

Simplified English – an Easier Version of the Language

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English is becoming a lingua franca for the world, allowing people from many different places to communicate in a common language.

But English is a difficult language to learn, in large part because of the huge number of irregularities in the grammar as well as the often-nonsensical spelling. Even native English speakers spend huge amounts of time learning to spell (and thus to read and write), time that could be spent learning other things if the spelling were more logical.

It would be quite easy to devise a parallel rational English language with simple phonetic spelling and simplified regular grammar. The vocabulary could remain basically unchanged. Such a 'New English' would be very easy to master for those who speak traditional English, and it would make learning the language very much easier and faster for non-English speakers.

New English could be introduced in two stages. Stage 1 would be a phoneticisation of the spelling. This would make it clear how newly seen words are pronounced and how newly heard words are spelt. The spoken language would be unchanged. Stage 2 (which wouldn't have to be introduced until later) would be a rationalisation and simplification of the grammar. This would change the spoken language somewhat, but, because most of the vocabulary would be unchanged, the New English should still be largely understandable to traditional English speakers and vice versa. What's more, because the new grammar would be much simpler than the old and without all the irregularities, it shouldn't take more than a few days to master understanding it, speaking it, reading it and writing it.

Stage 1: A Phonetic Spelling System

A possible system uses the present letters (except q) and four accents (called *bar*, *down*, *up* and *cap*) as shown below. The letters in black are written and pronounced the traditional way. Those in red are written and pronounced as indicated. There is no upper case (it serves no essential purpose). L is used instead of l, to avoid confusion with 1.

b d f g h j k L m n p r s t v w y z
c (<u>chop</u>) x (<u>mach</u>) z (<u>treasure</u>) s (<u>shop</u>) d (<u>that</u>) t (<u>thing</u>) n (<u>sing</u>)
a at ā ate à art á fall â owl
e bet ē eat è beer é bear ê the
i it ī bite ì fire
o hot ō boat ò for ó fold ô foil
u up ū rude ù hurt ú full û bush

Stress can optionally be indicated by underlining the vowel, e.g. rēmūvêL.

The following is an example of prose written using this system. It should sound exactly the same as traditional English when read. It shouldn't take long to become fluent with reading and writing with it. Keyboards could have three or four accent keys in place of the present Q, shift key and caps lock.

wuns êpon ê tīm dē wù trē béz, mumē bé, dadē bé and bābē bé, and dā ál Livd tēgedē in ê litêl hâs in dē wúdz. wun dā mumē bé mād sum porij. sum woz tū hot and sum woz tū kóLd. mumē bé and dadē bé àgyūd êbât dē porij. dā kùd hav miksd dem tēgedê, but, bēiñ béz ov litêl brān, dā went tū makêz fò brekfêst insted.

àftê dā left, ê yuñ lâť káLd góLdēLoks kām stumblīn frū dē wūdz in hù yūzyūêL drunkên styūpê. sē krašd hù wā into dē béz' hās, feL fās-fūst into a bóL ov porij, and bunt hù nōz. '#*@^!' sē sed, 'dis porij iz hot!' sē stuk hù fingê intū dē nekst bóL: it woz tū kóLd. dē tūd bóL woz just rīt, sō sē at it. den sē brōk ê cé and went tū slēp in dē bed dat woz just rīt.

wen dē béz got bak, stiL àgyūiñ êbât dē porij, dā hùd góLdēLoks snōriñ. ê skufêL ensyūd, but góLdēLoks manijđ tū eskāp frū ê windō wiđ just mīnê kuts and brūziz. sē had wákd ê litêl wā frū dē wūdz wen ê wúLf jumpđ at from behīnd ê būs and bit hù hed of. dē end.

Stage 2: A Rational Grammar System

Devising a good, intuitive, natural and easy-to-use rational grammar system is more complicated than devising a good phonetic spelling system. The following is a first attempt only. It will be incomplete and able to be improved on. It is uninflected, so in general, words have just one form and most irregularities thus disappear.

Verbs

A verb clause has three parts: subject/person, tense indicator, verb.

- The subject/person can be a noun or a pronoun (ī, yū, zē (gender-neutral third person singular), hē, sē, it, wē, yē, dā).
- The tense indicators are: iz, duz, wiL, did, dun, woz.
- The verb is uninflected. So ēť is used in place of eat, eats, eating, eaten and ate.

i ēť: I eat, I do eat (no tense indicator)

i iz ēť: I am eating

i wiL ēť: I will eat, I am going to eat

i wiL iz ēť: I will be eating

i wiL duz ēť: I will make a habit of eating

i wiL dun ēť: I will have eaten

i did ēť: I did eat, I ate

i dun ēť: I have eaten

i woz ēť: I was eating

i woz duz ēť: I used to eat

i woz dun ēť: I had eaten

i woz wiL ēť: I was going to eat

Other forms are produced as follows:

Infinitive: add tū before the verb, e.g. it woz stāt tū get dāk (it was starting to get dark)

Imperative: just the verb, e.g. stand up!

