History of English Language

M.A. English First Year Paper-I

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FOREWORD

Since its establishment in 1976, Acharya Nagarjuna University has been forging ahead in the path of progress and dynamism, offering a variety of courses and research contributions. I am extremely happy that by gaining a B++ (80-85) grade from the NAAC in the year 2003, the Acharya Nagarjuna University is offering educational opportunities at the UG, PG levels apart from research degrees to students from over 285 affiliated colleges spread over the three districts of Guntur, Krishna and Prakasam.

The University has also started the Centre for Distance Education with the aim to bring higher education within reach of all. The centre will be a great help to those who cannot join in colleges, those who cannot afford the exorbitant fees as regular students, and even housewives desirous of pursuing higher studies. With the goal of brining education to the doorstep of all such people, Acharya Nagarjuna University has started offering B.A., and B.Com courses at the Degree level and M.A., M.Com., M.Sc., M.B.A., and L.L.M., courses at the PG level from the academic year 2003-2004 onwards.

To facilitate easier understanding by students studying through the distance mode, these self-instruction materials have been prepared by eminent and experienced teachers. The lessons have been drafted with great care and expertise in the stipulated time by these teachers. Constructive ideas and scholarly suggestions are welcome from students and teachers involved respectively. Such ideas will be incorporated for the greater efficacy of this distance mode of education. For clarification of doubts and feedback, weekly classes and contact classes will be arranged at the UG and PG levels respectively.

It is my aim that students getting higher education through the centre for Distance Education should improve their qualification, have better employment opportunities and in turn facilitate the country's progress. It is my fond desire that in the years to come, the Centre for Distance Education will go from strength to strength in the form of new courses and by catering to larger number of people. My congratulations to all the Directors, Academic Coordinators, Editors and Lesson-writers of the Centre who have helped in these endeavours.

Prof. P. Rajasekhar
Vice-Chancellor
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M.A. First Year English
Paper-I : History of English Language
Syllabus

Text Books
1. F.T. Wood : Current English Usage
2. A.C. Baugh : History of English Language

Reference :
1. Bradley: The Making of English
2. R.Quirk: The use of English
3. Jesperson: The Growth and Structure of the English Language
4. S.Potter: Our Language
5. Wren: The English Language

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Lesson – 1

English as an International Language

Contents

1.1.1 Objectives

The aim of the present lesson is to

(i)   give an overview of the history of the English language
(ii)   trace the crucial role played by English in the world
(iii)   describe some characteristic features of vocabulary and structure of English

1.1.2. Introduction

Language is the most characteristic human activity, which distinguishes human beings from animals. All animals have their own communication systems but only human beings have language. The social purpose of language is obvious to everyone. Language is the medium by which man communicates his thoughts and feelings to his fellow men, the tool with which he conducts his business or the government of millions of people. It is the vehicle by which the science, the philosophy and the poetry of the race have been transmitted to him. So it is important to study the nature and development of his language. To do so, one need not be a philologist or a linguist. But the liberally educated man in the present day world should know something of the structure of his language, its position in the world and its relation to other tongues, the wealth of its vocabulary together with the sources from which that vocabulary has been and is being enriched, and in general the great political, social, and cultural influences which have combined to make his language what it is. The study of the history of one's language thus is of interest not only to the special student but to the educated person as a cultural subject.

In this case, we have to study the history and nature of the English language because we are students of the English language. The all-important role played by English in India and the world is very obvious. First let us see the importance of a language.

1.1.3. The Importance of English

There is a very intimate relation between a language and the people speaking it. In fact one cannot think of them separately. A language lives only so long as there are people who speak it and use it as their native tongue, and its greatness is only that given to it by these people. A language is important because the people who speak it are important – politically, economically, commercially, socially, culturally. For example, English, French and German are great and important languages because they are the languages of great and important peoples. That is why they are widely studied outside the country of their use. But Roumanian, Serbian or Malay are seldom learned by any except the native population. Sometimes a language is studied not because of its importance in the modern times but because it was the language of a great nation or race. Greek is a good example for this; it is studied in its classical form because it represents a great civilization, but in its modern form, Greek is spoken only in Greece.

There is no doubt today that English has become one of the most important world languages. It is the language not only of England but of the extensive dominions and colonies associated with the former British Empire, and it is the language of the United States. According to the United States Government policy statement, "The rapidly growing interest in English cuts across political and idealogical lines because of the convenience of a lingua franca increasingly used as a second language in important areas of the world. - - - English is a key which opens doors to scientific and technical knowledge indispensable to the economic and political development of vast areas of the world" (International Education and Cultural Exchange, Spring 1966).

The importance and the international status of English today become particularly clear when we compare the use of English in Shakespeare's time. In 1600, English was almost unknown outside the British Isles; it was not spoken universally even within the British Isles. The number of English speakers in the world when Shakespeare was writing has been estimated at five million. Showing a phenomenal increase there are now more than 250 million people for whom English is the mother tongue or 'first language'. If we add to this the number of people who have a working knowledge of English as a second or foreign language (many Indians, Africans, Frenchmen, Russians, and so on) we raise the total to more than 350 million.

In the number of speakers, English is the largest of the occidental languages. English – speaking people constitute about one-tenth of the world's population. English, however, is not the largest language in the world. Chinese is spoken by more than 450 million people. But the numerical ascendancy of English among European languages can be seen by a few comparative figures:

Russian	-	140	millions	Portuguese	-	63	millions
Spanish	-	135	-do-	French	-	60	-do-
German	-	90	-do-	Italian	-	50	-do-

Thus at the present time English has the advantage in numbers over all other western languages. But the importance of a language is not alone a matter of numbers or territory; it depends also on the importance of the people who speak it. As A.C. Baugh (1968) says:

> The importance of a language is inevitably associated in the mind of the world with the political role played by the nations using it and their influence in international affairs; with the confidence people feel in their financial position and the certainty with which they will meet their obligations – i.e., pay their debts to other nations, meet the interest on their bonds, maintain the gold or other basis of their currency, control their expenditures; with the extent of their commerce; with the conditions of life under which the great mass of their people live; and with the part played by them in art and literature and music, in science and invention, in exploration and discovery — in short, with their contribution to the material and spiritual progress of the world. (p.5)

A.C. Baugh concludes by saying that English is the mother tongue of nations whose combined political influence, economic soundness, commercial activity, social well-being, and scientific and cultural contributions to civilization give impressive support to its numerical precedence.

The increase from 5 million to 350 million speakers has not come about because of any special merits in the language itself, but because of increases in the influence exerted by the speakers of English. It is to an important series of historical events that we must look in order to understand the development of English. Richard Mulcaster explained the 'small reatch' of English in 1582 by saying that 'our state is no Empire'. But he was writing at the beginning of the settlement of America by English speakers; this is the greatest single event which has given English the enormous number of users it has today. In addition, Mulcaster pointed out that there was no valuable learning written in English that might stimulate foreigners to learn the language. We must remember that Francis Bacon wrote in Latin even in the 1620s while laying down the foundations of modern science. But Bacon's successors in the sciences wrote in English and soon made Mulcaster's remarks obsolete in this second field also. In the 17th century the English state had become an empire, thereby changing another condition noted by Mulcaster – which had carried the language far and wide. In the 18th century, too, English was already firmly established in Canada, and had spread to India. Before the century ended, it had spread to Australia and South Africa as well.

In countries like Canada, Australia and America to which English had been newly exported, the situation was fairly straightforward. There was a large-scale settlement from the British Isles of people who took their language with them and who preserved that language in an expanding colony of European people whose numbers and power made the language supreme there. Thus in these places, English became the mother tongue. But countries like India were different. Here was a very numerous and highly cultivated native population, and no large-scale immigration of English speakers as colonists. English therefore remained the language only of trade and government, spoken by few Indians; there was no question of its becoming the first language of ordinary people throughout the subcontinent. In such 'developing' countries like India and Pakistan, English is used as the commercial, educational and scientific medium, and learnt as a second language.

In Sri Lanka and Malaya, English is the medium of higher education. In the newly independent Commonwealth countries of Africa, English is still more important. It is the official language of Ghana, where it is taught from the first year of primary school. In Nigeria we have a similar position, though such African languages as Hausa and Yoruba are also widely used in the early years of schooling. Again, to people in Africa or Pakistan or Chile, English is the obvious foreign language to master, not merely because it is the native language in Great Britain and the United States, but because it provides the readiest access to the cream of world scholarship and to the bulk of world trade. It is understood more widely than any other language.

