

THE DEVELOPMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE

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INTRODUCTION

The English Language comes majorly from Germanic Language. In 499AD, Germanic people invaded British Isles. At that time, locals of Britain lived in small communities, away from each other. This made it easier for the Germanic tribes to defeat them. The English Language came to existence approximately in 450AD. It was made up of all the languages that the invaders brought. It was observed that when the society grew, language grew.

HISTORY

During the 5th century, three Germanic Tribes invaded the British Isles. Namely, ANGLES, SAXONS and JUTES. Others were Vanats, Goths or Visigoths etc. Before the arrival of these invaders, England used Celtic language.

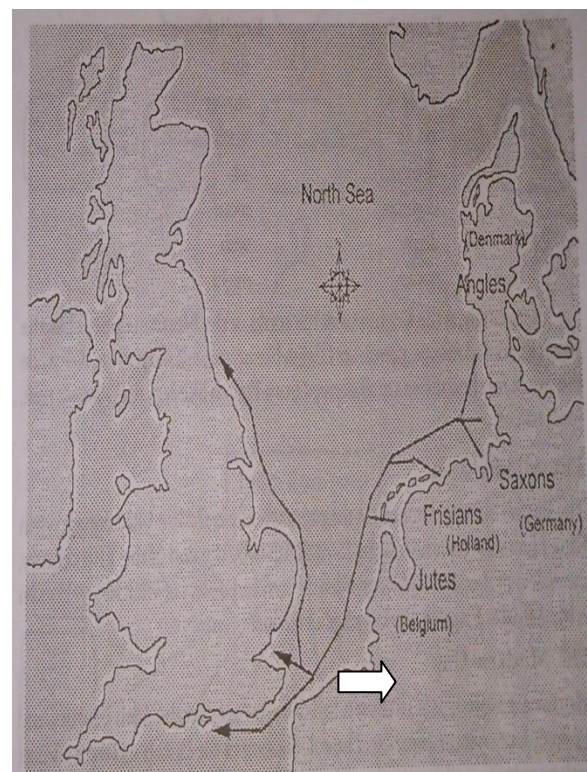
Invaders pushed the Celtic speakers into Wales, Cornwall and Scotland.

The movement of Germanic Tribes:

From DENMARK to NORTH GERMAN →
Crossing the NORTH SEA
Reached ENGLAND

The main tribe Angles were named from **Engle**, their land of origin and their language was called **Englisc** from which the word, **English** has been derived.

In 55BC, Julius Caesar discovered the British Isles and introduced **Latin** as King's tongue. This map shows where the Saxons and Angles originated from. They started to settle from AD410.



Beginning of the Indo-European(Aryan) Languages and the rise of English

The English language has come from the Teutonic branch of the Indo-European languages, a big family of languages with almost all languages of Asia and Europe named Indo-European.

Indo-European languages can be classified into two sets of languages: Eastern and Western languages.

east

The English language belongs to the Teutonic group of languages and has descended from Germanic tongue. Like other Indo-European Languages, English was also inflected in the beginning and was thus a synthetic language. But with the passage of time, English started shedding its inflections and they became weaker and weaker. Towards the end of Old English period, English turned from being a synthetic language to an analytic language. Two tense system was developed. There were two numbers, the dual being dropped. During this time, there were practically no loan words. It had also developed processes to build new words:

---conversion

---derivation

---compounding.

Old English Period(AD450–AD1100)

Old English (also referred to as Anglo-Saxon or **Englisc**) is a west Germanic language, closely related to Old Frisian and was heavily influenced by Old Norse. Between the middle of 5th century and 12th century, Old English was spoken and written in parts of modern day England and southern Scotland. It was a passage from Synthetic to Analytical Stage.

a) Nouns: In the Old English, Nouns had seven parts-

Nominative, Accusative, Instrumental, Dative, Ablative, Genitive and Locative.

Later, in the simplified version, only four of them were retained- the Nominative, Accusative, Dative and Genitive.

b) Verbs: Drive- he drives- I drive- they drive, etc. So the word endings are non-existent in six cases, save a single one. But in the Old English it was as follows:

Eg: *ic- drif-e; /η/u-drif- st; he/heo/ hit-drif-þ* [singular

We/ge/hi-drif-a þ [plural]

c) Personal Pronouns: By this time, almost all inflexions had been dropped except 'him' and 'them'.

Eg: 1st person 2nd person 3rd person

ic (I)-singular *þu(you)* -

wit (dual) *git(dual)*
he/heo/hit

wē-plural-ge -----

d) Definite Articles: The 'the' of today has no inflexions, can be used as singular,

plural, article and adjective among others. But in Old English it was used in different forms with all genders and numbers.

