

English from Roots to Fruits

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Abstract: *In this paper we will travel through the journey of English language. Beginning from its inception we will explore how the language developed over time and its influence on the literary artists around the world and also conversely how the difference in writing style of various writers resulted in evolution of English from its old form to the one we use now. English is slowly turning into a universal language. It has become the language of all citizens. Knowing English has become an important prerequisite for almost all kinds of professions. English language has becoming a global phenomenon slowly and steadily. If every learner wants to blend in international stream in terms of profession, family then he or she needs to be fluent and well versed in the English language. Whatever wisdom and knowledge they may have, if they don't know how to express it at any alien point, then that would be a tremendous put off to one. This paper deals with the English language how it has become a universal language why it is necessary learn this language, moreover it portrays the features of the universal language, the different medium, standardization and the concept of universalities etc. Furthermore we also analyze how English, after conquering the real world, is gaining dominance over the digital worlds as a means of communication as well as a means of coding. Finally we conclude by predicting about the future based on the facts we have.*

Key Words: *Annotations, colonialisation, fusion, hybridized, lingua franca,*

I. The Roots: Where It All Began

English is commonly referred as 'The Global Language' for it is the language that is dominated the whole wide world. Isn't its inception and initial worth pondering about? Well there is no such precise date about the birth of English language but very roughly around 1300 years past this day is credited with the birth of this paramount language, you can probably give or take a century or so; And the place blessed with the origin of the language is on the eastern side of the island of Great Britain which presently is in East and South East of England. Referring to sources, saying that English began in A.D 449 at a place called Ebbsfleet on Pegwell Bay, near Ramsgate in Kent wouldn't be wrong. English also has its name derived from the name of Angles from their ancient region Angela.[1]

Credit recipients for turning this ordinary language into 'world language' are namely United Kingdom, United States of America, Canada, Australia, Ireland, New Zealand and a number of Caribbean nations! Due to an enormous increase in the powers of the nations such as Great Britain and England from 17th century to the mid-20th century due to colonialism has had an extensive influence on this language and mainly its propagation wide round this planet!

Also adding to this effect, Industrial Revolution further accelerated this revolution. It so happens according to history, English originated from the fusion of closely related dialects. These dialects are now collectively termed as 'Old English'. These were brought to the eastern coast of Great Britain by the Germanic settlers (also known as Anglo-Saxons) during the 5th century. English laid its foot in India with the arrival of the East India Company. As this British rule expanded so did the population of Indians speaking English. Even though Hindi, Tamil, Telgu etc. are the languages of general communication in India, the official documentation and information exchange is done in English only, for the fact that English is the globally accepted language.[2]

Mother tongue or not, today English has become the primary language of approximately 1.4 billion people around the globe! Owing this tremendous and ever increasing number of people in the English speaking category, there has been a recent speculation about the possible future of the language and the next big question that arises-"Is there a possible alternate global language or what position will English hold in the coming years for the future generations?" . Just as Latin was replaced by English, who knows maybe English may soon swap places with some language in future times!..till then let's celebrate the greatness of the English language and dive further into the ocean of the development of this means of communication.

II. English and Its Regional Variants

Varieties in different regions which possess a literary form are called variants. English being the most spoken language has many variants around the world. The most fundamental form of this language is the

standard form which may also be addressed as old English.[3] This is the dialect originating from the Great Britain is one of the original forms of this language and is seen in Shakespearean literature.

A slightly abridged form of this is the British English which is also subdivided into Irish and Scottish English. British English is mostly spoken in the United Kingdom and countries in British empire. The spellings of most of the words are kept unchanged and have been taken directly from the classical English. Now, there's one form of this language that's has gained popularity for its utter simplicity and straightforwardness that is the American English. The spellings are not directly taken from the classical English but have been modified as per phonetic accuracy. Another prominent feature of this language is the use of double negative, its very common to hear phrases like "I ain't going nowhere" among people speaking American English specially the blacks.[4] Apart from the two main counter parts some new forms have been born like the Indian English.

As the name suggests Indian English is the Indianized version of the language. Unlike American English or the British Version, Indian English is one of the first dialects of English originating from a non 'white' state.

Indian English consist of many hybridized words which contain elements of both English and Hindi, words like 'frustao' are commonly used by the young generation in their daily talks. Further more Indian English consists of more simplified pronunciations as well as spellings. With the rise in requirement of call centers and the ability of India to fulfill this ever rising need is expected to act as a catalyst in the rise and growth of Indian English. Even in India the usage and pronunciation varies round the country. In the northern states English is highly modified and the vocabulary in general is limited to basic and secondary levels, this may be because of comparatively less number of English speaking population.[5] While in the southern part of the Indian subcontinent the literacy rate is high which in turn contributes to higher general fluency and command in the English language, hence the southern form may be called the less modified form of the English language.