Today English has acquired importance not only in 'developing' countries as seen above but even in the highly developed countries of Europe. For example, a Norwegian or Finnish scientist who a century ago might have published his work in French, and three centuries ago in Latin, will often today seek to achieve the maximum circulation of his ideas by publishing it in English.

Thus, to come back to the earlier point, English may not be the largest language in the world in terms of the number of speakers. But it the most international of all languages. The discussion so far shows that a great many people are involved in the use of English. Millions of men and women in four continents have it as their native language, and further millions in every part of the world use it as a second or foreign language. This gives us a sense of the importance of the English language.

1.1.4. The Future of the English Language

The extent and importance of the English language today are such as to make it reasonable to speculate on the probable position English may occupy in the future. Growth in language is primarily a matter of population. Consequently the most important question affecting the future size of a language is, how much undeveloped territory does it have in which to expand? A second and almost equally important consideration is the climate and fertility of that territory. Civilization today thrives best in the temperate zones. It would be of little value to a language to possess vast territory at the North Pole. Let us then look at the territorial position of the principal European languages.

Of the seven languages mentioned earlier, English, Russian, and Spanish possess the largest areas. As a result of the colonial expansion of English in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the English-speaking nations today control about a quarter of the earth's surface, while Russian controls a sixth and Spanish a ninth. French in the colonial possessions of France and Belgium, and Portuguese as the language of Brazil, have opportunities, though more limited, for growth. On the other hand, any growth in German or Italian will apparently now be confined chiefly to the areas in which these languages are spoken in Europe. It would seem then that, numerically speaking, the three great languages of the future should be English, Russian and Spanish. Among the English-speaking territories, those offering the greatest opportunity for growth of population are the United States and Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa.

The political changes in India and Egypt since World War II are not favourable to the expansion of English in these areas. Russia is capable of great increase in population, and at the present time the Slavic race shows a fairly rapid rate of growth. On the other hand, a considerable part of Russian territory in Asia is in or near the Arctic zone, obviously an unfavorable factor. The opportunities for growth which Spanish has occur in Spanish America, but a lot of this territory is in the tropics. All in all, we may conclude that the English language is best provided with the facilities for expansion. Such expansion will come partly from the natural growth of the present population, partly from immigration. On the basis of territorial control it is probable that at no very distant time the English language will be spoken by a fifth, perhaps even a quarter, of the population of the world.

1.1.5. Will English Become a World Language?

The probable extension of English in the future, as indicated above, leads many people to wonder whether English will some day become the language of all the world, or at least its civilized portions. There is an increased consciousness of the many disadvantages that result from a multiplicity of tongues. How much pleasanter travel would be if we did not have to contend with the inconveniences of a foreign language. How much more readily we could conduct our business abroad if there were but a single language of trade. How greatly would the problem of the scientist and the scholar be simplified if there were one universal language of learning. And how many of the misunderstandings and prejudices that divide nations would be avoided, how much the peace of the world would be promoted if there were free interchange of national thought and feeling.

That the world is fully alive to the need for an international language is evident from the number of attempts that have been made to supply that need artificially. Between 1880 and 1907 fifty-three universal languages were proposed. Some of these enjoyed an amazing, if temporary, vogue. In 1889 Volapük claimed nearly a million adherents. Today it is all but forgotten. A few years later Esperanto experienced a similar vogue, but interest in it now is kept alive largely by local groups and organizations. Apparently the need has not been filled by any of the laboratory products so far created to fill it. And it is doubtful if it ever can be filled in this way. An artificial language might serve sufficiently the needs of business and travel, but no one seems to be willing to make it the medium of political, historical, or scientific thought. More importantly, they are aware of the impossibility of making it serve the purposes of pure literature, involving sustained emotion and creative imagination. It would seem as though the hope of the world for intellectual community lay in the eventual employment of one or a few widely known languages whose importance is universally recognized.

Less than a century ago French would have appeared to have a claim to such employment. It was then widely cultivated throughout Europe as the language of polite society, it was the diplomatic language of the world, and it enjoyed considerable popularity in literary and scientific circles. During the nineteenth century its prestige, though still great, gradually declined. The prominence of Germany in all fields of scientific and scholarly activity made German a serious competitor. And the rapid expansion of English and its growing influence in political and

commercial affairs have raised a second great competitor. Today it would seem as though English were in the ascendant. Its pre-eminence in commercial use is undoubted. Its employment for purposes of science and research has increased notably of late, especially in Scandinavian countries and among the smaller nationalities of Europe. Its influence is dominant in the East; cultivated Chinese and Japanese have adopted it as a second language. Of course it is nowhere a question of substituting English for the native speech. Nothing is a matter of greater patriotic feeling than the mother tongue. The question simply concerns the use of English, or some other widely known idiom, for international communication. And as John Galsworthy remarked, "any impartial scrutiny made at this moment of time must place English at the head of all languages as the most likely to become, in a natural, unforced way, the single intercommunicating tongue."

1.1.6. Assets and Liabilities

Since English seems likely to occupy an increasingly prominent place in international communication, it is worth pausing to inquire into its qualifications for so important a mission. All languages are equally adequate and perfect as tools of communication in their respective communities. So, without argument English shares with the other highly developed languages of Europe the ability to express the multiplicity of ideas and the refinements of thought that demand expression in our modern civilization. The question is rather one of simplicity. How readily can it be learned by the foreigner? Does it possess characteristics of vocabulary and grammar that render it easy or difficult of acquirement?

1.1.6.1. Cosmopolitan Vocabulary: Prominent among the assets of the English language must be considered the mixed character of its vocabulary. English is classified as a Teutonic language. That is to say, it belongs to the group of languages to which German, Dutch, Flemish, Danish, Swedish, and Norwegian also belong. It shares with these languages similar grammatical structure and many common words. On the other hand, more than half of its vocabulary is derived from Latin. Some of these borrowings have been direct, a great many through French, some through the other Romance languages. As a result, English also shares a great number of words with those languages of Europe which are derived from Latin, notably French, Italian, Spanish, and Portuguese. All of this means that English presents a somewhat familiar appearance to any one who speaks either a Germanic or a Romance language. There are parts of the language which he feels he does not have to learn, or learns with little effort. To a lesser extent the English vocabulary contains borrowings from many other languages. Instead of making new words chiefly by the combination of existing elements, as German does, English has shown a marked tendency to go outside her own linguistic resources and borrow from other languages. In the course of centuries of this practice English has built up an unusual capacity for assimilating outside elements. We do not feel that there is anything 'foreign' about the words *chipmunk, hominy, moose, raccoon, skunk,* all of which have been borrowed from the American Indian. We are not conscious that the words *brandy, cruller, golf, duck* (light canvas), *isinglass, measles, selvage, wagon, uproar* are from Dutch. And so with many other words in daily use. From Italian come *balcony, canto, duet, granite, opera, piano, umbrella, volcano;* from Spanish *alligator, cargo, contraband, cork, hammock, mosquito, sherry, stampede, tornado, vanilla;* from Greek, directly or indirectly, *acme, acrobat, anthology, barometer, catarrh, catastrophe, chronology, elastic, magic, tactics, tantalize,* and a host of others; from Russian *steppe, drosky, Vodka, ruble;*

from Persian *caravan, dervish, divan, khaki, mogul, shawl, sherbet,* and ultimately from Persian *jasmine, paradise, check, chess, lemon, lilac, turban, borax,* and possibly *spinach.* A few minutes spent in the examination of any good etymological dictionary will show that English has borrowed from Hebrew and Arabic, Hungarian, Hindustani, Bengali, Malay, Chinese, the languages of Java, Australia, Tahiti, Polynesia, West Africa, and from one of the aboriginal languages of Brazil. And it has assimilated these heterogeneous elements so successfully that only the professional student of language is aware of their origin. Even a commercial coinage like *Kodak* has probably lost its exotic look for most people. Such a cosmopolitan vocabulary is an undoubted asset to any language that seeks to attain international use.

1.1.6.2. Inflectional Simplicity: A second asset which English possesses to a pre-eminent degree is inflectional simplicity. The evolution of language, at least within the historical period, is a story of progressive simplification. The farther back we go in the study of the languages to which English is most closely allied, the more complex we find them. Sanskrit, Greek, and Latin, for example, as classical languages of early date, have inflections of the noun, the adjective, the verb, and to some extent the pronoun that are no longer found in Russian or French or German. In this process of simplification English has gone further than any other language in Europe. Inflections in the noun as spoken have been reduced to a sign of the plural and a form for the possessive case. The elaborate Teutonic inflection of the adjective has been completely eliminated except for the simple indication of the comparative and the superlative degrees. The verb has been simplified by the loss of practically all the personal endings, the almost complete abandonment of any distinction between the singular and the plural, and the gradual discard of the subjunctive mood. The complicated agreements that make German difficult for the foreigner are absent from English. However compensated for, such a reduction of inflections can be considered an advantage. You will learn more about this in the succeeding lessons.

