

A Snippet from The Chapter On Case

written by Holly

May 31, 2006

By Holly Lisle

Exploring grammatical forms not used much in English is part of the best fun of building languages. Here's a little snippet from the **Create A Language Clinic** chapter on Case (Declension).

Using Case As A Worldbuilding Tool

Let's play with a sentence in English, creating a couple of new cases to reflect a society very different from our own.

Creating A Case (or Two) for the Government

Let's say that we're required (by law, religion, or mind control) to publicly speak to and about government officials in terms of deep respect. Further, let's say that we wish to speak of them among ourselves in, ah, a somewhat less reverent manner.

We'll create the reverential case and the despicable case specifically to discuss government officials.

We'll create two case rules to make it possible for us to carry out these new goals for our language:

â€¢ **Reverential-case** nouns end with the suffix "ba (singular) and "bat (plural) and reverential-case verbs begin with the prefix b'.

â€¢ **Despicable-case** nouns end with the suffix "duh

(singular) and “dork (plural) and despicable-case verbs begin with the prefix dâ€™.

Now letâ€™s do a sentence, modifying it both ways. The basic sentence will be:

- Senator Hypocriticus addressed the Assembly on the subject of raises for members of the Senate.

We can tag certain nouns as neutralâ€”that is, not in need of modification. Well, really, we only have two neutral nouns in that whole sentence, and those are the words subject and members. Everything else has a political charge thatâ€™s going to require modification. [1]

Reverentially, (what youâ€™re going to hear on the nightly news, for example,) weâ€™ll get:

- Senatorba Hypocriticus bâ€™addressed the Assemblyba on the subject of raisesbat for members of the Senateba. (grovel, grovel)

The guy at home watching this on television is going to turn with one eyebrow raised and says to his wife:

- Senatorduh Hypocriticus dâ€™addressed the Assemblyduh on the subject of raisesdork for members of the Senateduh.

Same words. Same informationâ€”almost. We know that in the first sentence, the speaker is sucking up, whether by inclination or by compulsion. We know in the second sentence that the speaker disapproves of almost everything said by the first speaker.

[1] The word raises could be considered a neutral word, too; in most cases, raises are happy things, and everyone loves to get them. In the case of government officials voting themselves raises, however, the word takes on blood-pressure-raising qualities. Because of that, we can treat raises in this instance as a special case involving only government

raises. In which case, we modify it. (Which is, by the way, the nice thing about making up your own rules. They always work out the way you want them to when you do.

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Public Service Announcement: Internet Neutrality

written by Holly

May 31, 2006

By Holly Lisle

“Last summer, the FCC and Courts removed consumer protections on speedy Internet service and handed the phone companies and cable TV a blank check to create preferred service for favored clients. If Congress does not put these protections back soon, it could be a lot harder to reach your church or school, your local businesses or online communities you care about.”

From It'sOurNet

Non-tiered Internet access is what makes it possible for sites like this one and the Forward Motion Writers' Community to exist. We're nobody's cash cows or favored customers; we're small, and fringe, and unimportant in the grand scheme of things.

Please take a look at It'sOurNet and make your voice heard to your Senators and Congressmen. The world-wide communities we've fashioned and the easy communication we enjoy with each

other are at risk.

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Storm Toasted Our Modem

written by Holly
May 31, 2006
By Holly Lisle

With apologies for my absence, I've been without Internet since Sunday when a storm blew through, took out our power for a couple of hours, and toasted our modem. We just got it fixed, I'm catching up with a ton of mail, and I'll be back tomorrow.

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Favorite Lines Snippet, Blood Pressure, and Stuff

written by Holly
May 31, 2006
By Holly Lisle

A tiny, tiny snippet of today's 2000 words from the **Create A Language Clinic**, from the section on creating adjectives and adverbs:

We can, in other words, noun our verbs, verb our nouns, wring adjectives and adverbs and anything else we might want out of everything including the kitchen, the sink, and the cockroach beneath it, and in all other ways drive ourselves batwonkily mad twisting our language into labyrinthine pretzelconstruction nightmariforms.

Welcome to English. Have an aspirin.

On the blood pressure issue: In the last couple of weeks, just from eating vegan and taking a daily OTC herbal diuretic, my blood pressure has come down from an 160/100 to 140/82, average. Not perfect yet by any means, but give me a couple more weeks. And I'm feeling better. I cannot even begin to describe how much better I'm feeling. I'm writing better. I'm focusing better. And the constant headache is gone. I still have the occasional flare-up, but it responds to one or two aspirin and retreats.

Stuff. The weekend. We actually got out to see a movie for the first time in ages last weekend. **Over The Hedge**. I was expecting a preachy "Humans are evil"-themed movie, and was delighted to be proven wrong. It was a lot of fun, and worth a recommendation. And now, I am outta here. Until next Monday, anyway. Have a good weekend.

