

Sonia

HOLLIMON-STOVALL

Da 411 on givin' props to English

Ebonics should not be a second language



It may have been cute when Audrey Hepburn couldn't pronounce "plains in Spain" or "Hartford, Hereford and Hampshire," but not even the original classy lady could get a job speaking like that, and all she wanted in the movie was to work in a flower shop. Imagine the '90s, urban version of this movie, using "Ebonics," recently the most politically correct term for African-American slang.

"Dang! Y'all gon' wan' me ta do what? Nah uh, I ain't even tryin' ta hear dat (expletive). Whut 'chall think dis is?"

Hold on, there's my phone ringing — I think it could be Hollywood.

Since the dawn of language, nations and societies have had cultural dialects, and for instance in England before the turn of the century, the dialect you spoke often determined your station in life. Those who spoke "Queen's English" were generally the landed nobility and well-off. Any other variation, such as Cockney, was considered used only by the lower classes and the speaker undeserving of any opportunity. As in dear Eliza Doolittle's case, the only way to get a better job was to learn "proper" English.

I don't care if "dissed" did recently make it into the dictionary, using it at a job interview "ain't gonna" get you a job.

Does this mean that slang, specifically "black" slang, is low class and undeserving of recognition? Let me answer that question with another. Do blacks need legislative recognition in order to talk the way they want to?

When I'm kickin' it with the homecrew and just chillin', I talk the way I want to, using code words and nicknames my friends and I have made up or picked up from the street. Everyone, regardless of race, has their own "lingo" that is acceptable within certain family and friendship circles. That there is a time and place for everything is almost too obvious to state.

In a country where the battle is whether or not Spanish should be considered a second language, I can't believe that it would be acceptable to single out the dialect of one particular group for recognition. Are African-Americans too ignorant to learn standard English? Not according to the committees in favor of Ebonics. Oh no. They just want us to feel included, bridge the gap and acknowledge that our slang is language, too.

How much longer will separatist endeavors be accepted as politically correct "cultural sensitivity?"

If this idea of slang dialect as standard language becomes a reality, just imagine the fun for printers of federal and state forms. Already there are complaints in New York that the driver's license test has to be printed in too many Asian languages and it's costing the city a

fortune — imagine if they have to start printing in slang dialect.

First off, you would have to identify your race before taking the test, and for people of mixed races, this would be big fun.

Then, the really fun part. Just what type of slang do you speak? I mean, there's Southern slang, East Coast, West Coast and Hispanic slang. Would you choose the test that says "dude" or "homeboy?" Would the test be for cars, "rides" or "lowriders?"

But Spanish as a second language would cause too much confusion, right?

People of color don't need federal validation to speak their own dialect, nor do I think it would benefit anyone for teachers to stop correcting mistakes in grammar for the sake of cultural sensitivity.

The losers would still be those kids from uneducated homes, and I can't imagine the sensitivity of employers when they are throwing out misspelled applications and are forced to desperately try to translate during a job interview.

Not many generations have passed since blacks struggled to get into college, and not much further back were they struggling just for the right to learn how to read. Now that we can do all of those things, there are those who want to take away the tools to succeed in the name of cultural awareness and inclusiveness. Wake up, and take a sniff 'cause here's the coffee — we shall overcome.

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Patrick

MACDONALD

Writer leaves anonymity behind

Chalkboard sage imparts his wisdom to students

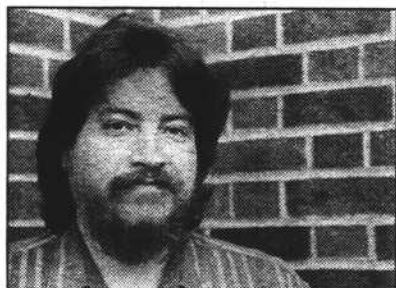
Awaken, you sleeping giants and return to the torturous paths of higher learning. Once again we are faced with the challenges that confront all students. What does this next semester hold in store for me? What will my new instructors be like? Does it get any better than this?

For those of you returning to these hallowed halls, I say welcome back. To the lucky few who are just embarking on this quest for a degree, I say prepare for this experience well. What happens over the next few years will give you the skills you need to continue in the working world as leaders of business and industry.

But you will not find this an easy path to travel. It is fraught with many perils. Long hours spent in quiet study and reflection on the meanings of life and how projectiles travel. Writing endless tomes about truth and reality, and developing chemical compounds that do not explode in the lab. And endeavoring to prove your prowess in your chosen subjects through the most terrifying of all perils — the examination.

Some of you may not survive. The ones who do have discovered true enlightenment through many lectures, pens and pencils flowing across the page in a mad dance of note-taking, and the clever use of tape recordings.

But the real key to success in college, as in any endeavor, is managing your time. If you have ever tried to make it from Nebraska Hall to Brace Lab in 10 minutes, you have either developed extraordinary



methods of time management, or have found that elusive worm hole that only appears when certain curse words are muttered while standing upon the steps of Nebraska Hall.

While managing your time may seem unimportant if your classes are not scheduled one right after the other, finding time to study, work on group projects, write papers and prepare for tests, is essential. It is more essential if you have a life outside of college, or work to acquire the funds necessary to enjoy what little time off you do have.

Now throw a wife and two small children into the mix, and you have something that resembles my situation.

At this point, I should probably introduce myself. For those of you who don't know me, I have never been, or will be, a perfume model. Most importantly, I am not your typical college freshman.

I am 36 years old, with a military background and 13 years of experience operating nuclear reactors. I have heard lots of jokes about glowing in the dark, growing additional appendages and having children that resemble something out of an R.L. Stine novel.

With such a humble background,

I can hardly consider myself someone who stands out in a crowd. I would rather consider myself to be an unassuming character. It is safer that way.

Hence, I can only lay a minimal claim to fame as the "Phantom Chalkboard Writer" in Avery Hall. Avery Hall holds some special creative magic for me. I have yet to determine why. Perhaps the journalism department provides a focal point for creative energies, drawing them into Avery Hall. Or maybe not.

I appear before you through the not-so-subtle promptings of my fellow Calc I students. Their encouragement means my literary works can now be appreciated by a larger audience.

I do not intend to betray their trust in me. During the next few weeks, I hope to amuse and enlighten you. Some of what I write may shock or offend, but I plan to make you think about the topic at hand.

But I am not so shallow as to believe that mine is the only opinion worthy of discussion. I welcome your comments and suggestions, because without them I cannot improve myself, which is why I am really here.

So awaken you sleeping giants and set your feet upon that worn and torturous path of enlightenment and higher learning. We travel this course together, so, to quote a recent Nissan commercial, let's "enjoy the ride."

MacDonald is a freshman electrical engineering major and a Daily Nebraskan columnist.



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