1.1.6.3. Natural Gender: In the third place, English enjoys an exceptional advantage over all other major European languages in having adopted natural gender in place of grammatical gender. In studying other European languages the student labours under the heavy burden of memorizing, along with the meaning of every noun, its gender. In the Romance languages, for example, there are only two genders, and all nouns which would be neuter in English are there either masculine or feminine. Some help in these languages is afforded by distinctive endings which at times characterize the two classes. But even this aid is lacking in the Germanic languages, where the distribution of the three genders appears to the English student to be quite arbitrary. Thus in German *Sonne* (sun) is feminine, *Mond* (moon) is masculine, but *Kind* (child), Mädchen (maiden), and *Weib* (wife) are neuter. The distinction must be constantly kept in mind, since it affects not only the reference of pronouns but determines the form of inflection and the agreement of adjectives. In the English language all this was stripped away during the Middle English period, and today the gender of every noun in the dictionary is known instantly. Gender in English is determined by meaning. All nouns naming living creatures are masculine or feminine according to the sex of the individual, and all other nouns are neuter. Attributive gender, as when we speak of a ship as feminine, sun and moon as masculine or feminine, is personification and a matter of rhetoric, not grammar.

1.1.6.4. Liabilities: The three features just described are undoubtedly of great advantage in facilitating the acquisition of English by foreigners. On the other hand, it is equally important to recognize the difficulties which the foreign student encounters in learning our language. One of these difficulties is the result of the very simplification of inflections which we have considered among the assets of English. It is the difficulty, of which foreigners often complain, of expressing themselves not only logically but also idiomatically. An idiom is a form of expression peculiar to one language, and English is not alone in possessing such individual forms of expression. All languages have their special ways of saying things. Thus a German says *was für ein Mann* (what for a man) where in English we say *what kind of man;* the French say *il fait froid* (it makes cold) where we say *it is cold.* The French visitor who had learned the English idiom *to press a person to do something* was making a natural mistake when he said *Can we not squeeze the young lady to sing?* His substitution was in a way logical but not idiomatic.

A more serious criticism of English by those attempting to master it is the chaotic character of its spelling and the frequent lack of correlation between spelling and pronunciation. Writing is merely a mechanical means of recording speech. And theoretically the most adequate system of spelling is that which best combines simplicity with consistency. In alphabetic writing an ideal system would be one in which the same sound was regularly represented by the same character and a given character always represented the same sound. None of the European languages fully attains this high ideal, although many of them, such as Italian or German, come far nearer to it than English. In English the vowel sound in *believe, receive, leave, machine, be, see* is in each case represented by a different spelling. Conversely the symbol *a* in *father, hate, hat,* and many other words stands for nearly a score of sounds. The situation is even more confusing in the treatment of the consonants. We have fourteen spellings for the sound of *sh: shoe, sugar, issue, mansion, mission, nation, suspicion, ocean, nauseous, conscious, chaperon, schist, fuchsia, pshaw.*

One cannot tell how to spell an English word by its pronunciation or how to pronounce it by its spelling. Much valuable time is wasted during the early years of education in learning to spell the language. But those who defend this spelling lay stress on the useful way in which the spelling of an English word often indicates its etymology. Again, since English has preserved in thousands of borrowed words the spelling which those words have in their original language, the foreigner will be able more easily to recognize the word. But in spite of these considerations, some improvement might be helpful without sacrificing completely the advantages claimed. That such improvement has often been felt to be desirable is evident from the number of occasions on which attempts at reform have been made. In the early part of the present century a movement was launched, later supported by Theodore Roosevelt and other influential men, to bring about a moderate degree of simplification. It was suggested that since we wrote *has* and *had* we could just as well write *hav* instead of *have,* and in the same way *ar* and *wer* since we wrote *is* and *was.* But though logically sound, these spellings seemed strange to the eye, and the advantage to be gained from the proposed simplifications was not sufficient to overcome human conservatism or indifference or force of habit. It remains to be seen whether the extension of English in the future will some day compel us to consider the reform of our spelling from an impersonal and, indeed, international, point of view.

1.1.7. Development of English Language: An Overview

Growth and Decay: English like all other languages, is subject to that constant growth and decay which characterizes all forms of life. It is a convenient figure of speech to speak of languages as living and as dead. We cannot think of language as something that possesses life apart from the people who speak it, as we can think of plants or of animals. But we can observe in speech something like the process of change that characterizes the life of living things. When a language ceases to change, we call it a dead language. Classical Latin is a dead language because it has not changed for nearly two thousand years. The change that is constantly going on in a living language can be most easily seen in the vocabulary. Old words die out, new words are added, and existing words change their meaning. Much of the vocabulary of Old English has been lost, and the development of new words to meet new conditions is one of the most familiar phenomena of the English language. Change of meaning can be illustrated from any page of Shakespeare. *Nice* in Shakespeare's day meant *foolish; rheumatism* signified a cold in the head. Very real is also the change of pronunciation. A slow but steady alteration, especially in the vowel sounds, has characterized English throughout its history. Old English st*ān* has become our stone; *cū* has become *cow*. Most of these changes are so regular as to be capable of classification under what are called 'sound laws'. *This aspect will be discussed in the next lesson.* Changes likewise occur in the grammatical forms of a language. These may be the result of gradual phonetic modification, or they may result from the desire for uniformity. The man who says *I knowed* is only trying to form the past tense of this verb in English. This process is known as the operation of *analogy,* and it may affect the sound and meaning as well as the form of words. Thus it is necessary to trace the influences that are constantly at work tending to alter a language from age to age as spoken and written, and that have brought about such an extensive alteration in English as to make the language of 900 quite unintelligible to the people of 1900.

The English language of today reflects many centuries of development. The political and social events that have in the course of English history so profoundly affected the English people in their national life have generally had a recognizable effect on their language. The Christianizing of Britain in 597 brought England into contact with Latin civilization and made significant additions to our vocabulary. The Scandinavian invasions resulted in a considerable mixture of the two races and their languages. The Norman Conquest made English for two centuries the language mainly of the lower classes, while the nobles and those associated with them used French on almost all occasions. And when English once more regained supremacy as the language of all elements of the population it was an English greatly changed in both form and vocabulary from what it had been in 1066. In a similar way the Hundred Years' War, the rise of an important middle class, the Renaissance, the development of England as a maritime power, the expansion of the British Empire, and the growth of commerce and industry, of science and literature, have each in its way, contributed to make the English language what it is today. In a word, the English language reflects in its entire development the political, social, and cultural history of the English people.

The successive lessons in this course will be devoted to and elaborate on the aspects briefly mentioned above, and which will introduce you to the different stages in the history and growth of the English language.

1.1.8. Summary

This introductory lesson tries to give the reader an idea of the importance of a language and its functions in a community. The importance of English is also discussed as the most widely used language in the world. The historical factors like the American settlement by English people and the expansion of the British Empire are responsible for the large number of speakers that English has. As a result, English has acquired a crucial role in 'developing' and 'developed' countries as a second or foreign language, as the language of education, science and technology, commerce and trade. The possibility of English becoming an international language in the near future has been explored. The assets or liabilities the language itself has in order to perform such a significant function have also been discussed. We also briefly traced the different landmarks in the development of the English language.

1.1.9. Technical Terms

lingua franca : a common or link language

philologist : one who makes a systematic study of language over a period of time, e.g. tracing the development or changes in word forms

linguist : one who makes a scientific and systematic study of language
inflections : endings of words effecting modifications, e.g. plural or past tense markers etc.
etymology : the study of the origins of words
analogy : the principle by which an irregular form is given up in preference of a more regular one; similar pattern.

1.1.10. Sample Questions

1. Discuss English as an international language.

2. What are the factors contributing to the important role played by English in the world?

3. What are the characteristic features of English which make it easier or difficult to learn as a foreign language?

1.1.11. Suggested Reading

1. A.C. Baugh. - A History of the English Language.

2. Randolph Quirk. - The Use of English.

3. Henry Bradley. - The Making of English.

Dr. K. Ratna Shiela Mani

LESSON – 2

Sound Changes

STRUCTURE

1.2.1.   Objectives
1.2.2.   Introduction
1.2.3.   Phonetic Change
1.2.4.   Mixture of Peoples
1.2.5.   Indo-European Family of Languages
1.2.6.   Grimmś Law
1.2.7.   Vernerś Law
1.2.8.   Ablaut
1.2.9.   Umlaut
1.2.10.   The Great Vowel Shift
1.2.11.   Summary
1.2.12.   Sample Questions
1.2.13.   Suggested Reading

1.2.1. Objectives

From this lesson the reader will be able to

    i.   know the significance of sound changes in the growth of English
    ii.   understand the First consonant Shift that affected the Germanic Languages.
    iii.   realize the importance of Grimm's Law and Verner's Law.
    iv.   trace the significance of the Great Vowel Shift.

