every person, excepting only those who are clinically incapable of participating in language activity, the study of language deserves an honored place in any curriculum requiring a knowledge of history. As a former language professor, I do not know anybody who is not curious about language at some time. That curiosity should extend to learning something of the history of one's language, who speaks it in what sorts of communities, and how the scientific study of language, called linguistics, has greatly advanced our knowledge of language's workings.

## **Speech and Writing**

A useful pun: Strictly speaking, language is defined as speech. To affirm this is to set aside everything that is derivative, such as writing. But it is true. Speaking and listening are what we do all the time. Only sometimes do we read or write — or type or word-process. Parents listen in wonder as their children begin to utter words.

For most of the history of mankind there was no writing, only speech, and later pictures perhaps. But one had to be able to draw, and not everyone could. And there was no alphabet or any other writing system. The length of time that writing has been around — no more than 8,000 years —

is trifling compared to the eons during which human beings communicated exclusively vocally with one another.

Most people are probably not aware that language is speech until some difficulty in its use arises, say, a speech disorder causing mispronunciations, or dyslexia that produces problems in reproducing speech in writing, or until they encounter instruction in the structure and use of language that goes beyond the superficial daily aspects of pronunciation, spelling, punctuation, and "good" grammar.

Recognizing that language is, first and foremost, speech is essential to comprehending the effect our words have on others. Our primary concern is, of course, to be understood, but we often also want to make "the right impression." Language in its fully developed form is many things — a system of communication between human beings, the ultimate medium of thought, a vehicle for literary expression, a social artifact involving instinct so closely woven into human experience that it is scarcely possible to imagine life without it. Have you noticed that if you have nobody to talk to, you may talk to your dog or cat or even yourself? The loss of the ability to talk, say, following a brain injury, can be devastating. Just think how much information has been passed on through the written words of those who have died; in these modern times we can also talk about all the spoken information that has been saved electronically.

## **What Exactly is Language?**

All of this is based, language by language, on a system of arbitrary vocal symbols by which thought is conveyed from one person to another. The word "arbitrary" is important, for there is no intrinsic necessity for any word to mean what it does, or for any language to have the structure it has.

Note also the word "symbol." It would seem that symbolism is the philosophic foundation making language possible. In other words, the power to symbolize and to appreciate symbols is a prerequisite to language. Only humans possess this ability to the fullest. (No horse is going to stop at a red traffic light on its own, and it may not even stop upon receiving a human verbal

command!) Lewis Thomas, in his *The Lives of a Cell*, has written: "The gift of language is the single human trait that marks us all genetically, setting us apart from the rest of life."

To speak of "conveying" thought implies that language is a vehicle of some sort and very likely not the thought itself, though this is a point still debated among linguists.

Another implication is that language, being a vehicle of *thought*, is employed exclusively for communication. If the conscious communication of *facts* is meant, then this is almost certainly not always the case. If you think about it, language is used for just about everything *but* the transmission of out-and-out facts. What we communicate is more along the lines of the "total personality," when feelings, moods, hopes, fears, and such are projected. Often what is projected is not good and wholesome.

## Oddities

In recent years we have heard about or witnessed many linguistic and social curiosities, among them, "lookism," that odd phenomenon prohibiting staring. It was reported in the newspaper in the spring of 2004 that a violent confrontation among young girls from different neighborhoods took place in Wilmington, Delaware, with hostile and insulting words followed by an exchange of "dirty looks" called "ice grilling." One 16-year-old claimed she was "banked," street slang meaning "ganged up on," by girls from across town. It wasn't clear what the girl had done to deserve "banking." One Delaware psychologist has opined that "many girls feel empowered by [aggressive female characters on TV], especially if they have low self-esteem." He also stated that young girls take insults much more personally than do boys. At any rate, the aggressive side of girls in Delaware, exhibited largely in aggravated assaults caused by hostile and "disrespectful" language and lookism, has, according to the Delaware Statistical Analysis Center, increased by 412% from 1985 to 2002. If lookism is unacceptable, then "showism" or "seeism" of, say, obese or bizarrely dressed people—baggy crotches, piercings, heavy jewelry, backwards caps—ought also to be. It would certainly have a leveling influence.