Furthermore in countries like China more variants are in their primitive stage. As china is rising as the biggest English speaking state even Chinese have started modifying the pronunciations as per their speaking style and convenience. This may lead to an entirely new and a different dialect of the language and will also introduce the world to some of the elementary Chinese words which will bridge the gap between the Chinese and the rest of the world.

III. Expansion: How the World Came Under the Shade of This Language

In present days English is spoken and considered as an important language all over the world, there being many reasons for this statement.

Main reason for this expansion is colonialisation. Around 1500 – 1950 British started conquering many nations all over the world. Britain was an English country so obviously their language for communication was English. The conquered countries found it very interesting and attractive or high lighting. Many people started to view English as a language spoken by the gentleman and because of this idea English was made compulsory in schools as a part of learning. Even the novels and hand written scripts played major role in developing the language .In 18th century there was a lot of shuffling going in and around the country. There were many written copies which were published by the English authors criticizing the situation .This copies were circulated all around the world. People in all parts of the world showed a great interest to read the scripts and novels; this might be regarded as the golden period of the expansion of this language.

Even the political issues were one of the reasons for the spreading of the language .English countries emerged as one of the most powerful bodies in this world. At this time all countries in the world started coming under one tree called UNO (United Nations Organisation). It is not that easy to maintain such a big organisation so everyone come to a common agreement that English is a language that must be used for their abroad interactions.

The modern world reason for spreading English is the industrialisation. Nowadays the complete world is running with a lingua franca that is 'English'. Everyone across this globe is willing to stay as updated in this fast moving lifestyle. This life which they are expecting to live is available in the rich English countries. So everyone is aiming for a job either in the United States of America or the Great Britain as in these countries English is the key language for getting along with the people in these countries. Another reason is that spreading of Multi-National Companies all around the world trying to enter the Indian markets. Due to these MNC's even the local companies are also trying to imitate them and started demanding English language as a fundamental skill. The main reason behind this is to maintain a common language for all the employees to communicate within that English the fundamental and rather a prominent requisite to survive in the today's world.

Furthermore the language is also growing around the world due to the dominance of the United States America in almost all the fields; as a result having a command is more of a necessity than a luxury.

IV. Dominance of English in Coding and Social Networking

With the advent of modern technology computers have become an important part of our lives. This may also be attributed to the greater availability of internet; this in turn has resulted in better connectivity among people locally and globally. Now, when we consider a global platform, we face a problem, a very fundamental one, that is how do we communicate? Here English came out to be the undisputed winner over other widely spoken languages like Russian, Spanish, and Chinese for its sheer simplicity and appeal to the masses. The words in this language are as easy to pronounce as they are to comprehend, that is in voice communication the clarity and understandability of this language is greater even in highly scrambled annotations.[6]

Unlike other languages English is very easy to learn and is widely spoken worldwide hence English language resources are more readily available as compared to other languages. Furthermore the phonetics in this language is extremely precise, neither too specific nor too vague, which makes formation of words extremely simple even for a person with elementary knowledge of the language. This in turn encourages people to use Latin script, which is the script of English alphabet system, to form words in their local language, giving birth to 'hinglish', which is nothing but Hindi words written using English alphabets instead of the Hindi ones.

Another reason for the wide acceptance of English in the silicon world would be its alphabet system which has just 26 letters unlike other languages like Chinese for which the number of characters is still undetermined!! This quality of English language gives it an edge over other languages when it comes to construction of hardware for typing purposes as it enables us to make keyboards that even include special characters like comma, exclamation mark, colon, semi-colon etc. in compact spaces. The 'qwerty' format is the most widely used keyboard format as it combines the simplicity of English language with an impeccable placement of the keys which makes typing a breeze![7]

English is not just the most preferred in general language usage but it also proves out to be the most effective when it comes to coding languages. This can again be attributed to its simplicity and versatility since English has a vast variety of special symbols which contribute to a well-structured document or a piece of code.

In English the scope of modification of words is very high; this has facilitated the creation convenient keywords in languages like 'C', 'C++' and Java. These languages are instrumental in the creation of legendary softwares like Microsoft Windows operating system, Turn it in, Android OS and the list goes on and on...As the technology is growing so is the requirement of English training starting from elementary levels, simply because if there's lack of fluency in English language one can never leave a mark on the map of silicone valley There's no denying the fact that English is very much like the wheels of the development train of this world!!