1.2.2. Introduction

The common man usually and mistakenly associates language with writing. He is likely to forget that writing is only a conventional device for recording sounds and that language is primarily speech. Even more importantly, he does not realize that the language at any point of time is the product of centuries of development and that language as long as it lives and is in actual use is in a constant state of change.

Let us try to understand the implications of the above points. Speech is the product of certain muscular movements. The sounds of language are produced by the passage of a current of air through cavities of the throat and face controlled by the muscles in these regions. Any voluntary muscular movement (organs of speech included) when constantly repeated is subject to gradual alteration. This alteration, however, takes place largely without our being conscious of it. Now any alteration in the position or action of the organs of speech results in a difference in the

sound produced. Thus each individual is constantly and quite unconsciously introducing slight changes in his speech. As A.C. Baugh says,

> There is no such thing as uniformity in language. Not only does the speech of one community differ from that of another, but the speech of different individuals of a single community, even different members of the same family, is marked by individual peculiarities. Members of a group, however, are influenced by one another, and there is a general similarity in the speech of a given community at any particular time. The language of any district or even country is only the sum total of the individual speech habits of those composing it and is subject to such changes as occur in the speech of its members, so far as the changes become general or at least common to a large part of it. (pp.117-18)

In Lesson 1, we made note of several features of English which make it easier to learn than most other languages. One such feature was the gradual loss of inflections simplifying its grammar. The tendency to grammatical simplification in languages is usually slow in its working, unless it happens to be stimulated by some special cause. Among the causes which hasten the progress of languages towards grammatical simplicity, there are two that require particular notice. These are (1) phonetic change; and (2) the mixture of peoples speaking different languages, or different dialects of the same language.

1.2.3.Phonetic Change

When we study the history of any language, we always discover that, at some period or other, certain of its elementary sounds have undergone an alteration in pronunciation. These changes are unconscious and unintentional, and are very gradual. Generally there is a subtle difference in the sound of a word as uttered by young men and by old men living at one time. But when the pronunciation of a vowel or a consonant becomes in each successive generation a little more unlike what it was at first, the total amount of change may in time be very great. If we compare the present day pronunciation of some language with that of the language five centuries ago, we might find that all the as had turned os, and all the ds into ts, or the other way round. As Bradley says:

> More commonly we should find that a particular vowel or consonant had changed into a certain other vowel or consonant whenever it occurred in the same part of a word (beginning, middle or end); or whenever it came in an accented syllable; or whenever it came next to a certain other sound, or to any sound of a certain class; and that under other conditions it had either undergone a different kind of change, or else had remained unaltered. (p.14)

The term 'phonetic change' is conventionally restricted to that kind of unconscious alteration of sounds which has just been described. If we study any particular language as it is spoken today and ascertain what sound in it represents each of the sounds of some older form of the language under each of the varieties of condition under which it occurred, we shall obtain a body of rules which are called the phonetic laws of the present stage of the language. It is often said that the phonetic laws applicable to one and the same dialect and date have no exceptions

whatever. Whether this is absolutely true or not we cannot say; but we can be nearly sure that when we come across a seeming exception, it is more due to the work of some other process than 'phonetic change'. For instance, it is not a case of phonetic change that we say 'I broke', where our ancestors said 'I brake'. As Bradley says, "what has happened is not that a has change into o, but that the old past tense has been superseded by a new one, imitated from the participle broken." (p.15) Again, an apparent exception to a phonetic law may be due to the fact that one dialect has borrowed a form from another dialect in which the course of phonetic change had been different.

Why a particular phonetic change should take place in one language, dialect or period and not in another is a question beyond the scope of this lesson. For our present purpose, it is enough to note the fact that the same original sound may develop quite differently in two dialects of the same language, and that a sound may continue for many centuries unaltered, and then enter on a course of rapid change. As outlined by Bradley, the results of phonetic change, so far as they affect the history of grammar, are of three kinds:

1. Confluent development. Sometimes two originally different sounds come to be represented in a later stage of the language by a single sound. Thus the Old English ā and ŏ (in certain positions) have yielded the Modern English ō, so that hāl (whole) and fŏla (foal) now form a perfect rhyme.

2. Divergent development. One and the same original sound may, owing to difference of conditions, yield two or more distinct sounds in the later language. Thus in Old English ic l ǣde (I lead), and ic l ǣdde (I led) had the same vowel; but because in one word the vowel was followed by a single and in the other by a double d, their modern forms have different vowels.

3. Dropping of sounds. In some cases the phonetic law relating to a particular vowel or consonant is that, when it occurs under certain conditions, it will neither remain unchanged nor change into anything else, but will vanish altogether. Thus, an Old French t, if it comes at the end of a word, becomes silent in Modern French. Again, every short vowel which ended a word (of more than one syllable) in Old English has long ago dropped off, so that all the words which a thousand years ago were disyllables with short vowel endings are now monosyllables.

Supposing in any language these three kinds of phonetic change affect the sounds used in inflectional endings, it is obvious that the result must be a considerable upsetting of the grammatical system. In particular, the effect of 'confluent development' and 'dropping of sounds' is to weaken the inflectional system by confounding different cases, persons, tenses etc., under the same form. One example is the inconvenient peculiarity of Old English grammar in having a large number of nouns with their nominative singular and nominative plural alike.

In this way phonetic change leads indirectly to that kind of simplification which we shall find exemplified in the history of the English language. The later lessons, especially on the Middle English period, show in detail how the endings of case, number, gender in nouns, verbs, adjectives etc. came to be pronounced differently, thereby losing their distinctiveness, and eventually leading to the loss of inflections.

1.2.4. Mixture of Peoples

The second condition which we mentioned as favouring grammatical simplifications was the mixture of peoples speaking different languages or dialects. Let us imagine a community speaking a highly inflected language receiving a large accession of foreigners to its population. It is a matter of general experience that the vocabulary of a foreign tongue is easier to acquire than the grammar. The newcomers would soon manage to communicate with the natives using the bare stems of words without troubling themselves with grammar or with the terminations of adjectives or articles, or the different ways of forming the plural in nouns. The natives also would start avoiding the inflections which are puzzling to the foreigners for the purpose of intercommunication. Eventually they cannot avoid using this simplified grammar for communication amongst themselves. If, in addition, there is intermarriage and absorption of the strangers in the native population, the language of this community must in a few generations, be deprived of a considerable number of its inflectional forms.

Let us take a somewhat different example, where we have two peoples that live together and blend into one, speaking dialects instead of widely distinct languages. The two dialects would have a large common vocabulary, with marked differences in inflections. The blending of these two peoples is likely to take place more quickly. Since only the grammatical endings will hinder understanding, the speakers of neither dialect will be particular about preserving them. Thus, as Bradley says, "the simplification of the inflectional machinery of a language is powerfully stimulated by the absorption of large bodies of foreigners into the population and by the mixture of different dialects" (p.19).

The succeeding lessons will discuss, among other things, how far these causes were actually in operation during the formative period of the English language. We will be satisfied with a couple of examples here.

(1) You will see in Lesson 4 about the origin of English in detail. Firstly the Teutonic the tribes, — Angles, Saxons, and Jutes (the founders of English), who settled in Britain in the fifth and sixth centuries, though speaking substantially the same language, brought with them their peculiarities of dialect. But in the main, Old English dialects did not differ much in vocabulary except for the grammatical differences. The increase of population and the establishment of political unity over larger and larger areas during the succeeding centuries, necessarily resulted in the formation of mixed dialects, and this contributed to the decay of the inflectional system of the language.

(2) Another example is that of the Scandinavian influence on Old English, described in Lesson 6. The amalgamation of the two races followed quickly and since the Scandinavians were one-time neighbours of the Teutonic tribes who had come to England earlier, the languages spoken by them bore a lot of similarities. Except for the dissimilar grammatical inflections, the words were identical. Under such conditions there must have arisen mixed dialects, mainly English, but containing many Danish words, and characterized by the dropping or confused use of some of the terminations distinctive of cases, genders and persons. Since we know for a fact that in those districts in which Danes had settled are precisely those in which English grammar became simplified most rapidly, there can be no doubt that the Scandinavian admixture in the

population was <u>one</u> of the causes that contributed to bring about the disuse of the Old English inflections.