## Polite and Elevated Language

Given all the problems one encounters in talking about the origin of language, the nature of language, and the rigorous description of languages throughout the world, how can one possibly talk about the somewhat hazy aspects of polite language, let alone church or religious language? Yet, for starters, it is not hard for most of us to learn that an occasional "Sir" or "Ma'am" is better than "Hey, you," and that swearing or taking God's name in vain will alienate many people.

The best way to describe polite language seems to be as a momentary overlay of standard language, often called "formal English," but religious language as another register, or level, of language altogether and understood metaphorically as "vertical" rather than "horizontal," meaning as in standard discourse. For many people the first term, "vertical," connotes something controversial and distinctive, whereas the second strikes them as neutral and harmless, when, in fact, all registers constitute a means of coloring language to the advantage of user and/or recipient. In English, the distinction turns about the employment of certain formal, staid, archaic, obsolete, and obsolescent items of vocabulary and forms, and current, general, non-elevated speech, particularly when the latter contains "politically correct" grammatical appeasements to female persons.

Vertical, or religious, language, as understood by most non-feminist scholars, is something more than a collection of archaisms and other expressions allegedly injurious to women's emotional welfare. Religious language is rather like literary language, with a heavy aesthetic component. It may effect what it signifies and, through the use of metaphors, may create a tension between the literal and the poetic.

To be clearer: *Register* is a term used in applied linguistics to indicate the uses to which a language is put — informative, occupational, emotive. Under "emotive," we can understand, say, a religious or a rebellious/aggressive component. Each register employs a typical range of grammatical patterns and lexical items, although not to the exclusion of all others. Scientists write differently from novelists; lawyers and physicians have their own vocabularies; talking to babies does not involve the same kind of speech as conversation with adults. Speaking to God

often calls up language of a stilted, formal, ultra-respectful sort. Political rants call up just the opposite. If nothing else, the concept of "register" ought to tell you to be very careful that you not offend others by the use of religious terms in swearing or the use of profanity and obscenities in a general social context. On the positive side, you must also realize that "hard" words are really often only "different," more precise words for familiar objects, say, in discussing auto mechanics or the law or medicine. Here is an opportunity to increase one's vocabulary.

Lastly, it is obvious that many cultures spring from religions, and thus religion must be taken into close consideration if one wishes to operate linguistically within a particular culture. Religion, like a culture's attitude toward the universe, vitally affects the continuation of a given culture and is reflected in its language. The use of an inappropriate register can, or ought to, fatally mark a speaker. Hilaire Belloc goes so far as to maintain that "the decay of a religion involves the decay of the culture corresponding to it." Couple the "decay" of language within a given society, and the phenomenon bears watching

## **Speech Communities**

There are probably more than 4,000 speech communities, with the numbers of speakers ranging from many millions down to a matter of hundreds or even dozens. The truly big languages of the world include English, Chinese (vernacular Mandarin), Arabic, Hindi (Hindustani), Spanish, Russian, German, Japanese, Malay, Bengali, French, Portuguese, and Italian. Of course, many people speak more than one language. Some people speak both a standard language and a dialect of that same tongue—visit Germany and see, for example—or a huge lingua franca such as Swahili. But everybody speaks some language, either as a first or second language or a native language, and is therefore a member of some speech community. We have said before that language is speech. True, and that speech is that of some community.

