

NEAR EAST UNIVERSITY

FACULTY OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

**DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE
AND LITERATURE**

**THE HISTORY OF THE ENGLISH
LANGUAGE
(UNDERGRADUATE THESIS)**

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1999



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I. PREFACE

Education has given success to many students throughout life. And being one of these students must be the most honourable certificate, I could get. I believe that this honour does not only effect us but also to the teachers who have given us the strength of education.

I would like to thank all my teachers and especially our chairperson Assoc. Prof. Dr. Cül Celkan for helping me throughout my University Education. Being in the English Language and Literature department has not only given me an education of English but also showed me that the love you would find at home, is found at our department. This is what makes our department different.

These three and a half years have passed with joy and love. I owe this happiness to the friendship, that had a great influence on my education. And if I had a chance to give an honour for the person who gave this joy and love, it will be to our chairperson Assoc. Prof. Dr. Gül Celkan. I believe that the English Language and Literature department would not have succeeded without her.

THANK YOU...

Firuzan Remzi...

950727...

THE HISTORY OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE: CHANGES THROUGHOUT TIME

II. INTRODUCTION...

HISTORICAL OUTLOOK ON THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE...

English Language is a difficult subject to look at it historically. It simply starts from the beginning and carries through to the present day. First of all, A history of English Language makes you think about the question "What is meant by the word, English?".

In the present history, most people explain 'English' a standard English (a written form). A brief explanation of the history of English Language, specifies the standard English. Moreover, English maybe a single Language that has numerous varieties of itself. Different dialects in different countries. Regional dialects differ in various aspects. English is also used as a Lingua Franca for purposes of commerce and science. Because it is known as the status of the world Language. Basically, English can not develop in all varieties and registers of the Language that English is still alive. There is no exact date or proof to show, when English had began. English is a branch of the west Germanic family of Languages that came to the islands in the fifteenth century by the Germanic people known as Anglo-Saxons. They arrived in England and probably spoke a different variety of the Language. Before they occupied England the country was Romanised Celts, many years before Anglo-Saxons claimed their own political system. The concept is to the large extent politically and educationally. The invaders brought with them their own version of French, so the Norman conquest created a country that had no longer English or English speaking. England experienced

a renaissance of Latin learning. Latin, French and English were in use. Before the time of Alfred 'English' did not exist. Only a number of varieties existed. The standard turned out to be basically west Saxon, the result of political events had nothing to do with the advantages and disadvantages of the dialect. The development of a standard English is the result of an increased education and mobilised speakers, in the need of communication. A standardised form of English needs the introduction of writing and the model of Latin, to form the varieties of English. 'Interregnum' was provoked by the political circumstances of the Norman conquest and the replacement of English by Latin and French. The end of this Interregnum, no standard English form existed, that is when the idea of using English activities arose.

Another question is what a history devoted to the English Language. It can not contain all details of the history. It only focuses on the variety known as standard English. There are no texts which give us information about the English Language, though Ælfric wrote a Latin grammar in English. The history of English has divided itself into three major periods: Old English (referring to the Anglo-Saxon), Middle English and Modern English. Modern English is sometimes divided into the Early Modern English and the Late Modern English. Old English, the Norman conquest of 1066 introduced new settlers who spoke old French, this changed the nature of English. Middle English starts from early Modern English and the transition is dated from 1485. Both 1066 and 1485 are political dates. It had forced historians of the language to accept them for the development of the language. The period that followed, dated 1660, was mostly concerned with the regulation of the Language and produced numerous books about what was 'correct' English. The next period covers mainly the nineteenth century, boundaries are 1798 and 1914. This latter date suggests the breakdown of old attitudes caused by the horrors of the first world war and how it affected all aspects of society, including attitudes to language.

A history of Language must cover not only changes within the elements which make up a sentence-the sounds, the inflections, the vocabulary and the syntax-but also the wider changes which are reflected in attitudes to the Language and how the Language

is used for literary and other purposes. The changes in Language, especially sound changes happened slowly over a period of time. Also the history of English pronunciation can never take account of the pronunciation of all individual users of the language. The growing standardisation of spelling leads to discussion about what is the most appropriate spelling to use, and in the discussions the relation of pronunciation to spelling form a major concern. A new usage is first adopted by some people, and then spreads out to other people till it reaches an amount of population. In the change over from Middle to Modern English is mostly based on the fall of inflections. The first period of the standard may be regarded as establishing a spelling system in writing for country as whole, a spelling which has promoted partly through education (mainly through the publications of the printing press).

Firstly, the previous age had been concerned with regulating language and discovering the principles which underlined all language on the assumption that all languages followed the same structure. The nineteenth century was interested in the diversity of languages and varieties of language. One problem that such varieties faced, and still face, is that they do not usually exist in a regulated written form and thus may be regarded as inferior. Secondly, the nineteenth century saw an enormous growth in the historical study of language. The development of the concept of a family tree for languages and the recognition that English was a Germanic language which belonged to the Proto-Indo European family of languages were among the advances made at this time.

III. PHRASES IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE...

A) OLD ENGLISH...

Old English, and Anglo-Saxon, are names used by Modern scholars for the written version of a language used in England from the departure of the Romans until sometime after the Norman conquest. It is dated within the years 1100 to 1150. Direct written evidence is only found from the last four hundred years of this evolution, and the vast majority of the information about Old English is preserved in manuscripts written in the tenth and eleventh centuries. The scribes who wrote the manuscripts which are the only source of information about Old English lived in various parts of England wrote a version of the language which they spoke every day. These manuscripts preserve evidence of dialectal variation in the pronunciation and grammar of the language.

