America’s War on Language: 1918-2018

Speak the language of your flag:

Dennis Baron
American Community Survey
language question

a. Does this person speak a language other than English at home?
   - Yes
   - No

b. What is this language? (For example: Korean, Italian, Spanish, Vietnamese)

c. How well does this person speak English?
   - Very well
   - Well
   - Not well
   - Not at all
American taxpayers carry the costs of educating nearly four million foreign-born students who do not speak English.
USE ONLY ENGLISH, ROOSEVELT URGES

America No “Polyglot Boarding House,” He Tells Iowans.
The Trading with the Enemy Act of 1917

In 1918 the New York Times reports on calls for banning foreign languages in general, and German in particular.
An Order of Fries, Please, But Do Hold the French

BY SHERYL GAY STOLBERG

WASHINGTON, March 11 -- The French may have Champagne, Brie, croissants and even kisses. Americans, at least in the cafeterias of the House of Representatives, now have freedom fries and freedom toast.

With frustration rising in the Capitol over French opposition to President Bush's policy on Iraq, Rep. Bob Ney, Ohio Republican who is chairman of the House Administration Committee, has introduced a bill. The measure is now before the House Administration Committee for consideration.

French fries? Mais non!

Sauerkraut May Be 'Liberty Cabbage' Dealers Think Camouflaged Name Is Better Suiited to American Sensibility.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America that the names of any city, town, village, or other public place in any foreign country shall be changed upon the passage of this act. The names of any public place in any foreign country shall be changed upon the passage of this act. The names of any public place in any foreign country shall be changed upon the passage of this act. The names of any public place in any foreign country shall be changed upon the passage of this act. The names of any public place in any foreign country shall be changed upon the passage of this act. The names of any public place in any foreign country shall be changed upon the passage of this act. The names of any public place in any foreign country shall be changed upon the passage of this act. The names of any public place in any foreign country shall be changed upon the passage of this act. The names of any public place in any foreign country shall be changed upon the passage of this act. The names of any public place in any foreign country shall be changed upon the passage of this act. The names of any public place in any foreign country shall be changed upon the passage of this act. The names of any public place in any foreign country shall be changed upon the passage of this act. The names of any public place in any foreign country shall be changed upon the passage of this act. The names of any public place in any foreign country shall be changed upon the passage of this act.

Liberty Measles at West Point

Liberty Falls, N. Y., Feb. 7. -- An epidemic of "liberty measles," which is reported to be the disease of the hour at the close of the Military Academy, is rapidly spreading throughout the country. The cadets were said to be in great condition of health. Quarantine regulations were established to prevent the admission of any person suspected of having the disease. The hospital, which is said to be the largest in the country, is said to be in full operation, and the patients are said to be in good health.
LEAGUE STARTS WAR ON GERMAN PRESS

VALUE OF GERMAN LANGUAGE ASSAIRED

Educator Says It Is a Barbarous Tongue, Which Is Lacking in Cultural Worth and of No Commercial Importance
First. English should and must be the only medium of instruction in public, private, denominational or other similar schools.

Second. Conversation in public places, on trains and over the telephone should be in the English language.

Third. All public addresses should and must be in the English language.

Fourth. Let those who cannot speak or understand the English language conduct their religious worship in their homes.
MEANT TO STOP
GERMAN PLOTS

GOVERNOR HARDING'S PROCLAMA-
TION DESIGNED TO PRE-
VENT HUN PROPAGANDA.

"I am telling those who insist
upon praying in some other lan-
guage that they are wasting their
time, for the good Lord up above
is now listening for the voice in
English."

Quad City Times, June 2, 1918, p. 19
1918: Better American Speech Week

Speak the language of your flag.

One of the posters in the school children's "Better Speech" exhibit at the Art Institute this week.
The Watch Your Speech Pledge, 1918

Better American Speech Week
Oct. 27, to Nov. 2, 1918
One Language for a United People

Speak the Language of Your Flag.
Slovenly Speech Bespeaks a Slovenly Mind

Watch Your Speech Pledge:

I love the United States of America.
I love my country’s language.
I promise:

1. that I will not dishonor my country’s speech by leaving off the last syllables of words;
2. that I will say a good American “yes” and “no” in place of an Indian grunt “um-hum” and “nup-um” or a foreign “ya” or “yeh” and “nope”;
3. that I will do my best to improve American speech by avoiding loud harsh tones, by enunciating distinctly and speaking pleasantly, clearly and sincerely;
4. that I will try to make my country’s language beautiful for the many boys and girls of foreign nations who come here to live;
5. that I will learn to articulate correctly one word a day for one year.

Better American Speech Committee
Chicago Woman’s Club
Billy S. Nichols

Carter Practice School, Chicago:

EXTRA EDITION
Desperate Spies Tried!
One Acquitted!
COURT-MARTIAL EVERY FRIDAY
BEWARE! Bad-English spies are being interned every day! Protect our native tongue now and ever. Use good English. Speak as well as you can! Think before you speak! Cherish and protect the language of your country.

USE GOOD ENGLISH
Watch your speech!! The room is flooded with secret service agents! Oh, yes, and so is the playground. If 306 doesn't get you, 308 will.