V. A Comparison between Classical and Modern English

Talking about phonology, modern English retains almost all of the Anglo-Saxon consonant sounds, although differences in pronunciation exist. Anglo-Saxon vowels sound very different to modern English. The vowels had a lengthened and short version.

The basic syntax of Old English is left untouched in Modern English. The most preserved texts are prose. T-V junction had its disuse in Modern English. T-V junction is a contrast within a language between second-person pronouns that are used for varying levels of politeness, courtesy, familiarity, etc. e.g the use of "sir/ma'am", or whether to address someone by their first or last name. Auxiliary verbs found an important application in interrogative sentences. Prescriptive grammarians found its rise and fall. It is the practice of mastering one variety of speaking any language against another.[8] As the journey of English continues through the highway of time we expect to even more changes in the languages. Unlike the old days, not just the general communication is tending to becoming more and more informal, even the literary fields are heading on the same way. Authors like Jeffery Archer, Dan Brown, Arundati Roy, Robin Sharma, ChetanBhagat are also writing in a way that appeals to the youth, that is, instead of sticking to a specific format of writing they are exploring new ways to write.

All in all we can say with full certainty that no matter how things change in the future, English will always retain its beauty and elegance and will keep on conquering new horizons.

VI. What the Future Speaks

In the recent times there has been an effect on the language of English due to the social networking and text messaging by youth. Not only that, due to wide use of English all over the globe there had been changes even in the accent, grammar, phrasing and pronunciation in English terms. Now-a-days priority is given to ease of language usage rather than grammatical accuracy. Even the spelling of English words has altered very little over the same period. As a result, English spellings are not reliable guide to the pronunciation of the language.

In the recent times the developing countries like India and China have become one of the most populated English speaking countries having a different mother tongue. E.g. Chinese who have never known other language have included English as a compulsory language from the lower level of schooling. Apart from English teaching in schools, other forms of English training courses have appeared across China like the new

Beijing oriental school which is the paramount school in English training at all levels be it GRE, SAT, GMAT, TOFEL or at the primary and the secondary level. And even they improvised teaching methods into effective learning by introducing listening and speaking programs.

In India English is the second most spoken and written language after Hindi. Indians feel proud and educated while communicating in English. Indians often mingle their own language with English. India having different linguistic culture acts as a bridge for communicating over various linguistic barriers. And also it is used in various administrative systems like legal, financial, educational, business in India. Just like American, British, Australian English, Indians have created English of their own kind by mixing all kind of accents and slangs of their mother-tongue making the condition of English even worse. By considering all these present situational changes which English is undergoing, we may come to a conclusion that in future a new language might be evolved which may be called *GLOBISH* (a mix of English and other slangs and accents) which is as described by Robert McCrum in his book “How the English Language Became the World’s Language”. [9]

Yet this should not be ignored that there’s still a possibility that even English can get replaced by another language. Looking at the present scenario some of the possible languages could be German since Germany has always been a industrial hub and with globalization Germany is more accessible than ever before hence people are taking training in German language too. One more possible language could be Chinese for the reason that Chinese people are migrating to all parts of the world, yet a hold up in that would be the difficulty level and complication of the language. Furthermore it may also happen that Hindi turns out to be the next global language for the fact that Indians with a technical background are getting placed at technical firms all over the world. Yet this shift of language is a gradual process and we cannot expect to see these changes in our life time, all we can do is hope that a time traveler would come and tell us about our future and what it ‘speaks’

VII. Conclusion

Now the question arises how these standards set around the globe are. As we have already seen that English has evolved as much has the world. So to work up a single standard that becomes acceptable is not easy because that may not suit all the people in the world. So that makes the job of standardization much more difficult. As many people worked hard they succeeded in making a standard level of English around the world. Teaching of English in this standard globally accepted format becomes very important as that is what makes the student learn the language. They learn the way they are taught. So as we have already had a lot of discussions on how the language is taught throughout the world, we may not continue it here. Just one more thing that becomes very important is that the influence of mother tongue.

We know the influence cannot be avoided but that is what is the difficulty in the job of an English teacher is. They need to minimize this influence so that the students only understand and learn what is globally accepted so that they succeed in their lives in the future. To conclude we can say that English is doubtlessly the most versatile and agile language and is here to stay. It does not only dominate the real world but also has a good hold on the communications over the internet and as a medium for the coding languages which are like the gears and screws of the silicon based world. it may also be noted that it’s evolution over the years and over the various regions it bloomed has given birth to many dialects of this language which may as well lead to formation of an all new language based on English as it happened with Hindi and Sanskrit.

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