The coming of Christianity in AD 597 introduced Latin literacy to England, which was followed by attempts to render the English language in the letters of the Latin alphabet-those which survive to the present day. After about AD 975, as the result of West Saxon domination of the rest of the country, a degree of standardisation emanating from Winchester is to be found in Old English documents. This means that the vast majority of surviving Old English literature, which post-dates this standardisation, is written in Late West Saxon. Like German, Old English possessed a complex inflectional grammar. The Nominal group exhibited concord (agreement) between the article, modifier and head for number, gender and case. There were four cases (nominative, accusative, genitive and dative) and three genders (masculine, feminine and neuter). Nouns possessed distinct sets of inflectional endings, by which they can be classified as Strong and Weak nouns. In addition, according to the

syntactical environment, any adjective could adopt a set of either Indefinite or Definite (Strong or Weak) inflections. Verbs also fell into Strong or Weak types. A brief example of Old English:

Masculine noun ('the long day')

Singular	Plural
Nom. Se langa dæg	þā langan dagas
Acc. Þone langan dæg	þā langan dagas
Gen. Þæs langan dæges	þāra langena daga
Dat. Þæm langan dæge	þæm langum dagum

Neuter noun ('the distant land')

Singular	Plural
Nom. Þæt feorre land	þā feorran land
Acc. Þæt feorre land	þā feorran land
Gen. Þæs feorran landes	þāra feorrena landa
Dat. Þæm feorran lande	þæm feorrum landum

Feminine noun ('the old learning')

Singular	Plural
Nom. Sêo ealde lâr	þā ealdan lâra/e
Acc. þā ealdan lâre	þā ealdan lâra/e
Gen. þære ealdan lâre	þāra ealdena lâra
Dat. þære ealdan lâre	þæm ealdum lârum

Like other languages, expanded its vocabulary by means of external borrowing. Some of its wordstock can be traced to ancient borrowing from Latin in the centuries before the migration of the Germanic tribes to England. More important its borrowing, Old English, like German, made much use of compounding and derivation in the creation of new wordforms.

In all the categories of language-forms, vocabulary, and the spelling that represents sounds-literature has developed on a path somewhat different from that of the spoken language, and is more conservative than the spoken language.

The Coming Of The English...

The English language grew in England. We can not reconstruct something of its earlier stages in Indo-European, but before it came to England the Germanic branch had already differentiated from Indo-European and into three branches of its own. Those who came to England in the early fifth century and brought with them the beginnings of English were speakers of the Anglo-Frisian variety of West Germanic(one of these three branches). The first regional varieties of English were consequently defined in the areas in which the three tribes settled: the jutes settled in the south-east now called Kent; the Angles settled in the area north of the Thames up to Modern Scotland; and the Saxons settled in the area south of the Thames in the area outside Kent.

The religion of the Anglo-Saxons had a great deal to do with the history of language in Britain, for although the writings of Patrick, Gildas, and other Christians survive, all written in Latin, we have nothing from the pagan Anglo-Saxons because, in the early middle ages, education was the monopoly of the church and pagans were for the most part illiterate.

Writing Systems...

The writing system the Roman missionaries brought in AD 597 was the Latin alphabet- the same system the Roman legions had brought more than six hundred years earlier, an alphabet substantially like the one English used for today. Writing is a conventional method of representing a language by visible marks. Most of the successful writing systems represent the sounds of the language, but some attempt to represent what the language symbolises, cutting out the phonetic shape of the word and directly representing what the word means.

Old English Sounds & Sound Changes...

A living language is a spoken language: a dead language remains in written records only. But the written records too can speak: they can provide evidence of the spoken language. The evidence from Old English, then, will not help us to reconstruct how the spoken sounded in a particular speaker's idiolect, which is the only way a spoken language ever 'sounds'. It does, however, help us to understand the history of English sounds, and the sound pattern earlier English poets and other writers had to work with. A question like 'what is the evidence for the sound pattern of a dead language?'. It varies from language to language. But typically, it has six kinds of clues: 1) explicit early statements about its pronunciation: 2) rhymes, alliteration, puns, and other linguistic effects that depend on the sounds of words: 3) the later history of the language and on other languages related to it: 4) the representation of foreign words in the language and words from the language in foreign languages: 5) spelling convention in the language and: 6) other evidence, including-for stress and pitch-poetic meter. There were some exceptions to the freedom of old English spelling: some individual scribes had fairly fixed spelling habits and some literary centers, notably in monasteries, often developed a 'house style' for spelling.

Dialects & Political Boundaries...

The English were not a politically unified nation until late Old English times, and as they originally came from different parts of western Europe, they spoke different dialects of west Germanic. They settled in different parts of Britain, but able to communicate with each other. Dialects are varieties of a language that differ in pronunciation, vocabulary or grammar, but are not different enough to prevent understanding.

B) MIDDLE ENGLISH...

By 1100 certain changes, which had begun long before, were sufficiently well established to justify our use of the adjective middle to designate the language in what was actually a period of transition from the English of the early Middle ages-Old English-to that of the earliest printed books, which, despite certain superficial differences, is essentially the same as our own. Many linguistic features of Middle English were already tendencies in late Old English, but the beginning of Middle English is usually associated with the conquest in 1066. The last surviving Old English dates from 1154: and the earliest surviving text that has been called Middle English is dated from 1108-1122.

The changes that occurred during this transitional, or 'Middle,' period maybe noted in every aspect of the language: in its sounds, in the meanings of its words, and in the nature of its word stock, where many Old English words were replaced by French ones. During the Middle English period there were such extensive changes in pronunciation, particularly of unaccented inflectional ending, that grammar too was profoundly altered. Many of the grammatical distinctions of the Old English period disappeared, thereby producing a language that is structurally far more like the one we speak. By the end of the thirteenth century monasteries and universities found it necessary to make rules forbidding the young men in their care to speak English-one of these rules justifies itself 'lest the French language be entirely disused'.

The special difference in England was mostly result of the monopoly of literacy among the classes that spoke French, and the stabilising influence of the French landholdings of the same classes. So long as the landholdings remained, the conditions for change were absent.

I) EARLY MIDDLE ENGLISH...

