

Keep your mayonnaise in the dark



English has been wriggling its way into the Netherlands for many decades now. Remember back in the nineties when you were six and *Mighty Morphin' Power Rangers* played in a language you didn't understand? Nowadays children get to watch Dutch dubs, but the Anglicisation has marched on and has infiltrated our daily lives. This has led many Dutch people to believe they control the English language at a high level. Unfortunately, though, they don't. In fact, the increase in English is probably responsible for a distasteful blend between our primary and secondary languages termed 'Dunglish', often caused by literally translating speech.

The term Dunglish is a literal collision between Dutch and English, but the most commonly used Dutch term, 'steenkolenengels' (*lit.* coal English), has far more interesting etymology. It goes back all the way to the early twentieth century, when the only way for Dutch port workers to communicate with the personnel of English coal ships was through a very basic form of English. Today the term is applicable to any Dutch person, and it simply means 'dude, your English sucks'.

Take for instance the following example posted on www.dunglish.nl: according to fire protocol, you must 'be disabled helpful' and 'mind that no colleagues or visitors left behind'. While most people will be able to make sense of these instructions, they show poor effort on the translator's part. That is, of course, assuming more than Google

Translate was applied to the original text to begin with. If people cannot be bothered to lay down a plain, correct fire protocol, it makes you wonder how much they care about your safety in the first place.

Fortunately, most instances of Dunglish are cringe-inducing rather than tear-inducing. We have all heard of 'falling with the door in the house' (getting directly to the point) or 'being in the war' (being confused). But did you know you're supposed to 'keep [your mayonnaise] cool and in the dark' (www.dunglish.nl)? After all, you would not want your cream-coloured goo to know you secretly prefer its archenemy—that bottle of ketchup it has to share a cupboard with.

My own English is in no way perfect, so whenever I am uncertain of something, I either look it up or ask someone to help me out. I think many people would benefit from doing the same, not just because their texts or speech will sound less aggravating, but also because it will improve their knowledge of the English language. Sure, no one is going to throw a fit over 'I have it cold', but shivers are sure to run down *my* spine as I try to contain myself from correcting it.

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