

## READER AHOY!

Jennifer Phillips, 09/19/09

Arr, shiver me timbers! We be right considerable stuck in our understandin' o' Latin and Greek plurals, matey. Yon scurvy Yankee dogs who pen lyin' rags fer landlubbers be claimin' that our Latin and Greek words should be whipped into properrr Amerrrican English w' all these hissed plurals. Aye, I'm t' first t' give the landlubbers their blubberin' words and bid them be welcome, but before ye rush to blab jus' like a Yankee landlubber, let me put hand to wheel and steer ye straight on this yon vasty topic.

Firstly and thusly, pirates and science be on speakin' terms. Aye, landlubbers don't credit it, but 'tis true. Not only we be bo' 'splorers misunderstood and feared, we bo' also ken what crewin' is all about, and how words be ropes or cutlasses dependin' how they be used.

In centuries past, sailin' jargon got stolen by landlubbers who walked 'boot boastin' o' splitting mainbraces, room fer swingin' cats, shiverin' timbers, usin' such vasty words o' distant seas to make themsel'es sound tra'elled wi'out e'en gagging down one cup of grog. (Gar, now I be getting thirsty thinkin' 'boot it.) Aye, not one in eight used yon terms properly, shame t' say.

Nowadays t' richest word booty be in science, so people strut 'boot talkin' o' "ego," "codependence," "DNA," "genetic," "enablin'", all those fancyamuck words when they don't really ken their use, *capisce*?<sup>1</sup> E'eryone wants t' show off their piece o' eight, that be all.

Now, those scurvy Yankee dogs who pen and edit lyin' rags are all thumbs down on 'spert word rules which leave them marooned in understanding. "Nobody knows Latin and Greek anymore, so if we use them, our readers won't understand what these endings are," they snivel. "Audience comprehension," they mewl, as tho' anybody e'er drew a map o' buried booty or o' genetic function nice as pie fer t' first Simple Simon to follow.

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<sup>1</sup> If ye can't ken *capisce*, try to savvy or comprehend it, *capeesh*?

*Bilgewater!* Yer true pirate won't write down "hoist sail here, tack starboard there, hoist anchor here" nor define terms on yer navigation maps. Whoever doesn't ken sailin' shouldn't be out navigatin' by others' maps. Any pirate worth his salt will lie like a scurvy dog when it comes to pennin' down buried treasure. T' real map be in their heads, which ye can't get out o' them even if ye crack their heads open with yer cutlass. Scientists be the same. Heed me words-- ye can't crack open decades o' scientific training with a few whacks o' yer pen, whether ye be a 'spert lyin' scurvy scribbler or no.

Ye gotta pull rope w' scientists or yer words will be hung by the yardarm by all these who ken what's tru'. Landlubbers may rejoice at yer silly slicin' of jargon into lies, but ye won't get no respect from these who dirty their hands steerin' t' discovery. Go changin' science int' yer words for yer hapless landlubbers, that be one thing, aye. But t' go up and tell us that pirates or scientists must speak like landlubbers, that be a laugh. Lend me yer hand on me hook, and I'll tell ye why.

Seventhly comes after thusly, standin' fer the *seven seas* that pirates and scientists be sailin' t' 'splore and plunder the world o' its treasures. We don't sail t' seven seas w' just Yankees or Limeys as our crew. Avast the very thought! Aye, mayhap these fancy privateers pokin' along coasts do, but every true 'splorin' crew be made up o' people o' all lands workin' and talkin' together, matey.

The main criterion fer crewing a voyage o' 'sploration be lust-- fer piracy or science, take yer pick. Next comes talent, knowledge, and the skill t' work through choppy waters or experiments while keepin' one's lunch down. English? Avast! Nobody ever got hung from the yardarm fer having a clumsy tongue in English. In the galleys there be no "please tell me, one or two lumps o' sugar, sir?" or such queenly chit-chat over yon hardtack. Such ponces would be

laughed off the plank by these who kened them, while those who didn't ken would look at them blank-like.

Along w' the rope-pullin', new pirates learn t' *lingua franca* o' the job—how they better jump t' and handle sails, wheels, and such when told, and ken how t' issue orders others can savvy. By their salty tongues ye ken pirates, arrr!

That be how scientific crewin' works, too-- t' keep harmony workin', all words must work for t' here and now. Scrub benches, pass the pipettes, collect data, analyze it—'tis all the same whether ye be Chinese, Japanese, French, Turkish, or else-- yer don't have time t' be all hoity-toity in faddy English fer t' scurvy Yankee scribblers.

Even when t' scientists put up their 'splorations in articles (which be writin' 'boot discovery and challengin' others t' disprove their navigation)—true scientists ken t' use the *lingua franca* that Japanese, Hindoos, French, Germans, Spanish, or other scientists can ken. That be pullin' t' ropes all together for science, savvy? Yonder be t' pirate spirit o' science!

Aye, I'll take a cutlass to anybody who forces scientists to drop their Latin and Greek in favor o' baby-like words for landlubbin' tastes. Landlubbers ain't trained on t' rope-pullin' or sailin' no matter how sweet ye speak to them. No matter t' words used, yer eyes don't know nothin' 'boot ropes if yer brain and hands haven't learnt t' ropes. T' brain and hands must ken before t' eyes ken.

If ye try before yer hands ken, ye'll be goin' all out on wrong angles, getting' ropes inconceivably tangled and knotted, then ye'll whine yon orders be godawful bilgewater because the words didn't fit int' yer brain pan nice and pretty. Avast! The job's not plain—mere words don't work wi'out t' understandin', and understandin' comes with t' work itsel'.

Leastways good greenhorns be pausin' to ask fer t' true meanin' o' odd jargon before they rush t' be all mistook. But gi'e them all t' jargon wi'out t' object, they be all cocky t' rush off t' be sailin' by their ears, not their eyes. Gar.

Yon scurvy scribblers be feedin' readers swill t' be earnin' their pieces o' eights as 'sperts when they don't e'en ken their fore from their aft. They truly be spreadin' confusion instead of learnin'— then they critique workin' 'sperts for being wrong in yon jargon? Arrr. Keelhaulin' be too good; let's be condemnin' them t' toil and learn instead.

Long live the jargon o' the Jolly Roger and the jargon o' datum-huntin'! May both jargons flow free and easy t' all shores where the treasures o' t' world await! Pack up your vessel with the *lingua franca* of Latin, Greek, and other pirated tongues before you set off, and you'll always have holds full of fantastic booty!