The grammar of English underwent striking changes. The Old English inflectional system distinguishing case, gender and number in nouns and adjectives was greatly simplified as the vowels in unstressed inflectional ending ceased to be differentiated in pronunciation. The personal pronouns also became indistinct as the result of phonetic change, and new forms began to appear. Early Middle English is distinct from Old English also by the relatively high number of recent foreign lexical borrowing's. These are words borrowed into English from settlers in the Danelaw in the two hundred years preceding the conquest but, as a result of the cultural status of the West Saxon written standard, not recording in writing until after the Norman conquest, when the English language itself lost prestige by comparison with French. The major contribution of this last was to suppress standardised English before setting it free in infinite new variety, and subsequently enriching its vocabulary by copious loanwords and phrases.

II) LATER MIDDLE ENGLISH...

It saw the triumph of English over French in almost every sphere of life, the rapid expansion of the education of laymen in Latin, the beginnings of more extensive popular literacy, and the emergence of more standardised forms of the written language. In 1450 instruction in French was still thought to be a valuable qualification for a successful career in commerce, and schools existed to teach it for this purpose. With the decline of French as a technical written language in the early decades of the fifteenth century, many borrowing's of technical words were made into written language. The later Middle English period saw the emergence of spelling systems which achieved much more general use.

The fifteenth century is notable as the first great era in which the founding of grammar schools was viewed as a meritorious act among the wealthy and influential. This

century also witnessed important syntactical and phonological developments in the story of English.

The Decline Of French In England...

For a long time after the Norman conquest, French was the language of the governing classes in England. The impact, of the Norman conquest on the English language was not all of one kind: it continued to be significant during the following three hundred years in various ways, causing greater disenfranchisement of English at the beginning and greater adoption of French words into English at the end. It varied from one region to another, having one result in London but others in more distant areas: It varied from one class to another, being most obvious in the Establishment and nearly indiscernible among the peasantry. At first the new Establishment and its hangers-on, foreigners in England, spoke French because it was their native language: and It varied from one use to another, being most clear in the law courts and least so in casual conversation. The impact, in all its varieties, resulted from the kind of invasion and the kind of invaders that brought French to England. Nevertheless there was never any period during which the majority of the country's population did not speak English. Those whose ancestors were Norman's eventually came to think of themselves as English.

The French of the law courts, however, was an argot all its own, with many significant departures from Anglo-Norman or any other variety of French, and with the English substratum that was the mother tongue of its speakers showing in frequent English forms of vocabulary and grammar.

The Linguistic Influence of the Conquest...

The impact of the Norman conquest on the English language was to a large extent confined to the word stock, though Middle English also showed some instances of the influence of French idiom. A huge body of French words were ultimately to become part of the English vocabulary, many of them replacing English words that would have done for us just as well. Some examples from Middle English:

Old English

æhta
burhsittende man
dæl
forwearð
genôh
gewistfullian
mildheortness
rîce

Middle English

catel 'property'
citeseyn 'citizen'
porcioun 'portion'
perischid 'perished'
plente 'plenty'
make we feeste 'let us feast'
mercy 'mercy'
cuntre 'country'

Middle English Sounds & Spellings...

Like many newcomers to a linguistic community, the Norman scribes brought with them spelling conventions which they set about adapting to the needs of English. They also brought with them an outsider's ear for the sounds of English which they just as promptly applied to English spellings that native convention had restrained from keeping pace with English changes.

∞ Qualitative Sound Changes

The changes in the consonants, both by their reduction in individual sequences and words, and by the alliterations in their membership by loss and addition, were paralleled by changes in the vowels. The unstressed vowels of Old English had become increasingly difficult to distinguish, so that the morphological signals of synthetic constructions had to be replaced by syntactical and lexical signals in analytical constructions-that is by word order and prepositions.

The ascendant dialect of English at the end of the Middle English period, that of London, was formed out of elements of all three regions. London lay at a point where the frontiers of all three were close, and people from all three made their way to London. As a result the London variety, and the standard variety that is its descendant, have a somewhat eclectic composition.

Quantitative Sound Changes

They involve the actual quality of the consonant or vowel, which changes its sound or vanishes entirely. But some other changes in the sound patterns of English during the Middle English period involved the quantity of the sound, making long vowels short or short vowels long. Another rule that influenced vowel length operated in the Middle English period. It lengthened short vowels in the first syllable of two syllable words when that syllable was stressed and open (did not end with a consonant). The syllable rule resulted in new solutions to the problem indicating vowel quantity in conventional spelling. It also brought about regular changes, but the outcome of these changes was often a difference in the vowel quantity of the singular and plural of nouns. In such cases analogy almost always ironed out the differences; but analogy is a force, not a rule, and its workings are not regular.

Middle English Morphology & Syntax...

The Middle English nouns, adjectives, and articles illustrate the change most clearly. The Middle English noun had two cases (except, early in the period, for rare survivals of the dative), two numbers, and one gender: the eight possible variations of any Old English noun were reduced to four. The distinctive direct object and indirect object cases disappeared, leaving the only subject case-now better simply called the common case-and the possessive, as is still true of the Modern English noun. The Middle English noun has singular and plural numbers, also like the Modern English noun. And like the Modern English noun too, the Middle English noun had only 'natural' gender.

Changes In Grammar...

∞ The Reduction Of Inflections

Middle English became a language with few inflectional distinctions, where as Old English was relatively highly inflected, then less so than Germanic, which was about as fully inflected as Latin. This reduction of inflections was thus responsible for a structural change of the greatest importance.

∞ The Loss Of Grammatical Gender

One of the important results of the leveling of unstressed vowels was the loss of grammatical gender. In Old English, gender was readily distinguishable in most nouns. In Middle English, on the other hand, all but a handful of nouns acquired the same plural endings. This important development, coupled with the invariable *the* that supplanted the Old English masculine *se*, neuter *þæt*, and feminine *sêo* with all their oblique forms, effectively eliminated grammatical gender as a feature of English.

C) MODERN ENGLISH...

The history of English takes on an entirely new dimension after about 1800. No longer is it simply one of the varieties of the Germanic language family, nor subsidiary in its own homeland to French and Latin. Neither, for that matter, is it the symbol of English nationalism, whose merits are trumpeted in order to conceal misgivings about its true value in comparison with the classical languages. In the nineteenth century, English becomes largely standardised at home, expands beyond national boundaries, and is as a result more various in its overseas function as a world language.