A word of caution is in order here. The *first* language that one speaks is not necessarily identical with the language always or generally employed. For example, it may not be the language in which one thinks—that is, when the pressure is off and when one is not speaking but thinking, in other words, when there is complete freedom of choice of language. The concepts of first

language and language of thought combine to produce native language. Thus, native language = X first language + X language of thought. From this definition it is clear that some people have no native language. Therefore, modern-day speech communities, which are often, but not always, equivalent to whole nations, may contain native speakers and first speakers, second- or even third-language speakers, some of the latter of whom have adopted the language of the host country as their language of thought.

It is important to note here that a living language is one which is still the language of thought, but not necessarily, in all cases, the first language of a significant number of people. A language is dead when there no longer remains a substantial number of community members who use it as their language of thought — some of them, at least, using it also as a first language.

The importance of the first language learned is that it is the only one which we can be sure was learned without interference from any other language. An exception to this solid rule occurs occasionally when a child simultaneously learns one language/dialect from its mother, another from its father, and, say, a third from its nurse. Usually, it is the mother's language that is the first — and, of course, that language is usually also the language of the male parent — and because the child spends so much early time with its mother, that is the language of imprint. We confirm this by the expression "mother tongue."

It may well happen that a person who began life with one language, say, Polish, switches to another. A Polish child is brought to America at age six. By the time this child reaches age 16 he or she uses only English and remembers Polish hardly at all. He doesn't have a native language, for neither Polish nor English fits the bill. If we claim English is this person's "native" language, the characteristic of "native" must be something other than being first. But how can we call Polish the person's native language when the person can no longer speak or understand it?

## **Speech Communities — Dialects**

A speech community is always made up of dialects. These represent the variations of a language. All languages are continually changing, but we can never clearly discern the direction of change. Usually, a major dialect, often based on the written language, becomes the standard language, which is then the language taught in school and the one to which the students are expected to conform. Use of this standard language is not only the tool for making oneself widely understood; it is the accepted mark of polite behavior and represents "good" grammar and right pronunciation. Such a concept obviously quickly leads to the avoidance of substandard speech.

Sometimes the distinction between a language and a dialect is difficult to make. The most basic notion is that a language is a form of speech that is officially accepted and sanctioned by a nation, whereas a dialect suffers from a lesser status. But things are not so simple. By this approach we would eliminate Welsh and Frisian but not Lithuanian and Latvian, although these latter two languages were disregarded as such under the Czars but regained full status after World War I when the Lithuanian and Latvian Republics were established. But you will remember that is not the end of the story, for the Soviet Union then swallowed them up, eliminating those languages' national character until the dissolution of the USSR restored them by default. There are many more examples.

What if we say a language possesses not just national status but has a literature? That works pretty well until we come up against such problems as discounting the many languages of black Africa and American Indians, while perhaps counting Ozarkian and Brooklynese as languages because of authors who imitate their speech in literature.

What it comes down to is this: What we actually speak are dialects. Yes, that is the real-life answer. There is no intrinsic difference between language and dialect. One dialect attains prominence and becomes the official speech of a nation for some special reason, usually because it represents the speech of the most important area, for example, the seat of government. Dictionaries often list multiple pronunciations of words in the order of preference, thus helping

to "standardize" or identify a dialect. To bring this closer to home, we can say that the standard British English language is the dialect of East Midland or London; for Americans it is something sometimes called "Midwestern." Linguistic reality shows us that while it is relatively easy to set a written-language standard for a country, it is an entirely different matter to impose a spoken-language standard. Localisms of all sorts in enunciation, intonation, grammar, vocabulary, including slang, crop up everywhere and repeatedly and thwart efforts at elimination.

Some of the efforts directed toward eradication of dialectisms and the like are intentionally promoted by teachers to assure that understanding will occur on a wide scale; but radio, TV, and the newspapers unknowingly contribute toward this objective by trying to hire announcers and writers whose speech has few local characteristics and thus helps to spread a "standard" language. Except for a "drawl" or a "twang" or two, it is becoming increasingly hard to hear much difference in the voices of announcers from Virginia or Nebraska, Kentucky or Indiana, Vermont or Wisconsin, California or upstate New York.

