

## How Americanisms are killing the English language

Article by Hephzibah Anderson

As a nation, we've been both invaded and invader, and our language is all the richer. English words like **bungalow**, **bazaar**, even Blighty, have their roots elsewhere. Go far enough back and isn't it pretty much all just distorted Latin, French or German?

The first American words to make it across the pond were largely utilitarian – signifiers for flora and fauna that didn't exist back in Merrie England. **Moose**, maize and tobacco ere among them. But there were others, too, that in retrospect might seem laden with significance – words like **plentifulness**, monstrosity and conflagration.

With no means of **swift** communication or **easeful** passage between the two countries (United States and Great Britain), American English **merely trickled back** into its source to begin with. But as the balance of power between Britain and her former colonies **shifted**, as America ascended to military, economic, cultural and technological dominance, that trickle swelled to a torrent, washing away any kind of quality control.

Sometimes, American words just seem more glamorous: who wants to live in a flat, when they could make their home in an apartment instead? Sometimes that glamour is **overlain** with **bracing egalitarianism**. Take 'movie', the word has all the glitz of Hollywood and none of the intellectual pretensions of the world 'film', which increasingly suggest subtitles 'foreign-language film' that can't be interchangeable with the word movie. Other times American words fill a gap, naming something that British English speakers have been unable to decide on, as is increasingly the case with ATM, a boring but brief alternative to cash point, cash machines, hole in the wall. It makes us predisposed to embrace the foreign.

It's impossible to have too many words, right? But like some **hoity-toity** club, language seems to operate on a one-in, one-out basis. Researchers behind 2014's Spoken British National Corpus, who found that the word awesome is now used 36 times more than the word Marvellous. "A nation that outsources the development of its own language – that language it developed over hundreds of years – is a nation that has lost the will to live" (Matthew Engel). But ultimately, the battle isn't really one of British versus American English, but of individual experience versus the homogenising effects of global digital culture.

### Opinion

Being colonized by another language is now happening in the world. It is happening with English that is becoming the global language. I don't like this but now you just have to learn the language if you want more things and opportunities in your live such as travel, study or work. I can't think in a world without my language, if it happened, my culture would disappear. Language describes you, your culture and your history. That's why it is important to save it. Changing your language, is changing yourself. I know how important is to have a global language, but the world mustn't kill the other languages, they are part of humanity.

### More new words

Bond	Reek	Scuttlebutt	Meaninglessness
Contend	Ornery	Euphemism	Cinch
Ceased	Boondoggle	Mock	

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