In England during the nineteenth century, forces for standardisation were strong. Most notable of them was the great expansion of primary education, the purpose of which was to teach children to read and write and spell 'correctly'. As awareness of a correct form of the written language was promoted by increased literacy, the breakdown of Old dialect distributions was hastened by easier communication and the mixing of population. The study of English has always incorporated two distinct traditions and purposes. Indisputably the most familiar and widely followed is the pursuit of communicative effectiveness in the use of the language, both written and spoken.

There has been no systematic change in morphology to compare with the loss of inflection in Early Middle English, nor in the phonology to compare with the Great Vowel Shift. Changes to the syntax and especially to the lexicon are more notable, but not so striking as those which took place in Early Modern English.

1) EARLY MODERN ENGLISH...

The Early Modern English may be taken to extend from about 1500, when printing was becoming widespread, to 1800, when English had become established as a language of international importance and the subject as academic study. The English language, reflecting the growing confidence of the English nation, was reckoned to possess its own creative resources and need owe nothing to either French or Latin. The variety of changeableness of English, which had been linked to foreign influence since the twelfth century, was now compared unfavourably with the supposed fixity of Latin.

The first dictionary of English, compiled by Robert Cawdrey, appeared in 1604, and its title page offers to instruct its public in both the 'true writing' and the meanings, as well as the proper contexts in which to use, the many unfamiliar words they might encounter in their reading and in listening to the sermons of classically educated clergy. The most striking linguistic developments during the Early Modern period also concern the pronunciation of the language, and maybe viewed as continuing the series of raising's of the Great Vowel Shift. By 1750 the sound system of standard English possessed six long-vowel phonemes and the diphthongs. Morphological changes in the period were much more limited than those which distinguish Middle English from Old English, but there was considerable variation in both morphology and syntax. Syntactical developments also include the final abandonment of double negation in the standard language and the use of more periphrastic tense forms.

Changes in the lexicon in the Early Modern period consist in part of continuation of Latin influence noted in later Middle English and associated with the 'Inkhorn Controversy', but borrowing's from Spanish with Italian now join these traditional sources of new vocabulary.

II) RECENT DEVELOPMENTS...

In 1961, a new American dictionary of the English language, *Webster's Third New International*, appeared. Changes in the English vocabulary had made the earlier book obsolete; as a reference book, a working tool for readers, writers and teachers, the 1934 edition could no longer perform its job because too many new words had come into the vocabulary, and too many old ones had changed meaning or gone out of use entirely.

The development of method was the growth of linguistic science, well underway when the earlier edition appeared but greatly accelerated in the years since then. Millions who would never use or even see the dictionary were treated to journalists' views of its adequacy, for the dictionary had become the 'media event'. The continuing growth of the vocabulary; the accelerated growth of linguistic research; and the exponential growth of the mass media are the three changes that characterise the history of the English language in the twentieth century.

Twentieth-Century Vocabulary...

By the middle of the twentieth century, America had developed a distinctive vocabulary unlike that of Britain and even unlike that of America in the mid-nineteenth century. But only few of the sources for this new vocabulary were also new: the language continued to enrich its lexicon, as it had for over a thousand years, by borrowing, by the creation of intellectual and other specialised words, by the 'promotion' of slang to standard use, by the generalisation of proper names and outright coinages, by the widespread use of compounding, derivation, and functional shift.

☞ Borrowing

Most of the words borrowed in to American English since 1900 have yet to become naturalised: they still retain associations with the culture of their origin; they are often of uncertain pronunciation; they sometimes retain foreign inflections; they enter into limited compounds and derivations. The Middle English revolution in vocabulary had been carried out by borrowing, but the Modern English revolution is one created out of resources already in the language.

☞ Slang

Slang is an informal term, although many quite rigorous linguistic studies and dictionaries have concentrated on it. A slang word or phrase has special status on the scales of register, time, and space. And regional dialects often accept as standard what the national standard of the language would regard as slang. Slang, it could almost be said, is in the ear of the observer; one person's perfectly standard word is the slang word of another time, place, or style. It will survive into a new era as standard when its young speakers grow up; it will conquer new territory as standard when they move into a new region; it will characterise new registers as a new standard when they assume the new leadership of their society. Slang is most unlike other varieties in its instability.

IV. A DETAILED SURVEY ON THE BACKGROUNDS OF ENGLISH...

The beginnings of English left no literary or historical records and no archaeological traces. The explanation that was first proposed about 200 years ago and now is well supported with evidence from many languages is that there was once a language (now no longer spoken) that developed in different ways in the various parts of the world to which its speakers travelled. We give the name Proto-Indo-European to that prehistoric and now dead language because at the beginning of historical times languages that derived from it were spoken from Europe in the west to India in the east.

The Languages Of The World...

The first is a practical matter, the second a theoretical one. But is doubtful whether every language now spoken has even been listed, and most of them have not been described beyond mere mention. Not long ago a survey of the languages spoken in Africa listed some 700, excluding the largest family, the Bantu, which comprises most of the languages spoken in the southern half of the continent. A figure of about 4,500 languages in the world is often mentioned, but even a survey that counted as dialects what many would call languages would seem too low with such a total. The languages that have received the most study and the most discriminating classification have been languages with a long written history, like French and Spanish; or languages with great commercial or political importance, like Chinese or Arabic; or, most commonly, languages with both. But neither a long tradition of writing nor a large role in the world marketplace makes a language more important for language study.

A language that depends entirely on inflectional contrasts in verbs and in nouns and their adjuncts (pronouns, articles, adjectives) to signal syntactical relationship can, within the boundaries of the sentence, disregard word order as a significant linguistic feature. Such a grammar is called 'synthetic'. A language that depends entirely on word order and function words (such as propositions and auxiliary verbs) needs no inflectional contrasts to convey the relationship of one word to another in the sentence. Such a grammar is called 'analytic'. No language among those familiar to most Americans is entirely synthetic or entirely analytic. But classical Latin was much more synthetic than Old English was, and Old English was much more synthetic than Modern English is. The history of the English language, in terms of these two systems, has been one of change from a highly synthetic grammar to a largely analytic grammar.

