

"s," adverbs by adding "ly," and that degrees are indicated by the words "more" and "most."

Whether or not Basic will actually become a workable international language only the post-war world can tell. But, like all other such projects, opinion is divided sharply into two violent camps, with the arguments running like this:

Arguments for Basic

Proponents insist that as a world language Basic tops all other attempts because it stems from a tongue spoken by 200,000,000 people, has a background of spontaneous growth, and leads into a rich literature—none of which can be said for an artificial language like Esperanto. As the speech of the American melting-pot, regular English has bridged cultures, while Basic has spread over wide geographical areas (its greatest success has been in India, and even low pidgin has spread rapidly through the South Pacific and across Malaya). Other arguments: English can be made the easiest language for learners, and sloughing off endings for simplification doesn't mangle it as a Romance language would be mangled. Among its staunchest supporters are H. G. Wells, George Bernard Shaw, Julian Huxley, and Ivy Litvinoff.

Charges Against It

The bitterest charge against Basic—whose opponents come chiefly from the ranks of those who advocate another international language—is that it represents "cultural imperialism" (Winston Churchill said in his speech: "The empires of the future are the empires of the mind"). By this argument, Esperanto, or any of the other 325 projected universal tongues which do not have a base language, would be superior because they are not only impartial, but are broad enough to lend a brilliance of expression which its limited vocabulary denies to Basic. Churchill himself, like other English-speaking persons, would find the habit of leaving out words far more difficult than the learning of a new language.

With singular glee, its opponents like to point to the "clumsiness" of Basic. "The officer led his soldiers against the enemy, but the enemy stood firm" would, they said, read like this: "The person in military authority was the guide of his men in the army against the nation at war, but the not-friends stood solidly upright." But to this C. K. Ogden snapped back his own translation: "The lieutenant went in front of his men to the attack, but the other side did not give way."

What Basic English would do to the speech of the Master of Words is shown by this "translation" of a part of the Prime Minister's address at Harvard.

CHURCHILLIAN ENGLISH

I like to think of British and Americans moving about freely over each other's wide estates with hardly a sense of being foreigners to one another. But I do not see why we should not try to spread our common language even more widely throughout the globe and, without seeking selfish advantage over any, possess ourselves of this invaluable amenity and birthright . . . I am here to tell you that whatever form your system of world security may take, however the nations are grouped and ranged, whatever derogations are made from national sovereignty for the sake of the larger synthesis, nothing will work soundly or for long without the united effort of the British and American people. If we are together nothing is impossible. If we are divided, all will fail.

BASIC ENGLISH

I take pleasure in the thought of British and Americans going about freely one on the property of the other almost not conscious that they are of different countries. I do not see why we should not make the attempt at an even wider distribution of our common language over the earth, and, with no purpose to get the better of others, take up as our right the values that come from this move . . . I am here to say to you that whatever form or system of safe government for the earth you have, however nations are grouped and ranged