Let us now examine in detail certain important sound changes that have characterized the development of the English language.

1.2.5. Indo European Family of Languages

One of the characteristics of language is that it is dynamic, ie., it goes on changing. It changes according to the changing needs of the community that uses it. It is subject to various kinds of pressure like migration and contact with peoples speaking different languages. Thus, if people using one language migrate to different parts of the world, their language gradually becomes diversified into many dialects; and these dialects become so differentiated from each other and also from the original tongue that they come to be treated as different languages. Thus one language may give birth to a number of languages. For example, most of the languages of India and Europe are descendants of a language called Indo-European, the details of which are discussed in the next lesson.

1.2.6. Grimm's Law

English belongs to the Germanic (or Teutonic) branch of the Indo-European family of languages. Some of the other languages that belong to the Germanic/Teutonic branch are Dutch, German, Norwegian, Swedish, and Icelandic. There are some characteristics of the Germanic branch that distinguish it from the other Indo-European branches. One of the chief characteristics of the Germanic languages relates to the *First Germanic Consonant Shift*, popularly called *Grimm's Law*. In other words, a distinctive mark of the Germanic languages is their almost regular shifting of the Indo-European stop consonants (A stop consonant is produced with a stricture of complete closure and sudden release). That is, the original Indo-European sounds remained in general unchanged in all branches except the Germanic; but in the Germanic branch their articulation shifted and a new set of sounds were substituted for them. The evidence of this shift was discovered by comparing hundreds of words whose meaning was very close, but whose forms differed as between the Germanic and the non-Germanic branches, whereupon it was observed that these differences were not haphazard but clearly followed a definite pattern. The actual discovery of the phonetic correspondence concerned had been, in part at least, anticipated by Ihre and Rask, the Danish philologist, but the definite formulation of the law was first made by Jacob Grimm in 1822 in his *German Grammar*. After a good deal of investigation he concluded that the primitive Germanic group had changed the Indo-European consonant system, and the change had apparently proceeded so regularly that it must have followed some definite, methodical course. As a result of further research he formulated a law, which he declared formed the basis of the change, and, as mentioned earlier, this law has come to be known as Grimm's Law. It attempted to systematically account for the correspondences between certain consonants in the Germanic languages and those found for example in Sanskrit, Greek and Latin.

The Indo-European consonant system had the following stops
Voiceless   Voicecless   Voiced unaspirated   Voiced

unaspirated	aspirated		aspirated
p	p^h	b	b^h
t̪	$t̪^h$	d̪	$d̪^h$
k	k^h	g	g^h

t̪ and d̪ are dental stops.

Aspirated sounds are sounds that are followed by a strong puff of breath, i.e., /h/.

In the Primitive Germanic, some changes took place in this set of stops, which are explained by Grimm's Law. Grimm's Law is stated in three parts:

(1)   The Indo-European voiced aspirated stops lost aspiration and became voiced unaspirated stops in Germanic. Thus $b^h > b$; $d̪^h > d̪$;   and $g^h > g$

        (i) $b^h > b$

            Sanskrit *bhrata*   :   English *brother*

            Sanskrit *bhu*   :   English *be*

        (ii) $d̪^h > d̪$

            Sanskrit *madhu*   :   English *mead*

            Sanskrit *rudhiras* :   English *red*

            Sanskrit *bandhan*: English *bind*

        (iii) $g^h > g$ (IE /g^h/ changed to /h/ in Latin and Sanskrit)

            Sanskrit *hansa*   :   English *goose*

            Latin *hostis*   :   English *guest*

(2) The Indo-European voiced unaspirated stops became voiceless unaspirated stops in Germanic.

        Thus $b > p$; $d̪ > t̪$; and $g > k$.

        (i) $b > p$

            Latin *slubricus*   :   English *slip*

Sanskrit *sabar*   :   English *sap*

(ii)   d > t
$$_\Pi \quad _\Pi$$

Sanskrit *padam* :   English *foot*   (d > t; later
Latin *decem*   :   English *ten* $_\Pi \quad _\Pi$

t > t)
$$_\Pi$$

(iii)   g > k

Sanskrit *yuga*   :   English *yoke*

Latin *genu*   :   English *knee* (In Old English it was c*neo* and
                                      was pronounced / kneo /)

(3) The Indo-European voiceless unaspirated stops became voiceless fricatives in Germanic. Thus

p > f;   t > θ ; and k > h.
       $_\Pi$

(i)   p > f

Sanskrit *pancha*   :   English *five*

Latin *pedem*   :   English *foot*

(ii)   t > θ
    $_\Pi$

Latin *tres*   :   English *three*

Sanskrit *dant*   :   English *tooth*

(iii)   k > h

Latin *canis*   :   English *hound*

Latin *cordem*   :   English *heart*

There are, however, two exceptions to the third part of Grimm's Law: The Indo-European voiceless unaspirated stops did not become voiceless fricatives in Germanic when they were immediately preceded by another stop or /s/. For example, Latin o*cto* is English *eight*. Since /t$_\Pi$/ was preceded by /k/, /t$_\Pi$/ did not become /θ/. Latin *hostis* is English *guest*. Since /t$_\Pi$/ was preceded

by /s/, /t̠/ did not become /θ/. Therefore the third part of Grimm's Law can be stated as follows:

The Indo-European voiceless unaspirated stops became voiceless fricatives in Germanic except when preceded by another stop or the voiceless fricative /s/.

1.2.7 Verner's Law

Soon after the formulation of Grimm's Law, linguists found it necessary to modify the third part of the Law. For a long time scholars were puzzled by certain apparent exceptions to the shift, instances in which it has, indeed, taken place, but in which the resulting consonant has been voiced. For example, Sanskrit *saptam* is English *seven*. Corresponding to the /p/ in *saptam*, there should be a /f/ in *seven*; but instead we have a /v/ in /sevn/. Sanskrit *bhrata* is English *brother*. Corresponding to the /t̠/ in *bhrata,* there should be a /θ/ in *brother;* but instead we have a /ð/ in /'brʌðƏ/. The explanation of this voicing was furnished in 1877 by Karl Verner, and is consequently known as Verner's Law. Though Verner's Law has few direct reflexes in Proto-Indo-European (PE) it has played an important part in the development of the language, both through its operation in Germanic, and because it formulates a tendency which has been operative fairly consistently at all periods. The voicing depends upon the evolution of the second major characteristic of the Germanic languages, namely a new system of phonemic accentual stress, which eventually comes to be located on the root-syllables of words. This has remained a constant feature of the sub-family, and has played a greater part than any other single element in the history of English – its grammar as well as its phonology. Its first detectable consequence is Verner's Law. Verner's Law is intended to supplement Grimm's Law, by accounting for the apparent exceptions to it.

Verner's Law can be stated as follows: The Indo-European voiceless unaspirated stops /p, t, k/, no matter in what position in a word they occurred, changed to voiceless fricatives /f, θ, h/ in early Primitive Germanic. In later Primitive Germanic (in fact, partly in Primitive Germanic, partly in West Germanic, and partly in Old English), however, a split developed. Those which were in initial position in a word, or immediately after a stressed vowel, changed no further; but those which were in any other position, in voiced surroundings (i.e., preceded and followed by a voiced sound), changed to voiced fricatives. In other words, Germanic voiceless fricatives became voiced fricatives in voiced surroundings if the vowel preceding the fricative in the original Indo-European word did not carry primary stress. The following pairs of Sanskrit and Old English words illustrate the law:

	Sanskrit	Old English
1)	`Vartāmi (I turn)	weorþe* (I became)
2)	Va`varta (has turned)	wearþ (he became)
3)	Vavrti`ma (we have turned)	wurdon
4)	Vavrtā`na	worden

(*þ was a letter which represented the sound /θ/ and the modern spelling <u>th</u>)

We can notice that in the case of examples 1 and 2, the voiceless unaspirated stop /t̚/ changed to /θ/ in English. It did not become /ð/ because it was preceded by a vowel that carried stress. In examples 3 and 4, we find that /t̚/ occurs in voiced surroundings and it is not preceded by a stressed vowel, and therefore the /t̚/ became /θ/ which in its turn became the voiced fricative /ð/. In West Germanic the resulting /ð/ became /d/. For example, Latin *centum* is English *hundred*. Alterations in Modern English like *death/dead* are a result of this law formulated by Verner.