PLANNING OUR DRIVE FOR

I hereby pledge myself a secret service agent to protect the language of my country, to capture all spies of Bad-English and to keep my position secret.

Signed this 24th Day of November 1918,
John Smith
To define the national and official language of the Government and people of the United States of America, including the Territories and dependencies thereof.

By Mr. McCormick.

February 1, 1923.—Referred to the Committee on the Judiciary and ordered to be printed.

ILLINOIS MAN WANTS AMERICAN LANGUAGE

Special from Monitor Bureau

CHICAGO, April 6 -- Effort to legislate the "English language" out of existence so far as Illinois' grade schools are concerned has been made at this session of the Illinois legislature. In place thereof, the Senators have been asked to consider the "American language."

The project comes up in Senate Bill No. 23 which amends the school law to provide "for instruction in the elementary branches in public schools in the American language instead of the English language." Senator Frank J. Ryan of Chicago introduced the bill.

It's Legal—We Speak English

Residents of Illinois can stop worrying about learning to speak "American," and revert back to English, because Gov. Ogilvie yesterday signed a bill making English the official language of the state. A state law passed in 1923 designated "American" as the official language of Illinois, but some legislators pointed out that there was no such language.

Chicago Tribune, Sept. 24, 1969, p. 3.
1906 pledge for prospective citizens:

Eighth. I am not a disbeliever in or opposed to organized government or a member of or affiliated with any organization or body of persons teaching disbelief in organized government. I am not a polygamist nor a believer in the practice of polygamy. I am attached to the principles of the Constitution of the United States, and it is my intention to become a citizen of the United States and to renounce absolutely and forever all allegiance and fidelity to any foreign prince, potentate, state, or sovereignty, and particularly to ...., of which at this time I am a citizen (or subject), and it is my intention to reside permanently in the United States.

Ninth. I am able to speak the English language.
English Language Amendment, 1981

Sec. 1. The English language shall be the official language of the United States.

Sec. 2. Neither the United States nor any State shall make or enforce any law which requires the use of any language other than English.

Sec. 3. This article shall apply to laws, ordinances, regulations, orders, programs, and policies.

Sec. 4. No order or decree shall be issued by any court of the United States or of any State requiring that any proceedings, or matters to which this article applies be in any language other than English.

Sec. 5. This article shall not prohibit educational instruction in a language other than English as required as a transitional method of making students who use a language other than English proficient in English.

Sec. 6. The Congress and the States shall have power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation.
The English Language Unity Act has been before the US Congress since 2005.
HR 997 requires what would appear to be a high level of English literacy for citizenship:

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Sec. 164. Uniform English language rule for naturalization
(a) Uniform Language Testing Standard.--All citizens should be able to read and understand generally the English language text of the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, and the laws of the United States made in pursuance of the Constitution.
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To amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to establish a skills-based immigration points system, to focus family-sponsored immigration on spouses and minor children, to eliminate the Diversity Visa Program, to set a limit on the number of refugees admitted annually to the United States, and for other purposes.
the proposed 2017-18 immigration reform bill in the 115th Congress

- to establish a skills-based immigration points system,
- to focus family-sponsored immigration on spouses and minor children,
- to eliminate the Diversity Visa Program,
- to set a limit on the number of refugees admitted

_minimum_ of 30 points required for visa

The language requirement:

Applicants with equal points and equal educational attainment shall be ranked according to their respective English language proficiency test rankings.

Points are determined by decile in an appropriate proficiency test (IELTS, TOEFL, or other approved test):

10<sup>th</sup> decile: 10 pts.
9<sup>th</sup> decile: 9 pts.
8<sup>th</sup> decile: 8 pts.
6-7<sup>th</sup> decile: 6 pts.
< 6<sup>th</sup> decile: 0 pts.
My point score:

- 10 pts. English language proficiency (est.)
- 0 pts. for age (> 50)
- 6 pts. for BA from US institution
- 0 pts. for PhD from US institution in a non-STEM subject
- 0 pts. for “Extraordinary achievement” — Nobel Prize in science or social science = 25 pts; 15 points for Olympic medal (or equivalent sporting contest).
- 8 pts. (of possible 12 pts) for job offer with salary higher than median household income.
- 0 pts. (out of possible 6 pts) for investment in a US-based business > $1.35m (or 12 pts. for investment > $1.8m for 3 years), and maintain a management role in said business.

my total: 24 pts

REJECTED
Spanish language version of the Star Spangled Banner, commissioned by the Bureau of Education as part of its Americanization campaign in 1918, and supervised by John Philip Sousa.
Joey Vento, late owner of Gino’s Steaks, poses at the take-out window.
Dallas, Texas, police issued tickets for “Non-English speaking driver” even though there was no legal requirement that drivers speak English.
whitehouse.gov/espanol went from this to this, on Jan. 20, 2017:

Trump's Spanish version of White House website removed

...
The pro-Russian news site Tsarizm.com interviews ProEnglish Stephen Guschov at CPAC.
SPEAKING HER MIND  Government should set target date for ‘everybody in the country’ to speak English says former integration tsar

Dame Louise Casey also blasted Theresa May for delaying the Government’s long-awaited Integrated Communities Strategy