Historical Reconstruction...

Writing, like fossils, does not in most cases take us more than a step or two behind what we can observe in the languages still spoken today. But some of the records are indeed quite old, and languages evolve fairly rapidly: thousand-year-old English survives in rather abundant records, and it is so unlike the modern language that special study is needed to read it, and even to recognise it for the English it is. The fuller record remains the spoken languages of the modern world. In them all four of the main categories of the language-vocabulary, sounds, word shapes and sentence shaper (morphology and syntax)-give evidence of the genetic relationships and hence of the history of the languages.

Historical reconstruction depends on the accumulation of sufficient relevant evidence and the confirmation that one piece can provide for another. For most words the meaning will have changed more than it has for the number-words; of course individual sounds have no 'meaning' at all by themselves. So historical reconstruction looks first

to forms and only later glances at the changes of meaning that the 'same' forms have undergone.

Indo-European & Germanic...

The history of English is limited to the history of language family to which it demonstrably belongs. That family now is usually called Indo-European because the languages in it are spoken over much of Europe and the Indian subcontinent (it is also been called Indo-Aryan or Indo-Germanic) 'Indo-European,' however, suggests that the speakers of the original language from which the others, including English, descended, were immobile: that they were from the start spread from India to England, and that they remained there. On the other hand, in the historical context of 2,000 years, however; in the absence of any written record of common Germanic; and without any historical annals to witness the contact of the Germanic tribes with their new neighbours, customers, conquests, or what ever it is better to say that the special features that differentiate Germanic languages from other Indo-European languages seem to be more than very marked examples of the internal effects of language change. They seem instead to be the effects of external influences that made common Germanic an early Creole.

Language Typology & Language Families...

In talking about a language family, we use metaphors like 'mother' and 'daughter' languages and speak of degrees of 'relationship' just as though languages had offspring that could be plotted on a genealogical, or family-tree chart. It has become customary to speak of languages in terms of families: of mother tongues, or related languages, of native and adopted words, of common descent and common ancestors. We speak of Latin as a dead language, but in fact it still lives in various developments as Italian,

French, Spanish and the other romance languages. Hence the terms *family*, *ancestor*, *parent*, and other genealogical expressions when applied to languages must be regarded as no more than metaphors. Languages are developments of older languages rather than descendants in the sense in which people are descendants of their ancestors. Older scholars classified languages as isolating, agglutinative, incorporative, and inflective, these being exemplified, respectively by Chinese, Turkish, Eskimo, and Latin. The isolating languages were supposed to represent the most primitive type: they were languages in which each idea was expressed by a separate word and in which the words tended to be monosyllabic.

The Old English Dialects...

Four principle dialects were spoken in Anglo-Saxon England: Kentish, the speech of the jutes who settled in Kent: West Saxon, spoken in the region of the Thames exclusive of Kent: Mercian, spoken from the Thames to the Humber exclusive of Wales: and Northumbrian, whose localisation is adequately indicated by its name. Old English dialect differences were slight as compared with those that were later to develop and nowadays sharply differentiate the speech of a lowland Scottish shepherd from that of his south-of-England counterpart.

V. MAJOR CHANGES IN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE BETWEEN THE YEARS 1400 & 1660...

The period from 1400 to 1660 saw some of the most far-reaching changes in the English language, which is hardly surprising as the language was adjusting to the new standard. In orthography various proposals were canvassed. The main conflict was between those who wanted to standardise spelling around traditional spellings and those who preferred to reform spelling in accordance with pronunciation. The proposals made by the latter group were so far away from the orthography used hitherto that they were not acceptable and this has remained the fate of spelling reformers. The former group contained many who wanted to modify tradition by making the etymology of words in English transparent.

Spellings common in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries that have not survived. The reformed spellings created uncertainty how the words should be pronounced. Gradually most adopted spelling pronunciations, though both an original and a new pronunciation existed side by side in many cases, and some words never accepted a spelling pronunciation. Etymology was a strong force in the changes in spelling. No doubt the adoption of etymology was partly motivated by the standardised spelling of classical Latin since that allowed English to accept a standard spelling for classical words as a contribution to the overall standardisation of the language.

Another feature of this period was the printing press which had been brought to England by William Caxton in 1476. The printing press in England was remarkable in two ways: most of the material it produced was in English rather than in Latin, and most of the compositors in the early period were foreigners-few of whom, if any, had any training in the current writing system found in England. Moreover, many private individuals excepted the printers to correct and regularise what they had written, and this replies to literary writers as much as the others. The spellings that were adopted by

the printers, gained ready acceptance, though it took some time for the restriction of the spellings to particular words to be regularised.

In Middle English punctuation marks included the virgule, a full stop, an inverted semicolon, and a question mark. With printing came in due course the full stop, colon, comma, exclamation mark and brackets. The semicolon and inverted commas were introduced later. The employment of these signs gradually favoured a grammatical over a rhetorical function. In general the period witnesses expansion in the type and number of punctuation marks which are subject to considerable experimental usage. The amount of poetry produced in this period was enormous when compared with the past, and its rhyme and metre can often tell us a great deal about possible pronunciations. The most important development was the operation of that change known as the Great Vowel Shift. During this period there was a qualitative difference between the short vowels on the one hand and the long vowels and diphthongs on the other, each category underwent changes independently of the other.

At all events it is possible to accept that the trigger of the Great Vowel Shift, was sociolinguistic: an attempt by some speakers to imitate the more acceptable pronunciation of London and the potential competition which this provoked. This approach also suggests that although we call this change the Great Vowel Shift, it is not necessarily a unitary change. It involved a number of smaller adjustments to pronunciation spurred on by social considerations which differed in various parts of the country. Shortly, once more there was a difference in London English between speakers with conservative and advanced pronunciations, for in the former the diphthong was retained and in the latter the monophthong was regular.