As Jesperson says, the consonant shift is the great phonetic change affecting large parts of the vocabulary which had contributed, perhaps, more than anything else to make Germanic words look strange. But this consonant-shift must not be imagined as having taken place at one moment; on the contrary it must have taken centuries, and involving various stages in this development. It must have taken place sometime after the segregation of the Germanic from neighbouring dialects of the parent language. According to A.C. Baugh, there are words in Finnish borrowed from Germanic which do not show the change, and which therefore must have resulted from a contact between Germanic and Finnish before the change occurred. There is also evidence that the shifting was still occurring as late as about the fifth century B.C. (p.21). The   cause   of   the change is not known. It is often assumed that the charge was due to contact with a non-Germanic population. The contact could have resulted from the migration of the Germanic tribes or from the penetration of a foreign population into Germanic territory. Whatever its cause, the Germanic sound shift is the most distinctive feature marking off the Germanic languages from the other languages of the Indo-European family.

Consonants are, in general, the more permanent elements in a language: they are like the skeleton. Vowels and diphthongs are, so to speak, the flesh and blood. Vowels are less stable and diphthongs the least stable. A slow but steady alteration, especially in the vowel sounds, has characterized English throughout its history. Let us now see some great changes affecting vowel sounds.

1.2.8. **Ablaut**

According to F.T.Wood, *ablaut*, or *gradation*, "is the name given to that process, seen most clearly in the principal parts of verbs, by which vowel sounds undergo a change according to whether they occur in a stressed or an unstressed syllable." The term "ablaut" was used by Grimm to refer to certain vowel variations in the Indo-European as a result of stress changes. These variations are applicable to the English language through all its stages.

Many Old English verbs formed their preterites (past tense and past participle forms) by a vowel change, due to Indo-European variations in pitch and stress. Gradation is by no means confined to strong verbs, but it is best illustrated by them. The variations of the word *can* offer a good example of vowel gradation in Modern English.

Can't /ka:nt/	-	,Can't he make it?
Can /kæn / (strong form)	-	,Can he make it?
/k∂n/(weak form)	-	Can ,he make it?

/kn/(weak form)   -   Can he ,make it?

The /□:/ ~ /æ/ ~ /Ә / ~ ∅ alterations are referred to as <u>ablaut</u>. The groups of vowels that are in ablaut relationship to each other are known as - *series* and each vowel in a series belongs to a particular grade:
  i)   Fully accented: Full grade, /□:/ in /k□ : nt/
  ii)   Secondary accent: Secondary grade, /æ/ in /kæn/
  iii)   Tertiary accent: Reduced grade, / Ә / in /k Ә n/
  iv)   Weak accent: Vanishing grade, zero in /kn/
In the same way, the addition of a suffix to the root of a verb in order to make a tense or a participle might well involve the shifting of an accent and so result in a change in the root syllable.

3.   In Old English, the strong verbs fell into six classes according to their ablaut series. There was also a seventh group made up of reduplicating verbs, which may or may not have gradation. The following examples show that the four principal parts of Old English have been reduced to three in Modern English, since the disfunction between the second and third forms (past tense singular and past tense plural) has long since been lost. Further, the three variants often tend in Modern English to be simplified to two, or even one: *win*, *won* and *burst* respectively.

Old English	Modern English
1. *drīfan, drāf, drifon, drifen*	*drive, drove, driven*
2. *cēosan, cēas, curon, coren*	*choose, chose, chosen*
3. *singan, sang, sungon, sungen*	*sing, sang, sung*
4. *beran, bæ r, b□ron, boren*	*bear, bore, borne*
5. *etan, □t, □ton, æten*	*eat, ate, eaten*
6. *scacan, scōc, scōcon, scacen*	*shake, shook, shaken*

A typical representative of the reduplicating group is the following example:

Old English	Modern English
bēatan, bēot, bēoton, bēaten	beat, beat, beaten

4. Many verbs which were once graded have now dispensed with gradation. A few examples of such verbs are: *climb, help, dive, lock,* and *melt* (the old past participle form survives in the adjective *molten*). We can say that "In one respect all the graded verbs have taken a step towards simplification of a rather complex system" (F.T.Wood).

1.2.9. Umlaut

Umlaut or *Mutation* is an important sound change that took place during the Old English period. There were, in fact, two mutations called *i-mutation* and *u-mutation*. The *i-mutation* is also called *front mutation,* and the *u-mutation* is also called *back mutation*. The *i-mutation* is considered more important than the *u-mutation*. *i-mutation* took place in early Old English period. It was probably a slow process and did not occur uniformly and simultaneously in all words or in

all parts of the country, but it is thought to have been well advanced by AD 600 and complete by 700.

1. This change affected the stressed vowels, and the new forms that resulted from their change give us several distinctive grammatical differences today, the plurals such as *mice* and *feet* being the most familiar, but the causative verbs *set* and *lay* (formed by umlaut from the intransitives *sit* and *lie*) being also of daily occurrence.

2. The *i-mutation,* also called *i-* or *j-mutation*, can be stated as follows: all original back vowels (in accented syllables) when followed in the next syllable of a word by /I/ or /j/ were fronted, to the corresponding front vowels, the /i/ or the /j/ subsequently disappearing.

3. The vowel differences in *full* (adj) and *fill* (verb) are due to umlaut. The Old English forms were *full* (adj) and *fullyan* (verb). The back vowel /u/ in *fullyan* was followed by /j/ in the next syllable and as a result it underwent umlaut. It became its corresponding front vowel but retained its lip-rounding for some period. The following changes took place:

	Adjective	Verb
Original forms	/ful/	/fuljan/
Umlaut	-	/fyljan/ (/y/ is a rounded /i/)
		Later it became /fylan/
Loss of the final segments	-	/fyl/
Unrounding of the front vowels	-	/fIl/
Modern English forms	/ful/	/fIl/

4. Examples of words in which vowels underwent mutation -
   Mutated Plurals: *tooth: teeth; mouse: mice*
   Mutated Abstract Nouns Derived from Adjectives: *long: length; strong : strength; whole: health.*
   Verbs Derived, by Mutation, from Cognate Nouns: *doom: deem; brood: breed*
   Verbs Derived, by Mutation, from Adjectives: *whole: heal, full: fill.*

1.2.10. The Great Vowel Shift

In pronunciation, great changes took place in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, so that Shakespeare's pronunciation differed considerably from Chaucer's, but differed only in small ways from that of the present day. The biggest changes were in the vowel-system. During the Old English period and most of the Middle English period, most of the vowels of English remained unchanged. But since the fourteenth century, some of the English vowels have undergone what Jespersen calls the "Great Vowel Shift." This change had the effect of raising all the long vowels. In other words, all the long vowels gradually came to be pronounced with a greater elevation of

the tongue and closing of the mouth. The changes may be visualized by means of the following diagram:

i: ⟶ ai   au ⟵ u:

e: o:

æ: □:

a: □:

a: > æ: □: > □:
æ: > e: □: > o:
e: > i: o: > u:
i: > ai   u: > au
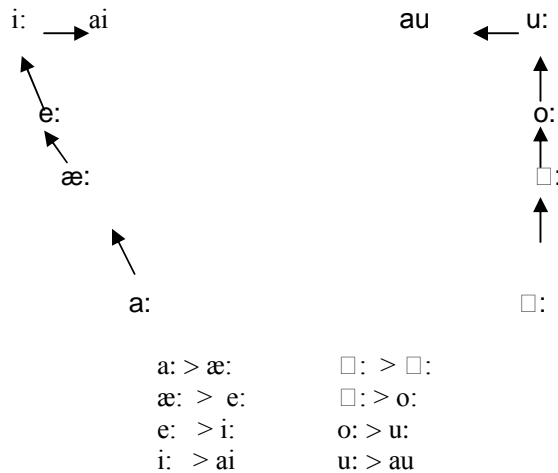
1. The vowels /a:, æ:, e:, □:, □:, o:/ were raised one step each. / i:/ and /u:/ could not be raised any further without becoming consonantal, and so they became diphthongs /aI/ and /au/. The Old English /mi:n/ became /main/ in Middle English (i: > ai). Similarly /θu:zƏnd/ became /θauzƏnd/ (u:> au) and /se:k/ became /si:k/.

2. The long vowels, both the front and the back series, have shifted to the positions of articulation of vowels above them. The highest in each series, unable to go higher, have become diphthongs. Jespersen argues that this general upward shift could not have taken place until the way was clear for it – in other words, that it must have begun with the diphthongization of [i:] and [u:], which then permitted the rest to rise serially without losing their phonemic contrasts.