Eg: Noun: *se(singular)* , *se(plural)* and *æt(neutral)*.

e) **Orthography:** Around the 10th and 11th centuries, 'þ' and

'ð' were in use but in the later stages changed to 'th'.

Eg: *Þu>thou* and 'ð' *at>that*, having slight different

sounds.

f) **SVO:** The rule says that the object must follow the verb and if it does not do so, then it might get confused.

(Subject-»Verb-»Object)

g) **Pronunciation:** In Old English, the 1st syllable was

stressed in polysyllabic words, but this tradition has

not been maintained in English.

h) **Strong & Weak Verbs:**

Strong Verbs got their past tense forms through

inflexions, by changing a sound in the middle.

Eg: sing-sang-sung.

Weak Verbs got their past tense by adding suffixes

like -ed, -s, etc.

Eg: walk-walked-walked (past maker – ed

i) **Gender:** The gender was determined by the grammar, just as the Indo-European tradition and it took English a several hundred years to get rid of it.

Eg: *mayden(girl)-wiðmann(woman)* were masculine

as the words ended with a consonant. Similarly,

sunne(son) was feminine as the word ends in a

vowel.

MAIN FEATURES OF OLD ENGLISH PERIOD:

- Few loanwords
- Flexibility of the language



Grimm's Law

Between the old English and the Middle English Period, some great changes took place in the English language; for over 700 years it was undergoing a change in phonology. English slowly made its departure from its parent Teutonic language and was on its way towards being an analytical language. Linguistics looked at the pronunciation of this time and marked these changes.



Jacob Grimm **(1785-1863)**

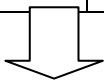
- In 1822, Jacob Grimm, a German Philologist did some research and formulated a law, known as Grimm's Law.
- At a certain time in the Old English period, some sounds of English Language which had originated from Indo-European sources, seemed to disappear while some other had remained the same.
- Searching a reason for this anomaly, he formulated a law which is a description of a linguistic phenomenon which took place in the development of a language.

The language goes from voiced sounds to voiceless sounds and then back to voiced sounds. The first three sounds which went out of the English Language were /p/(labial), /t/(dental) and /k/(velar).

These sounds were very soon replaced by three new sounds, but interestingly, from the same place of articulation as the above three.

The lost sounds slowly disappeared but returned after a few centuries.

	<i>labia</i> <i>l</i>	<i>denta</i> <i>l</i>	<i>vela</i> <i>r</i>	<i>labia</i> - <i>velar</i>
VOICED STOPS	<i>B</i>	<i>d</i>	<i>g</i>	<i>g/ b</i>
VOICELESS STOPS	<i>P</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>k</i>	<i>k/qu</i>
VOICELESS FRICATIVE S	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>h</i>	<i>wh</i>



	LABIAL	DENTAL	VEALAR		LABIA- VELAR
aspirated stops	*bh	*dh	*gh		*gwh
voiced stops	*b	*d	*g		*gw
voiceless stops	*p	*t	*k		*kw

Stage-1

(Early part of Old English, just after Germanic language had come in)

Latin Old English English

1. p f(Labial)

pisces fish

2 .t - Þ (θ) (Dental)

tres Þrec three

tenuis Þynne thin

3 .k h(Velar)

cordis heorte heart

Quod hwæt what

Verner's Law

The transition of Indo-European to Germanic took place between the 2nd and 6th centuries B.C. It took 1800 years, in 1822 to discover what changes had taken place. And another 50 years later Verner's Law was proposed. In 1875, Carl Verner found that there were certain cases where Grimm's Law was not followed, like in the case of medial consonants. Whenever the accent is not on the vowel immediately preceding the consonant, then Grimm's Law does not apply to medial consonants.



Carl Verner (1846-1896)

E.g. centum → hundred

(The vowel does not carry the stress, so *t* didn't change to *θ* as accent is on the last syllable, so change in medial consonant.)

So *t=d*, but not *θ*, as accent in the last syllable.

According to some linguistics, Verner's Law is more important than Grimm's Law as it refers back to accent pattern.

s>r: OE *ceosan* → choose(E). Thus, medial consonant /s/ becomes /r/, because accent on last syllable according to Verner. E.g. *ceas* → *curon* → *coren*.

The tradition is that in a word, the root syllable would be stressed, though this is not found in other languages of the family.

Middle English Period(AD1100-AD1500)

Middle English is a term coined by historical linguistics to refer to various forms of the English language spoken:

During the four hundred years of the Middle English period between the Norman conquest of (AD1066). When William Caxton developed the printing press, when a form of London based English, Chaucery Standard popularized.