The final unstressed syllables in words even the ones of French origin became blurred so they could rhyme together. The introduction of so many French words created variation in the stress pattern of English. The tendency to push the stress to the front of the a word characteristic of Germanic came into conflict with the Romance

preference to have the stress further back. The result was uncertainty among speakers of the language as how to stress particular words, an uncertainty which has persisted to this day as the different pronunciations of a word.

The phonology of this period is characterised by the availability of different pronunciations in the variety recognised as the standard. However, pronunciation cannot be regulated by the end of this period, the same is not true of pronunciation. There was no uniformity in the recommendations of the grammarians and it is difficult to know what impact their writings may have had on the average speaker. The mixtures of varieties was too profound, the question of what lead to follow too confusing, the stranglehold of Latin on education too powerful, and the availability of reading matter too limited to allow speakers to do much more than begin to make adjustments to their pronunciation.

In the syntax period sees the continued movement towards an analytic language which increasingly restricts choice in placement of individual parts of the sentence. Equally the influence of Latin grammar encourages more 'logic' in the construction of a sentence and more explicitness in linking together its constituent elements. Thus the idea that each sentence should have a subject and a predicate becomes more dominant. At the same time the growth in literature which it seeks to reflect the spoken language means an increase in the number of sentences which are incomplete or imperfectly formed. This period sees an expansion in the amount of English prose, much of which was more technical and descriptive.

The verb group in this period is less wordy than it was to become. The occurrences of more than auxiliaries was rare and even two together was uncommon. The two tenses, present and preterite, continue, but this period is marked by the continued growth of periphrastic forms of the verb group. The use of a part of the verb 'to be' with the present participle grows dramatically in this period and is found with all tenses both active and passive. Although at the beginning of the period the simple tenses was

often used instead of the progressive, the latter became more regular though it had still not achieved its present extent.

A feature of the modal's at this time is the development of the past tense forms with modal meaning and these are at first used independently in a modal function though they are increasingly replaced by periphrastic expressions. It is in this period that the periphrastic form with *do* becomes grammaticalised, though variety in its use prompted by sociolinguistic factors continued into the next period. The frequency of *do* use increased dramatically in the period 1550-1600 in questions, both negative and affirmative, and in the period 1650-1700 for negatives. Many formal documents continue to record *do* forms in simple affirmative statements without necessarily implying emphasis. Because the inclusion of *do* makes the verb group longer, its presence adds weight and emphasis to a statement. This may have made it favoured by style-conscious writers who wanted to point a clause or mark a type of discourse.

In the organisation of the sentence elements the preference for the subject + verb + object order was established and influenced the development of certain sentence patterns as we have just seen with *do*. It was this preference which led to the continued disappearance of impersonal verbs and which encouraged the use of object pronouns after parts of the verb 'to be'. It was also this which caused the disappearance of inversion of the subject and verb when an adverb was placed at the head of a sentence.

Reflexive forms of verbs are commoner in this period than today, for the tendency has been to convert reflexive verbs into intransitives by omitting the reflexive pronoun. The personal pronoun was the usual form of the reflexive. Some verbs had an ethic dative which came to seem not dissimilar from the reflexive form. It was used with verbs of motion and found commonly when those verbs were imperative. In this period, the ability to place an adverb between the verb and its object was reduced, no doubt because the link between the verb and its object was regarded as so close that if

anything else was placed in that position it might mislead the hearer or the reader to assume it was the object.

In the formation of complex sentences, one can detect a growing use of conjunctions to make clear the relationship between the various clauses which form a sentence. The growth in the concept of a sentence accelerated this development. In previous periods of English and still today in colloquial English, syndetic Co-ordination and subordination are common.

This period in the history of the English language is known as one of great lexical expansion, principally through borrowing from other languages but also through the formation of new words from the language's internal resources. The principal language for borrowing was Latin. This is true even for the fifteenth century where *lydgate* was more consciously *latinate* than *Chaucer*, whose borrowing's had been more from French. The change to Latin was caused by the new humanism and the pre-eminence which this coffered on Latin, together with the great expansion of technical vocabulary which was almost all Latin-based or at least Greek through Latin. The English vocabulary finally lost its transparency as the large number of words inserted into the lexicon destroyed the cohesion in words belonging to the same semantic field or paradigm. The lexicon was expanded by word-formation from within the language. New compounds and derivatives were numerous, and functional shift was very popular with almost all authors. We should recognise that the period was one of the great efflorescence of literary and technical writing in English and this created the need for a vocabulary which was capable for expressing the new intellectual and other concepts.

The common core of the vocabulary probably remained relatively unchanged throughout the period, for it was in certain registers that the new words were congregated. Nevertheless, the creation of the standard must have rubbed off onto the lexis of the language so the certain words were approved and these would have entered the spoken language as well.

VI. THE "EVOLUTION" OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE & ITS ACKNOWLEDGEMENT AS A UNIVERSAL MEANS OF COMMUNICATION...

1) ENGLISH TODAY AND TOMORROW...

In the English language today we can see both centrifugal and centripetal tendencies. In countries where English is used as a second language, there has been a trend during the past half-century for local standards to become established, and for the language to develop independently of British or American English. If this trend continues, these local varieties may ultimately diverge widely from Standard World English, and become separate languages, just as the various Romance languages evolved from Latin.

On the other hand major forms of English as a first language (in Britain, north America, Australia, New Zealand) do not seem to be diverging from one another any longer, and in some respects even seem to be converging, and it is likely that they will continue to constitute a more-or-less unified language as a major medium of international intercourse. The slowing down of the divergent trend has been due to the great development of communications (aircraft, telegraph, telephone) and the rise of mass media (the popular press, the cinema, the radio, television). These things have enabled the different regional varieties of English to influence one another, and so reduce their differences.

Dialect Mixing...

A similar kind of process of convergence is going on inside Britain: the dialects are being mixed and levelled. In addition to the influence of the mass media, there has been that of universal and compulsory education, dating from the last quarter of the nineteenth century, which has worked against the broader dialect elements, both regional and social. Moreover, the population has been more mobile: the small self-contained community has practically disappeared, there has been continuing migration to the great cities, and in two world wars there has been mixing of men in enormous conscript armies. As a result, the traditional rural dialects of Britain have virtually vanished, and have been replaced by new mixed dialects, based on the great urban centres.