3. The following table shows the changes that took place in the singular and plural forms of *mouse* and *tooth:*

a) *Mouse : Mice*   Singular   Plural

Original Forms   /mu:s/   /mu:si/

Umlaut   -   /my:si/

Loss of /I/   -   /my:s/

Unrounding of the   -   /mi:s/
Front Vowels

Great Vowel Shift   /maus/   /mais/

                                 (u:>a□)   (i:>ai)

Finally   /maus/   /mais/

gular   Plural

/to: θiz/

aut	-	/te: θiz/	
Loss of the Final			
Segments	-	/te: θ/	
Great Vowel Shift	/tu: θ/	/ti: θ/	

(o:> u:)   (e:>i:)

Finally   /tu:θ/   /t i: θ/

4. The effects of the Shift can be noticed in the following comparison of Chaucer's, Shakespeare's, and a present-day speaker's pronunciation:

Chaucer's Spelling	Chaucer's Pronunciation	Shakespeare's Pronunciation	Present-day Pronunciation	Present-day Spelling
lyf	/li:f/	/leif/	/laif/	*life*
deed	/de:d/	/di:d/	/di:d/	*deed*
deel	/dɛ:l/	/de:l/	/di:l/	*deal*
mone	/mo:n/	/mu:n/	/mu:n/	*moon*
hous	/hu:s/	/hous/	/haus/	*house*

From this it is apparent that most of the long vowels had acquired at least by the sixteenth century, if not earlier, approximately their present pronunciation.

The Great Vowel Shift is also responsible for the unorthodox use of the vowel symbols (letters) in English spelling, thus contributing to the chaotic spelling system of English. The spelling of English had become fixed in a general way before the Shift and therefore did not change when the quality of the long vowels changed. As a result, English vowel symbols (letters) no longer correspond to the sounds which they once represented in English. You will read about this topic again in Lesson 11.

1.2.11. Summary

The aim of this lesson is to introduce the reader to the importance of sound changes in language and in particular, to trace how certain major systematic changes have affected the growth of the English language. The tendency of English in its development has been towards a progressive simplification of its grammar, especially inflections. Phonetic change and mixture of peoples have been considered the prime factors working toward the blurring of and subsequent loss of inflections. Next specific instances of sound changes which are supposed to be methodical and obeying 'sound laws' have been discussed. The first of these is the First Consonant Shift as

manifested in the Germanic languages. Correspondences of certain consonants between Latin, Greek and Sanskrit on the one hand and English and other Germanic languages on the other have been formulated by Jakob Grimm. A few exceptions to this Law have been later explained by Karl Verner. Thus we are pretty certain of the idea that sound laws are regular and do not admit any exceptions.

Other changes affecting the English vowels are discussed under Ablaut and Umlaut, both of which are important aspects of English grammar. Finally the Great Vowel Shift, which took place during Shakespeare's time, has also been examined briefly because of its significance. During this shift all the long vowels underwent extensive change with the result of bringing Shakespeare's pronunciation closer to the Modern English pronunciation. The subsequent lessons will offer you instances of sound changes at work on the English language at different stages of the history of its development and leading to specific results.

1.2.12. Sample Questions

1.   State and explain Grimm's Law.

2.   Explain how Verner's Law supplements Grimm's Law.

3.   Explain and illustrate Ablaut.

4.   Write an explanatory note on Umlaut.

5.   Discuss the Great Vowel Shift in detail.

1.2.13. Suggested Reading

a.   Albert C. Baugh, *A History of the English Language*, Allied.

b. Frederick T. Wood, *An Outline History of the English Language*, Macmillan.

c.   Stuart Robertson, *The Development of Modern English*, Prentice-Hall.

Prof. V.V.N. Rajendra Prasad

Lesson – 3

The Indo-European Family of Languages

Structure

1.3.1 Objectives

From this lesson, the student will be able:

i.   to understand what a language family is.
ii.   to study the relationship between the major European and some Indian languages
iii.   to know about the languages belonging to the Indo-European family

1.3.2. Introduction

English is one of more than three thousand languages in use in the world. It is related to about a hundred of these languages which constitute the Indo-European Family of languages. The term Indo-European signifies the geographical extent or area from India to Western Europe including England and Iceland (The term Indo-European has replaced the other terms Indo-Germanic and Aryan). Towards the end of the eighteenth century, Western scholars studying Sanskrit noticed the similarity between Sanskrit and the classical languages, Greek and Latin. The similarity was noticeable in respect of other languages in use in several parts of Europe. On that basis, the theory of a common origin for these languages was developed.

Besides the Indo-European family, there are many other families of languages, which have been subjected to systematic investigation by philologists. A few of these families are *Semitic, Hamitic*, Ural-*Altaic, Sino-Tibetan, Korean, Malayo-Polynenian, Dravidian, African* (the *Bantau* and the <u>Sudanese</u> – Guinean), and the families of languages among the American Indians, in Australia and New Guinea. Towards the close of the nineteenth century, two more language groups *Tocharian* and *Hittite* belonging to the Indo-European family were identified.

1.3.3. What is a language family?

Just as we speak of human families, we speak of language families also. There are similarities between the two. The members of a human family are bound together by common characteristics. Let us for the sake of illustration consider a parent family A and call the various members A1, A2, A3, A4 etc. Each one of the members will carry the characteristics of the parent stock and the characteristics will be inherited by the members of the succeeding generations. Even if the succeeding generations become distant from the original parent family, the family characteristics do not get obliterated. In a similar way, the members of a language family show a certain resemblance.

If one compares a number of languages, there may appear to be some sort of relationship to one another. If then we are able to trace a group of these apparently related forms in several languages to a common ancestor by means of older writings, it may sometimes become clear that these forms must be branches from a common root. By going further back, we may sometimes be able to compare a number of early forms in different languages which in their turn must have descended from a common prehistoric original. This supposed original will be much older than the earliest written languages, so that it can never be verified with absolute certainty, but must remain only a strongly supported hypothesis. But if other qualities in these languages which are compared corroborate the relationship and ancestry which we have arrived at by the above method, we will be able to construct a genealogy of our languages; in other words, to classify them into families. For example, if we take the words for *is* in some European and Asiatic languages, we may reconstruct with fair probability the ancestral pre-historic word from which all must have descended. They are Latin *est,* Greek *esti*, Sanskrit *asti*, Russian *est'*, German *ist*, Italian *ė*, etc. Now by studying the earliest forms and the later history of each of these languages, we can be pretty sure that the ancestral form from which all descended was **esti*. We can know this because in Sanskrit an original *e* – sound became *a*, and that the Italian pronunciation reduced the earlier Latin *est* to a form indicated by the modern spelling *ė* . Thus such forms as **esti* are written with an asterisk (star) to remind that they are only probable reconstructions of ancestral or primitive forms and which are not attested by writing.

1.3.3. The Discovery of Sanskrit

The most important discovery leading to this hypothesis that there is a common origin of these languages was the recognition that Sanskrit, a language of ancient India, was one of the languages of the group. This was first suggested in the latter part of the eighteenth century and fully established by the beginning of the nineteenth. The extensive literature of India reaching back further than that of any of the European languages, preserves features of the common language much older than most of those of Greek or Latin or German. It is easier, for example, to see the resemblance between the English word *brother* and the Sanskrit *bhratar-* than between *brother* and fr*ater.* But what is even more important, Sanskrit preserves an unusually full system of declensions and conjugations by which it became clear that the inflections of these languages could likewise be traced to a common origin. Compare the following forms of the verb *to be*:

Old English		Gothic	Latin	Greek	Sanskrit
eom	(am)	im	sum	eimi	asmi
eart	(art)	is	es	ei	asi
is	(is)	ist	est	esti	asti
sindon	(are)	sijm	sumus	semen	smas
sindon	(are)	sijip	estis	este	stha
sindon	(are)	sind	sunt	eisi	santi

The Sanskrit forms particularly permit us to see that at one time this verb had the same endings (*mi, si, ti, mas, tha, nti*).

Let us now examine the words in the following table:

English	Dutch	Gothic	German	Sanskrit	Latin/Greek
Father	Vadar	Fadar	Vater	Pitr	Pater
Brother	Broeder	Brothar	Bruder	Brata	Frater/Phrater
One	Een	Ains	Eins		Uns
Two	Twee	Twai	Zwei	Dva	Duo

The words in the table reveal a certain similarity of form. There are many such words belonging to different languages, but showing a basic similarity. This similarity suggests that these words should have developed from a common origin or ancestor. This original source or the parent family, as far as the languages mentioned above are concerned, is called the Indo-European Family. A language family may be defined as the parent stock including large groups of languages bound together by common characteristics. A branch is a unit of the language family. It is a small group within the family having its own members.