Fifty years ago I used to pride myself on being able to identify the region from which a speaker came. I even used to wow audiences with my ability. I can't do it reliably anymore, although vocabulary and idiomatic expressions can give the listener some clues when "accents" fail. Americans are moving around too much these days, and TV and radio models help to wipe out former interesting speech differences.

Even slang expressions are picking up a life of their own and becoming ubiquitous. I can well remember when "tad," meaning "a little bit," was an expression limited pretty much to North Carolina. Not anymore in the last 5-10 years. Certain swear words have even penetrated the vocabulary of the man and woman on the street. I can also remember that what used to be Black English, with a clearly discernible grammar, has now, with the addition of "hip" and drug talk, changed — some would say, deteriorated — into barely understandable "dialects."

Any speaker familiar with his language community who partakes of varied social situations must possess a repertory of speech and paralinguistic alternatives for each situation so as to make

reasonable predictions about the outcome of his remarks. Although a negative approach, say, defective grammar or the use of obscenities, may produce distaste, anger, and outright rejection by the listener or reader, a positive approach can be expected to call forth social adulation.

## **The Speech of Black Americans**

Substandard English is one thing that worries a lot of prominent black Americans, among them the entertainer, comedian, and TV star Bill Cosby. In June 2004 he caused quite a national flap while speaking at an NAACP Legal Defense Fund observance of the commemoration of the anniversary of the Brown vs. Board of Education desegregation decision. Cosby, who holds a doctorate in education from the University of Massachusetts, faulted low-income black Americans for not making use of the opportunities made available to them through the civil rights movement. He said:

"These people marched and were hit in the face with rocks to get an education, and now we've got these knuckleheads walking around. I can't even talk the way these people talk, [for example] 'Why you ain't,' [or] 'Where you is' . . . and I blamed the kid until I heard the mother talk. And then I heard the father talk. . . . Everybody knows it's important to speak English except these knuckleheads. You can't be a doctor with that kind of crap coming out of your mouth."

Strong words but coming from such a man as Cosby, well worth listening to. When black Americans insist on limiting much of their vocabulary to black and ungrammatical expressions, they inevitably keep themselves from moving up in class, education, and salary, a deplorable and unnecessary situation. When teachers, black and white, tolerate such dialect, they gravely limit their students' future. To their credit, many black parents object to their children's teachers' permissiveness.

Of course, not everybody agrees. Jimi Izrael, a columnist for *Africana.com*, has said, as have others, that Cosby did not couch his criticism properly but "lobbed one-liners." Roland Martin, of *BlackAmericatoday.com*, on the other hand, said on "The O'Reilly Factor" in June 2004 that "[teachers] should teach standard English, not Black, not White [English]." How true. However, in his book *The Language Instinct* Steven Pinker asserts that "there is no need to use terms like

'bad grammar,' 'fractured syntax,' and 'incorrect usage' when referring to rural and black dialects." His tolerance for all of this is understandable and acceptable on a professional linguistic basis, but there are no benefits accruing to the users of such speech in normal society.

Having said all that, one has to admit that a number of rough-around-the-edges rappers have become huge business successes precisely because of atrocious English. Take Snoop Doggy Dogg, for instance. In June 2004 he sent an e-mail to Dr. Dieter Zetsche, CEO for DaimlerChrysler USA, embodying the same kind of language that he uses to rap, though minus obscenities: "Yo, what up? This is big Snoop Dogg, trying to put these new legs down for this new 300C. What I gotta do to get that brand new 300 up outta you? . . . If you want this car to blow, give it to me. This is Snoop Dogg. Preach!" It is becoming increasingly hard to convince young black men that the success of a very few rappers is hardly sufficient excuse for resisting learning and using standard English before the general public. People are simply not going to hire rap-talking guys or gals to work in banks, stores, schools, churches, or much of anywhere else.