Received Pronunciation & Regional Accents...

Received pronunciation, a non-regional accent based on the speech of the great public schools, has been accepted as a standard inside England for well over a century. Increasingly, however, there has been a tendency for the accent of educated people in south-eastern England to replace strict Received pronunciation as the standard: Received pronunciation has lost some of its prestige, as people educated at public schools have lost their monopoly of power and education. A considerable part has been played by the great post-war expansion of higher education. Today, the majority of university students are not speakers of Received pronunciation, and it is from them that a large part of the English professional classes are recruited. Most schoolteachers, do not use Received pronunciation, but an educated regional accent, so that the influence of the schools is towards this rather than towards Received pronunciation.

Changes In Vocabulary...

The expansion of the vocabulary seems to be going on at a great rate in our time. Many new words continue to be coined from Greek and Latin morphemes for use in science and technology, and some of these get into the general vocabulary. Not all new scientific and technical words are coined from Latin and Greek elements. The engineering industries in particular tend to use existing English morphemes, and one common habit is the coining of new compound verbs by back-formation.

Change Of Meaning...

One common cause of semantic change in our time appears to be formal influence: the form of a word causes it to be confused with another word, which influences its meaning. An example is the word *format*. This is a technical term of bibliography, referring to the way the sheets of paper are folded in making a book. Now, however, people use it to mean 'layout, design'. It is not only single words that change in meaning: the same thing can happen to whole phrases.

Changes In Pronunciation...

In the educated speech of south-eastern England, the long vowels /i:/ (as in see) and /u:/ (as in too) are often diphthongised to [iɪ] and [ʊʊ]. changes are taking place in the way words are stressed. There is a long-term trend in two-syllable words for the stress to be moved from the second syllable to the first: this has happened in living memory in such words as *adult*, *alloy*, *ally* and *garage*. Also many people have commented in recent years on the common habit among public speakers of putting heavy stress on prepositions. The 'continental' influence is perhaps reinforced by the 'new'

pronunciation of classical Latin, which has continental-style vowels, whereas the 'old' pronunciation had anglicised vowels. Almost any English person today who has learnt the 'new' style of pronunciation.

Changes In Grammar...

In grammar we can see the continuation of the long-term historical trend in English from synthetic to analytic, from a system that relies on word-order and grammatical words. On the whole, noun and verb forms have remained very stable during the later Modern English period, because of the influence of the standard literary language and of the educational system.

English Tomorrow...

It's dangerous to extrapolate or to prophesy, and none of us can guess what the English language will be like in a hundred years time. The changes of recent decades suggest what forces are at work in the language today and the likely shapes of things in the next few decades, but the history of the language in the coming century will depend on the history of the community itself.

One of the striking things at the moment is the expansion going on in the vocabulary. If this continues, the change of a century will be comparable to that of such earlier periods as 1300 to 1400 or 1550 to 1650. In grammar, the trends of the past thousand years continue in small ways. More substantial changes could be caused by the permeation of the standard language by usages which at present are non-standard. What we can be sure of is that the process of change, which we have traced from the early Indo-European records up to modern times, is still going on, and will continue to. It requires an effort of detachment to recognise current change for what it is. We are

so thoroughly trained in one form of the language that we are likely to dismiss innovations as mistakes or vulgarisms.

II) ENGLISH AS A WORLD LANGUAGE...

Today, when English is one of the major world-languages, it requires an effort of the imagination to realise that this is a relatively recent thing-that Shakespeare, for example, wrote for a speech-community of only a few millions, whose language was not much valued elsewhere in Europe and was unknown to the rest of the world. Shakespeare's language was pretty-well confined to England and southern Scotland, not yet having penetrated very much into Ireland or even Wales, let alone into the world beyond. In the first place, the great expansion in the number of English speakers was due to the growth of population in England itself.

At the same time, English penetrated more and more into the rest of the British Isles at the expense of Celtic languages, though it is only during the last two centuries that it has become the main language of Wales, Ireland, and the Scottish highlands. However, English has become a world language because of its wide diffusion outside the British Isles, to all continents of the world, by trade, colonisation, and conquest. The world-wide expansion of English means that it is now one of the most widely spoken languages in the world, with well over four hundred million native speakers, and roughly the same number who speak it as a second language. The method of its spread, however, also means that there are now many varieties of English, and that it is used for many different purposes in varying social contexts.

The English of the old 'White Commonwealth' and of the United States has remained relatively close to standard British English, and has been the principal language of the countries in question. Elsewhere, the linguistic situation can be extremely different. In

many other areas, English has become a second language, used alongside one or more local languages for public purposes, and often for communication between different language-groups in the community. A distinction is usually made between English as a second language and English as a foreign language. The distinction between second language and foreign language is not, however, a sharp one, and there are cases, like Indonesia, where classification is disputable. Moreover, there is a considerable amount of variation in the roles played by second languages, for example in education, in the fields of discourse used, and in the giving prestige or power.

The various forms of English when used as a second language differ in a number of ways from standard British or American English, often because of the influence of the speakers' first language. There are, however, English-based languages which depart even more radically from the standard types, namely pidgin's and Creole's. It sometimes happens that a pidgin becomes the first language of the group. The language is then called a Creole. Pidgin's and Creole's often Co-exist with standard varieties of the donor language, and the different forms are then likely to influence one another.

The development of so many varieties of English has produced problems and controversies about the language, especially in former British colonies which have become independent during the last half-century. Few examples could be given to show the differences of the world language. These can be considered under the headings of Phonology, Grammar, and Vocabulary. Pidgin's and Creole's, however, will be considered separately, since they are so different from the standard varieties of English.

VII. THE SPREAD OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE THROUGHOUT THE WORLD...

THE SPREAD OF ENGLISH BEYOND THE BRITISH ISLES...

The establishment of English-speaking colonies in North America at the beginning of the seventeenth century was the first decisive stage in the colonial expansion of England which made English an international language. The first English settlers, however, were by no means the first Europeans to set up colonies.