Negative: add nō before the tense indicator, e.g. i nō wiL iz ēť (I will not be eating)

Interrogative: add trū before the subject, e.g. trū yū Līk mangō? (do you like mango?)

Passive: add got before the verb, e.g. i wiL got ēť (I will be eaten)

Conditional: if for indicative, wif for subjunctive e.g. if i dū dat (if I do that),
wif i bē ric (if I were rich)

Gerundive: add -iñ to the end of the verb, e.g. wáLk-iñ dāñ dē strēt, i did sē ê rat (walking down the street, I saw a rat)

Other parts of speech

Articles: ê (a), an (an), êz (some), dē (the, singular), dēz (the, plural).

Plurals: indicated by the article or a number, e.g. dēz bē did cās i (the bears chased me)

Possessive: for nouns, add ov before, e.g. d̄ē bīk ov bob (Bob's bike); for adjectives and pronouns, īz, yūz, zēz, hēz, sēz itz, wēz, yēz, dās, e.g. d̄at bē sēz (that's hers)
Comparative: mò, Les, mōst, Lēst before the adjective, e.g. i bē dē mōst big (I'm the biggest)
Adverb: -Lē after the adjective, e.g. sLō-Lē (slowly)

Nouns from adjectives:

styūpid-nis stupidity (the state of being stupid)

Nouns from verbs:

kiL-iñ: killing (gerund, the act of killing),

kil-ê: killer (one who kills),

kiL-ē: killee (one who is killed)

Adjectives from nouns:

rē-remêdē (remedial, related to remedy)

Līk-Lizêd (lizard-like)

in-trend (trendy), êc-dā (daily), wiv-kàbên (carbonaceous), wiv-lēk (leaky), cov-grēs (greasy, contaminated with grease, covered with grease)

Adjectives from verbs:

dū-ské (tending to scare), can-ské (able to scare), got-fōget (forgotten), can-got-brāk (breakable)

Negative adjectives:

not simetrik (asymmetric), not can-got-brāk (unbreakable)

Verbs from nouns:

pūt-grēs (apply grease), dē-grēs (remove grease), rē-grēs (re-apply grease), òvê-grēs (over-apply grease), undê-grēs (under-apply grease), in-kās (cause to be in a case), ât-ground (take out of the ground), etc.

māk-model (make a model)

Verbs from adjectives:

māk-wēk (weaken, cause to be weak), māk-mò-wēk (weaken, cause to be weaker),

māk-not-wēk (cause to be not weak), māk-Les-wēk (cause to be less weak)

The following is the same story using the rational grammar system.

wuns êpon ê tīm trē bé woz bē, mumē bé, dadē bé and bābē bé, and dā áL woz Liv tēgedê in ê litêl hās in dēz wūd. wun dā mumē bé did māk sum porij. sum woz bē tū hot and sum woz bē tū kóLd. mumē bé and dadē bé did àgyū êbât dē porij. dā woz can miks dem tēgedê, but, bē-iñ êz bé ov litêl brān, dā did gō tū makêz fò brekfêst insted.

âftê dā did lēv, ê yuñ lát got káL góLdēLoks did kum stumbêL-iñ trū dēz wūd in sēz yūzyūêL drunkên styūpê. sē did kraš sēz wā intū dē hās ov dēz bé, did fáL fās-füst into ê bóL ov porij, and did bün sēz nōz. #*@^! sē did sā, 'dis porij bē hot!' sē did stik sēz fīngê intū dē nekst bóL: it woz bē tū kóLd. dē fūd bóL woz bē just rīt, sō sē did êt it. den sē did brāk ê cé and did gō tū slēp in dē bed d̄at woz bē just rīt.

wen dēz bé did get bak, stiL àgyū-iñ êbât dē porij, dā did hē góLdēLoks snòr-iñ. ê skufêL did ensyū, but góLdēLoks did manij tū eskāp trū ê windō wiđ just mīnê êz kut and êz brüz. sē woz dun wák ê litêl wā trū dēz wūd wen ê wúLf did jump ât from behīnd ê būs and did bīt of sēz hed. dē end.