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Public Service Announcement:

20 Worst Agents Listing

written by Holly

May 31, 2006

By Holly Lisle

Due to the recent flap between Barbara Bauer and Absolute Write, I'm reprinting the 20 Worst Agents list from SFWA:

- * The Abacus Group Literary Agency
- * Allred and Allred Literary Agents (refers clients to "book doctor" Victor West of Pacific Literary Services)
- * Barbara Bauer Literary Agency
- * Benedict Associates (also d/b/a B.A. Literary Agency)
- * Sherwood Broome, Inc.
- * Capital Literary Agency (formerly American Literary Agents of Washington, Inc.)
- * Desert Rose Literary Agency
- * Arthur Fleming Associates
- * Finesse Literary Agency (Karen Carr)
- * Brock Gannon Literary Agency
- * Harris Literary Agency
- * The Literary Agency Group, which includes the following:
 - Children's Literary Agency
 - Christian Literary Agency
 - New York Literary Agency
 - Poets Literary Agency
 - The Screenplay Agency
 - Stylus Literary Agency (formerly ST Literary Agency, formerly Sydra-Techniques)
 - Writers Literary & Publishing Services Company (the editing arm of the above-mentioned agencies)
- * Martin-McLean Literary Associates
- * Mocknick Productions Literary Agency, Inc.
- * B.K. Nelson, Inc.
- * The Robins Agency (Cris Robins)
- * Michele Rooney Literary Agency (also d/b/a Creative Literary

Agency, Simply Nonfiction, and Michele Glance Rooney Literary Agency)

* Southeast Literary Agency

* Mark Sullivan Associates

* West Coast Literary Associates (also d/b/a California Literary Services)

Please pass on this warning, plus links, to any writers you know.

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Over 10,000 Words on Language Clinic

written by Holly

May 31, 2006

By Holly Lisle

The Language Clinic has rolled over 10,000 words (the original concept here was to write a 3,000-word chapter and make that available quickly).

I estimate that I'm now around the halfway mark. No chance whatsoever of finishing it tomorrow. Good chance of finishing it next week.

I'm having huge fun with it, though, and I think the people who do the course will, too.

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Separated At Birth

written by Holly

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By Holly Lisle

Separated At Birth?

Faye Dunaway post facelift	Madame, with Waylon Flowers
	

Who'da thunk?

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First Chapter of I SEE YOU Is Up

written by Holly

May 31, 2006

By Holly Lisle

Put the first chapter of I SEE YOU on the site, will get the second one up in the next week or so, and then the third a week or two after that.

I hope you enjoy.

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I SEE YOU: Romantic Times Top Pick

written by Holly

May 31, 2006

By Holly Lisle

✖ Just got the news from Michelle Rowen that **I See You** got 4 1/2 stars and a Top Pick from **Romantic Times**.

Here's a quote from the review: "Talk about putting readers on the edge of their seats! Lisle's new thriller is a gut-wrenching combination of terror and romance, with a touch of the paranormal. The well-defined characters breathe life into this creepy, intense tale, making it truly unforgettable."

Which reminds me—I need to get the first couple of chapters up. The book will be on shelves the first of July, and I'd sort of forgotten that.

Michelle's new book, **Angel With Attitude**, will also be coming out in July, and got 4 stars. Her first, **Bitten and Smitten**, was funny and wonderful, and I'm really looking forward to seeing what she's done next.

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Lovely Language Geekdom

written by Holly

May 31, 2006

By Holly Lisle

I'm up to 44 print-ready pages on the Language Clinic, and I'm not even halfway. The **Language-Building Clinic** was supposed to be a single chapter in the **Worldbuilding Clinic** book, but it's expanding wildly.

Here's a snippet from today's work.

The English Issue, From the Language Builder's Perspective

The problem with having English as your first language, from the language builder's perspective, is that English is a language that never met a word it didn't like.

It got its birth as the Norman soldier's attempt to pick up Anglo-Saxon barmaids, and the Norman tongue had been pretty promiscuous even before that. It started out when Roman Latin kept illicit company with Germanic nouns and African adjectives and Greek verbs and a whole lot more, kept a little of this, a bit of that, and some of everything else, squeezed the whole mess into mostly-regular Latin grammar, bred like mad, and then tore across western Europe spreading civilization and what would become all the Romance languages—Italian, Spanish, French, Portuguese, and so on—before falling into disarray and disuse.

Centuries passed, while its clan of offspring shifted and evolved.

Then Latin's child Old French, carried by invading Normans, met my blue-painted intransigent Germanic-speaking Anglo-

Saxon ancestor horde, and in the crash, all of Latin's beautiful, logical rules broke, and Normans with their squishy Latinate multi-syllable soft sounds careened into rough-edged Celts and the advent of four-letter words that only had four letters.

Since then, English, the bastard child of frequent and messy cultural collisions, has gone on to add words from every other language on the planet that ever had an idea it didn't already contain. It has freely coined words when its speakers came up with concepts for which there were no words. It has cheerfully embraced, and then co-opted, and frequently mangled, the grammars and vocabularies of other places and peoples, under the absolute certainty that even though there were already a hundred ways to say "Dinner was great," having a hundred and one ways would be better.

English speakers have never accepted the limitations of the language. They have always just built more language to accommodate their needs, and then encouraged everyone else to jump onboard. Think Silicon Valley and the explosion of techie terms as a recent example of this. English goes anywhere and does anything, never takes No! for an answer, and even though it's a beast to learn well, can be picked up in a workable basic form by just about anyone, anywhere, using tons of words new speakers already know (because English raided their language for vocabulary a century or five ago.)

Every rule in English has an exception, or half a dozen of them, every part of speech has sections that have been tacked on like body parts to Frankenstein's monster, and everything you can say one way, you can say at least a dozen other ways, and probably closer to a hundred.

Because of this, English speakers (and therefore English-speaking language builders) have built into their subconscious minds this inherent linguistic sense that

anything is possible, that the language rules are really just general guidelines, that such rules as exist are mostly made to be broken, and that these rules certainly need not apply to them if they donâ€™t want them to.

Pause here for a moment. Consider what I said at the beginning of this course about a language being the soul of its people.

See what I mean?

There's considerably more, but I thought this bit was fun.

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