

ENGLISH HISTORICAL TERMINOLOGY: STAGES OF FORMATION AND SPECIFIC FEATURES

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Abstract:

Despite the existence of nearly 5,000 languages in the world, English has remained one of the leading languages of communication, influencing more than 2 billion people worldwide. In today's rapidly developing world, not only young people but also middle-aged individuals are becoming increasingly interested in learning this language. However, not everyone is well-informed about how this language originated or the history of its terminology and the stages of its formation. The history of the English language is incredibly rich and fascinating, shaped by the influence of various languages and cultures. This article provides information about the origins of the English language, its stages of development, and its modern state.

Key words: History of the English language, stages of formation, various languages, cultures, dialects, Old English, Anglo-Saxons, Vikings, Normans, modern English, global influence.

English is a West Germanic language that was originally spoken in England and is the first language of many countries, including the United Kingdom, the United States, Canada, Australia, Ireland, and New Zealand. It is the third most widely spoken native language in the world, after Mandarin Chinese and Spanish. English is also the official language of the European Union, many Commonwealth countries, the United Nations, and various international organizations. Its origins date back to the 5th century AD when Germanic tribes, namely the Anglo-Saxons, began migrating to the British Isles. These tribes brought with them three main dialects: Anglian, Saxon, and Jutish. These dialects eventually merged to form what became known as Anglo-Saxon or Old English. In the 8th century AD, the Celtic period in English language history began. The Celts communicated in the Celtic language, from which the word "birth" (meaning "painted") originated.

It is a well-known fact that many words in English are derived from Latin. Some of these words, such as street and cook, appeared even before the Anglo-Saxon migration to Britain and have continued to enter the language over time. In addition to vocabulary, English has also evolved significantly in terms of phrases and style. For example, the Latin phrase *mundo uti* ("to live") reappeared in Old English in the epic poem *Beowulf* as *worolde brucan*. Towards the end of the Old English period, English came into contact with French. Among foreign languages that influenced English, French ranks second after Latin. Later, Danish (a Scandinavian language) also joined this group. Since both English and Danish belong to the Germanic language family and share similarities, it is sometimes difficult to determine whether certain words were introduced by the English or the Vikings. For example, words like sky and take are of Scandinavian origin. The interaction between English and Danish began in the 9th century, reaching its peak in the 10th and 11th centuries before gradually declining. However, its influence never completely disappeared.

The origins of British dialect

British English consists of various dialects and accents, and today, English is considered one of the most diverse languages in terms of dialects. But where did these dialects and accents come from?

Ancient Language

The English language has been in use for over 1,500 years. During this time, it has undergone regional changes, leading to the development of various dialects. If we compare Britain to Australia, English has only been spoken in Australia for about 230 years, meaning there hasn't been enough time for dialects to develop extensively. However, when studying the richness of dialects, we should not focus solely on the importance of time but also on what has happened to the language over these years. So, let's take a look at Britain's history.

The Arrival of the Anglo-Saxons in England

Invasions and migrations played a significant role in the development of British dialects and accents. In the 5th century, Germanic tribes from the northwestern part of the European continent began settling on the island. These settlers consisted of three different groups: the Angles, the Saxons, and the Jutes. Since the first two groups were larger in number, they were collectively referred to as the Anglo-Saxons. Each group brought different dialects from their native languages.

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The Anglo-Saxons settled in different regions of England. The Angles occupied the Midlands and the eastern part of England, while the Saxons settled in the western and southern areas along the River Thames. The Jutes mainly settled in Kent and along the southern coast. These settlements led to the emergence of various dialects of Old English.

The Vikings

Around 800 AD, the first Vikings arrived in Britain. Some of them were raiders and plunderers, while others were farmers and traders. They lived a lifestyle similar to that of the Anglo-Saxons. Several dialects from the Vikings' ancient language, Old Norse, were adopted, leading to the formation of new linguistic features. To this day, traces of Old Norse can still be found in northern English dialects, as many Vikings settled in that region. Additionally, some words of Viking origin can be found in parts of Scotland and northern England, such as: fell (mountain), lait (seek), skalli (bald), bairn (child), braw (fantastic), kirk (church), quine (girl/woman)

The Normans Completely Changed the English Language

In 1066, the French-speaking Normans invaded England. Although French was different from Old English, it became the primary language of the elite and ruling classes. During this period, English lost its prestige among the upper classes, but by the 15th century, it regained its status and became the dominant language once again. During Norman rule, many French words were incorporated into English, especially in areas such as government, law, art, and religion.

The Development of Standard Written English

For a long time, English was primarily a spoken language. Literacy rates were low, and even those who could write did not follow strict grammatical rules; they simply wrote as they spoke. However, from 1350 onward, a modern English spelling system began to develop based on the language used in southeastern England. Another major factor in standardizing writing was the introduction of the printing press to England in 1476. This helped establish consistent spelling and grammar rules. The English we use today largely took shape during this process in the 15th century. Additionally, this development played a key role in the formation of "Received Pronunciation", the standard British accent.

Modern Dialects

Today, there are nearly forty distinct dialects in the United Kingdom, each with unique spelling and word structures. Some of the most well-known British dialects include: Cockney (spoken in East London), Glaswegian (spoken in Glasgow, Scotland), Scouse (spoken in Liverpool), Geordie (spoken in Newcastle)

Modern Changes

Today, due to waves of immigration, people from diverse backgrounds have integrated their dialects and accents with English in the United Kingdom. As a result, linguistic and dialectal diversity has been preserved to this day. English has spread globally and remains a key language in communication among many nations. This is largely due to its extensive vocabulary and adaptability. Additionally, English is the dominant language in international business, science, and technology.

In conclusion, the history and development of the English language have been profoundly influenced by its rich cultural heritage and the contributions of various peoples. From ancient times to the present, English has continuously evolved and has become an integral part of global communication.

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