

# Re: put your money where your mouse is, or why I prefer Spanish to English: a proposal

*Source:* <http://coding.derkeiler.com/Archive/Python/comp.lang.python/2004-03/1979.html>

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*Date:* 03/12/04

Date: Fri, 12 Mar 2004 06:29:18 GMT

John Benson wrote, deliberately and in full possession of his mental faculties:

>Everybody talks about how much better Python is than Lisp, C++, Java or  
>whatever else because it's so much cleaner, looks like pseudocode only it's  
>executable and all the cool guys are using it because of this and other  
>advantages.  
>  
>I propose that we change the language of this board to Spanish, as long as  
>we're so vocally committed to using best-of-breed languages. Derived from  
>the Iberian dialect of vulgar Latin, Spanish has many important advantages  
>over English:  
>  
>1) It's executable phonetic code: how it's written is how you pronounce it.  
>English suffers from a bewildering array of rules and counterexamples in  
>matters of pronunciation.

Then how about Italian, or maybe something exotic like some Austronesian language – Hawai'ian or Maori.

Or how 'bout Chinese: How it's written doesn't influence pronunciation one bit, so written Chinese can be understood by speakers of phonetically quite different versions of Chinese, and to a limited extent by Japanese and Korean speakers.

>  
>2) It's a widely supported standard. A Spanish speaker from Tierra del Fuego  
>can understand somebody from Madrid with little difficulty. Many dialects of  
>English, however, are often incomprehensible to other English speakers, like  
>Cockney, 'Strine and HBHE (High-Baudrate Hindustani English).

Austronesian languages are also a widely supported standard, the distance from Hawai'i to New Zealand being more than 5000 km (I forget how much exactly), and speakers of Hawai'ian can understand speakers of Maori with not that much difficulty.

And that Chinese is the widely supported standard to soon leave other widely supported standards in the dust is a matter of course.

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>3) *Spanish has less monosyllabic words than English. Programmers paid by the hour should be intrigued by this opportunity to augment their income. Also, the same amount of actual progress will take longer to report, conveying the impression that more has actually been accomplished.*

(Most) Austronesian languages' phonetic inventory is even more limited than that of Spanish, so even less monosyllabic words tend to occur.

So your arguments, even more so.

Chinese on the other hand tends to have more monosyllabic words (though in actuality today most words are bisyllabic), but distinguishes them through tones. So carefully formulated progress reports may sound like an uplifting song, conveying the impression that all is going well, while in fact little has been accomplished. Even easier if you do this in Cantonese.

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>4) *It hasn't been thrown together from the motley of influences that make English such a potpourri (from the French for "rotten stew"). Oops! Like I said, English is too much a patchwork of other languages to qualify as a natural venue for Pythonic discourse.*

Ha, Spanish is a potpourri of vulgar Latin, Basque and whatever proto-Iberian influences there were and, to a high degree: Arabic! If you really want a 'pure' language, I think today your best bet might be Icelandic, which is however not a widely supported standard...

>

>& *cetera.*

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>*Thinly-veiled threat: If this board doesn't immediately cut over to Spanish because it is obviously superior to English, I shall be forced to consider its badmouthing of other computer languages as just so much small-minded special pleading.*

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>*P.S. The fact that I have an M.A. in Spanish has nothing to do with the fact that Spanish is the best language for this board. I have recommended it solely on its obvious and indisputable merits. In the spirit of magnanimity, however, I will state in advance that anyone who disagrees with me is more to be pitied than censured.*

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Christopher