Read what one single black woman writing in the [Wilmington, Delaware] *News Journal* (June 5, 2004) had to say about Cosby's remarks while expressing pride that her daughter had just graduated from high school and was on her way to college: "My goal was to teach [my daughter] morality and values [and] personal responsibility. Daily living gave her an example to follow. She watched the way I carried myself, spoke to other people and went to work every day. She watched me read the newspaper daily and watch the news."

The writer goes on to say how she went to her child's school functions, voted, did volunteer work, attended church, showed compassion toward people, expressed patriotism, and prized duty. She provided the daughter with decent but not expensive clothes, prohibited her from "hanging out," and insisted that she go to bed at a reasonable hour. "Now it is up to her to implement what she has been taught," wrote the mother.

The daughter has turned out very well, and the mother wept with pride at the child's high school graduation. The mother wept also, she said, for other reasons: "I cried at the absence of her

father who was never there for her. I cried for another special man whose love and dedication to my daughter I can never repay. I cried for the love of friends and family who helped raise a beautiful, smart young woman. If I did this for my daughter, I ask others: "What is your excuse?" Her article ends with a clincher: "All the folks out there who are angry at Cosby [for his remarks on slovenly English] should redirect that anger and do right by your families. If you are angry, it's because the truth hurts."

The question has arisen: If the parents cannot do any better than their children, then should we throw in the towel? Most educators would scream "No!" because teachers also have a responsibility here. The language problems of youngsters are not limited to black or Hispanic Americans, but they are the ones suffering most from inadequate communication skills. Ultimately, the responsibility lies with the individual student, but there is no doubt that parents set the tone.

This fact is brought clearly to mind when one recounts the biography of the famous black pediatric neurosurgeon Dr. Ben Carson, now Director of Pediatric Neurosurgery at The Johns Hopkins Medical Institutions in Baltimore. Dr. Carson's first book, *Gifted Hands*, tells his life story. His second book, *Think Big*, offers encouragement to all people to develop their intellectual potential to the fullest. His third book, *The Big Picture*, gives details of his life as a surgeon.

Throughout his writings Ben Carson has inspired people of all ages and races always to strive to excel. He ought to know a great deal about striving, for he grew up in poverty in Detroit. But for his mother, he might have been lost to the world of medicine. An essentially illiterate woman with merely a third-grade education, she challenged her son to do his best. The poignant thing about his struggle to succeed is that all the while his mother urged him to study harder and harder and more and more, he did not know for many years that she was illiterate.

## **Summation**

Habitual speakers of what most people would call "less than standard" English ought to keep in mind that language is primarily speech and that it has a distinct effect upon listeners. The pertinent question is: Could a person make a better impression if he spoke differently? One should ask oneself: Has my way of talking ever been criticized or been an obstacle to my success? A friend and teaching colleague has reported to me that she used to use a recording made by the Southern New England Telephone Company that demonstrated the ability of a black ghetto man to alter his language habits in order to succeed as an executive at a corporation

How should teachers and parents confront the substandard talk of their minority students and offspring? Probably, the wisest course involves the promotion of a proper education and the realization that virtually all young people, at one time or another, will act rebelliously, even aggressively, and their speech is a reflection of that natural tendency. It may help or hinder when a respected role model such as Bill Cosby criticizes substandard speech. His forceful observations will, no doubt, incite some youngsters to introspection and inspire them to take pride in their language. His remarks may not help in other cases where rebellion runs high and profits, both social and financial, do too. Like an illness, such things need to run their course. We need to be patient and hope that an increase in long-overdue moral upbringing and a decrease in financial rewards for less than art will turn the trick. Education is one of life's engineers, time is another. As in the case of aggressive driving habits, a certain punishment is in order until people awaken to the need for politeness. Proper language use requires no less. Let the punishment be rejection with correction--true linguistic etiquette.

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