Middle English as a written language presented a wide variety of scribal and dialectal forms suggesting the decline of Wessex and the emergence of London as the major centre of literary production.

DIFFERENT LOANS AND BORROWINGS IN THE MIDDLE ENGLISH PERIOD:

Latin loan words

Law: *client, conviction, legitimate*

Science: *dissolve, medicine, recipe*

Scandinavian loan words

Nouns: *sky, window, knife, sister, husband, fellow*

Verbs: *thrive, kill, hit, call*

French loan words

Government: *state, court, council, assembly, tax*

Religion: *theology, baptism, confession, prayer, crucifix*

Law: *judge, advocate, bill, petition, complaint, prison*

Fashion: *apparel, gown, robe, garment, coat, frock*

Army: *defense, soldier, enemy, combat, spy, captain*

Middle English Period was the period of levelled inflections.

EARLY MODERN ENGLISH (AD 1500 – AD 1600)

The Early Modern English is important because it was used by Shakespeare and the first edition of King James' Bible.

This form of English is closest to the modern day language and can be easily understood by its modern day users .

The only difference lay in the areas of grammar, in the meanings of

certain words and differences in spellings.

The Standardization of English spellings can be attributed to this phase. This period is also known as the period of the Revival of Learning .Constantinople was captured by the Turks, resulting in the spreading of scholars and learning all over Europe and heralded the onset of Renaissance. Thus, words like medium, genius, squalor, delirium came into English.

The Great Vowel Shift:

According to some linguists, the Great Vowel Shift is of greater importance than other linguistic changes of the period. This covers a span of 200 years (14th to 16th century). It resulted in a huge variation in pronunciation between the time of Chaucer and Shakespeare. All the vowels of the time underwent a change:

- a) The long vowel sounds are raised from low to high
- b) (short vowel not touched).

When the high vowels cannot be raised, it is turned into a diphthong.

In ME there were —/i:/, /e:/, /ɛ:/, /a:/, /u:/, /o:/.

In Present English(PE) there are only five.

Stage I:

High Front /i:/ → /ai/ (Diphthongized)

E.g. Bite/bi : t/ — /bait/

lyf—Chaucer / i : f/ —Shakespeare /leif/ —
PE /laif/

So this change is effected in all words with
vowel /i/ in the centre and /e/ in the end.
E.g. ‘fine’.

High Back /u:/ → /au/ (Diphthongized)

E.g. Mouse—/mu:s/ — /maus/

Chaucer /hu : s/— Shakespeare /hous/ —PE
/haus/.

Thus is due to French influence,

/u:/ sound changed to /ou/, for e.g. In town,
mouse. This was because the /ou/ sound was
used frequently in French.

Stage II:

Mid Front /e:/ → /i:/ (Diphthongized)

E.g. meet— ME/me : t/ — PE/mi : t/

Deed—ME /de : d/ — PE /di : d/.

Thus this would cover all words with –ee in
them.

Mid Back /o:/ → /u:/

E.g. boot- ME/bo : t/ — PE/bu : t/

Shoe —ME/so:/ —PE /su:/.

Moon—Chaucer /mo : n/—Shakespeare /mu
: n/

—PE/mu : n/.

Exception, blood—/blo : d/ and not /blu : d/.

Stage III:

Mid Front /ε:/ → /i:/ (Diphthongized)

E.g. meat— /mε : t/ — /mi : t/

The sound /ε:/ is similar to bet, met, but is
not used in English now.

Sea— /sε:/ —/si:/.

Mid Back /ô:/ → /o:/ or /ôu/
(Diphthongized)

E.g. stone— /stô : n/ — /stô : n/ or /stôun/.

Stage IV:

Low Back Central /a:/ → /e:/ or ei/

E.g. Age — /eidz/

Abate— /ôbait/ — /ôbôit/.

This is applicable for all English sounds
with –ate like late, take etc.

Modern English

Modern English is a term refer to the
language spoken and written after the Great
Vowel Shift of around A.D. 1650.

It has become a language which is more
standardized in terms of grammar, spelling,
word meanings, pronunciation and
vocabulary. It has completed its shift from
being a synthetic language towards
developing as an analytic language.

It is continuously growing at a steady pace
every year with new words being added
from all over the world.

CONCLUSION

Modern English is the dominant
international language in human

communication, science, business, aviation, international relation and even the internet.

It is now the most taught and most widely understood language of the world and thus, termed as the lingua franca of the world.

- Approximately 350 billion people use English as their first language while second language speaker of Modern English is

around 1.5 billion.

- Modern English has a large number of dialects which are mutually intelligible. Some of these include

dition, 2013.

British English, American English, Australian English, Canadian English, Caribbean English, Indian English, New Zealand English, South African English among others.

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