English In North America...

The first English attempt at settlement in North America, in 1584, proved a failure, but in 1607 a second expedition established the colony of Jamestown in Virginia and was followed by several others, of which the most famous was the group on board the *Mayflower* who became known as the 'pilgrim fathers' and who settled in Plymouth, Massachusetts, in 1620. The pattern of colonisation in the southern areas differed slightly from that of the north. In contrast to the northern smallholdings, huge plantations and estates developed in the south, growing rice at first and later cotton.

The complex relationship between North American settlement and the slave trade, showing some of the main West African languages which were to influence the new forms of English that became spoken by slaves in North America and Caribbean. The variety of English which was implanted in North America was that of the early modern period. It has sometimes been claimed that many of the differences between American

and British English can be explained in terms of a 'colonial lag', that the language of colonial settlers is more 'conservative' than that of the country they left. The problem with the explanation is that in some areas on the east coast-among them the oldest settlements-there has long been an r-less tendency.

It might be supposed that in North America some dialect variation arose from contact with different indigenous languages. The influence of precolonial languages on American English, however, has been surprisingly slight. Different settlements had various motives for contact with the precolonial population; some tribes had more interest in it than others. Some puritan colonists wanted to convert the local people, or to enlist their help as household servants, so schooling was arranged for them, and parts of the bible were translated into their languages. But the native Americans were reluctant to have their identities changed in this way, and as the colonies expanded westward, they were pushed in the same direction.

Taking a cyclical view of linguistic history, Webster argued that the golden age of language in England was past; America's was in the future. It would be based, however, on the more Saxon elements in the language, and spelling would reflect the pronunciation of words more clearly. The nationalist ideal of linguistic uniformity in American English, however, has not been completely achieved.

English In Australia...

The English settlement of Australia occurred nearly two centuries later than that of America, penal colonies on the south-east coast of Australia were founded in 1788. Many of the convicts, once freed, became smallholders. They gradually coined a vocabulary to name new colonial identities and distinguish themselves from the precolonial Aboriginal population: 'currency' meant a non-Aboriginal born in

Australia, 'native' Australian a *white* Australian actually born in the country. The convict population came mainly from London and the south-east of England. Australian pronunciation is very close to cockney, except the initial /h/ (at the beginning of the words) is sounded. Recent research on pronunciation in the cities, however, suggests that in at least one respect this has changed. Colonisation in Australia took place at a time when the vowel in words such as *after*, *grasp*, *dance* was being lengthened in London and the south-east of England.

English In West Africa...

At much the same time as the Australian penal colonies were established, different kinds of settlement were set up in west Africa, Sierra Leone, were the first European slaving expedition occurred in the sixteenth century, was settled by escaped (in 1807) freed slaves. The commonality was aided in the British colonies by the fact of a shared language English. New British colonies were established in Africa after 1880. Between that date and the end of the century virtually the entire continent was seized and shared out among the European powers.

During the nineteenth century Britain came to see the role of colonies such as those in Africa as that of producing raw materials, while Britain remained the source of manufacturing. Colonialism was first used in the nineteenth century, it reflects changes in the relationship between Britain and its colonies as they were incorporated into what was called the British empire. The term is more loaded than 'colonisation', partly because it has been used most frequently by those who were opposed to it, on the grounds that it amounted to exploitation of the weak by the powerful.

VIII. CONCLUSION...

The making of English is the story of three invasions and a cultural revolution. In the simplest terms, the language was brought to Britain by Germanic tribes, the Angles, Saxons and Jutes, influenced by Latin and Greek when St Augustine and his followers converted England to Christianity, subtly enriched by the Danes, and finally transformed by the French-speaking Normans. The English have always accepted the mixed blood of their language. There was a vague understanding that they were part of a European language family.

The history of English language is normally presented in four stages—Old English, Middle English, Early Modern English and Present-day English. Old English is the stage of the language used between AD450 and AD1100. The period from 1100 to 1500 is Middle English, the period between 1500 and 1800 is Early Modern English, and the period since 1800 is Present-day English. For those familiar with English history, these dates may look suspiciously close to dates of important political and social events in England.

All language is systematic, the history of any language is the history of change in its systems. By change we mean a permanent alteration. That is, slips of the tongue, ad hoc coinages that are not adopted by other usages of the language, 'new' structures that result from one person's getting his or her syntax tangled in an overly ambitious sentence are not regarded as change. In simplest terms, all change consists of a loss of something, a gain of something, or both—a substitution of something for another. Both loss and gain occur in all the subsystems of natural languages. For example, over the centuries, English has lost the distinction between long and short vowels (phonological loss), between dative and accusative cases (morphological loss), the regular inversion of subject and verb after an adverbial (syntactic loss), the verb *weorðan* (lexical loss), the meaning 'to put into' for the verb *do* (semantic loss), and the letter *ð* (graphic loss). English has gained the diphthong represented by the spelling *oi* (phonological gain), a



means of making nouns like *dropout* out of verb + adverb combinations (morphological gain), a distinction between past perfect (*I had painted my room*) and past causative (*I had my room painted*) (syntactic gain), the word *education* (lexical gain), the meaning of 'helper' for the word *hand* (semantic gain), and the distinction between the letters *u* and *v* (graphic gain).

All changes, whether major or minor, conditioned or unconditioned, disrupt a language, sometimes rather violently. But any living language is self-healing, and the permanent damage resulting from change is usually confined to the feelings of the users of the language.

In sum, of all natural languages, change is both inevitable and constant; only dead languages (languages with no native speaker) do not change. Because change is constant and has always been so, there is such thing as a 'pure' or a 'decadent' language or dialect. There are only different languages and dialects, which arose in the first place only because all languages change. The history of the English language, then, is the record of how its patterns and rules have changed over the centuries. The history of the English is not the political history of its speakers, although their political history has affected their language, sometimes dramatically, as was the case with Norman invasion of England in 1066. Nor is the history of the English language the same as the history of the English literature, even though the language is the raw material of the literature.

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