1.3.4. The Indo-European Family

English is a member of the Indo-European family. The general view is that the parent language Indo-European, a hypothetical language, now non-existent, was spoken about 3000/3500 BC by nomadic tribes in the neighbourhood of the Black Sea. These tribes moved in different directions. This movement of the tribes, described as the dispersal of the tribes, might have been prompted by the spirit of adventure, and/or search for food and better climate. Gradually the tribes got separated. Each tribe carried the parent language and developed it in its own way with the result that the original language assumed different forms in different places at the hands of different tribes. As this language spread, it also mixed with many 'non-Indo-European' tongues and was modified by them variously at different stages. Consequently, differences between the languages of the tribes arose and these differences became more and more pronounced on account of a variety of factors like geographical barriers, lack of contact, divergence in customs, way of life and beliefs. With the passage of time, apparent differences became more pronounced than basic similarities.

1.3.6. Branches of the Indo-European Family

As a result of the dispersal of the tribes and the attempt of each tribe to develop the language to meet new requirements, the original Indo - European split into nine branches.   This is believed to have happened about 2000 BC. These branches are :1. India 2. Iranian 3. Armenian 4. Albanian   5. Hellenic   6. Italic   7. Balto-Slavic 8. Celtic   9. Teutonic.

The Centum Group and the Satem Group:

The Indo European family falls into two broad divisions – Western and Eastern. The Western division includes the Hellenic, the Italic, the Teutonic, and the Celtic[*] branches. These branches form the Centum* group. The Indo-Iranian, the Armenian, the Albanian and the Balto-Slavonic branches belonging to the Eastern division constitute the Satem group.

```
                           Indo-European
                                 |
        ┌────────────────────────┴────────────────────────┐
Western Division                                    Eastern Division
(Centum Group)                                       (Satem Group)
        |                                                  |
 ┌──────┼──────┬──────┐            ┌──────┬──────┬──────┬──────┐
Hellenic  Italic  Celtic  Teutonic   Indian  Iranian  Albanian  Armenian  Balto-Slavonic
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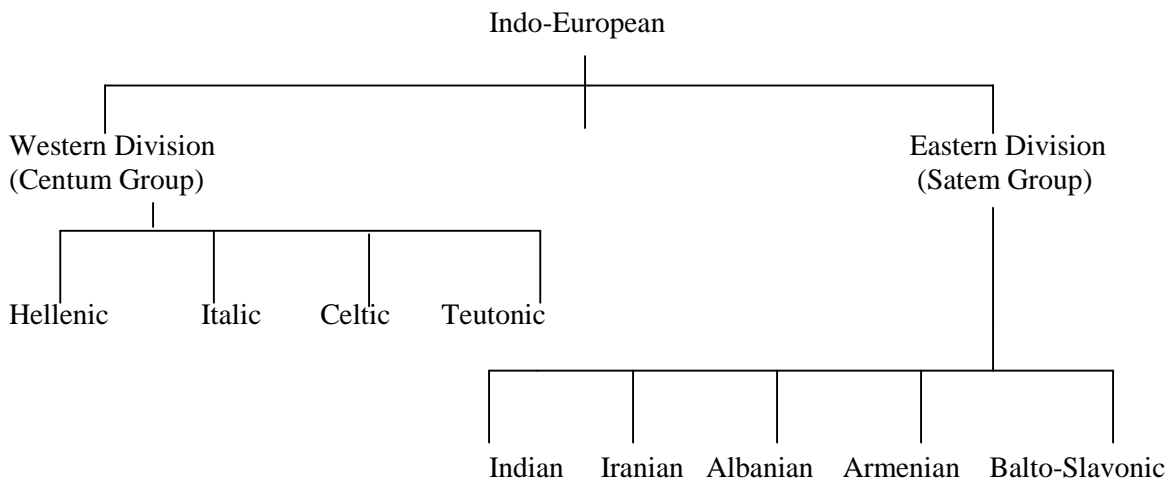
The Eastern group of languages show certain basic changes from the original system, such as a general shift in the pronunciation of the so-called 'guttural' consonants g and k to a 'palatal' position. Thus, for instance, the Indo-European assumed primitive form for the numeral 100 is *kmtóm*: but whereas languages of the Western set such as Latin (centum) retain the orginal k – sound, Sanskrit has changed the k to an *sh* – sound [∫] (□atàm) and Russian has the word as *sto*. For this reason the Western languages are commonly referred to as 'Centum-languages' and the Eastern often the Old Persian or Iranian form of the word – as 'Satem – languages'.

Let us now consider each of the nine branches.

1.   The Indian Branch: To the Indian division belongs Sanskrit. The language of the Vedas is known as Vedic Sanskrit. The Vedas are believed to date back to 1500 BC. Vedic Sanskrit is distinguished from another form of Sanskrit called Classical Sanskrit, which was an extension of

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[*] Celtic and Centum are pronounced with initial 'k' sound.

Vedic Sanskrit. Classical Sanskrit assumed a fixed literary form and its grammar was codified by Panini, the most outstanding Sanskrit grammarian (4th century BC). Originally Sanskrit commanded a position comparable to that of Latin in Europe in the Middle Ages. Besides Sanskrit, there were a number of local dialects in colloquial use known as Prakrits. Some of them assumed a literary form. The most well known of the Prakrits is Pāli, the language of Buddhism which developed in the 6th century BC. These colloquial dialects gave rise to the major North Indian languages, which still survive. They are Bengali, Punjabi, Hindi, Marathi and Hindustani.

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                              Indian
                                |
         ┌──────────────────────┼──────────────────────┐
         |                      |                      |
      Vedic                 Classical               Prakrits
     Sanskrit                Sanskrit                  |
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                            ┌──────────┬──────────┬──────────┐
                            |          |          |          |
                         Bengali    Punjabi    Marathi      Hindi
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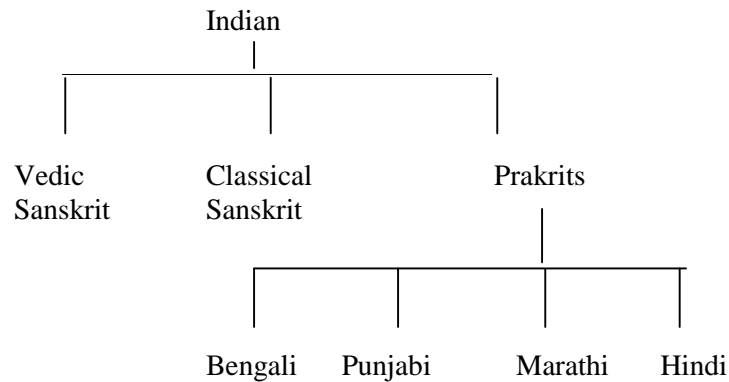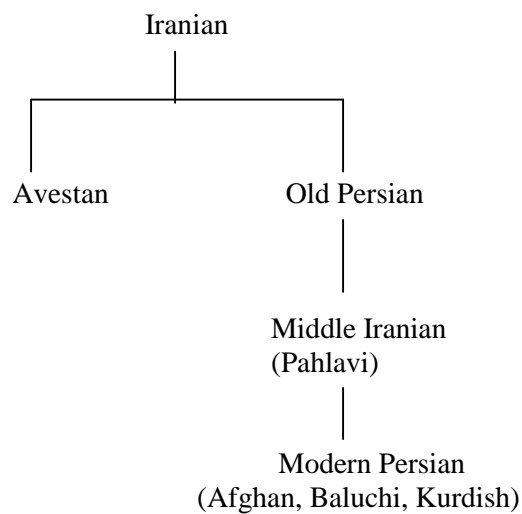
2.   The Iranian Branch: The Iranian division has two sub-divisions, (1) Avestan and (2) Old Persian. Avestan is the language of the <u>Avesta</u>, the sacred book of the Zorastrians. Old Persian is to be found only in inscriptions. A later form of this language, Middle Iranian or Pahlavi gave rise to Modern Persian. Afghan or Pushtu, Baluchi and Kurdish are members of the Persian Group.

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                           Iranian
                              |
              ┌───────────────┴───────────────┐
              |                               |
           Avestan                        Old Persian
                                              |
                                              |
                                        Middle Iranian
                                          (Pahlavi)
                                              |
                                              |
                                        Modern Persian
                                   (Afghan, Baluchi, Kurdish)
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3. **The Armenian Branch:** Armenian is used in a limited area south of the Caucasus and the eastern part of the Black Sea. Armenian has been preserved as a literary language since the fifth century AD. Besides an Armenian translation of the Bible, there is a considerable body of Armenian literature, mainly historical and theological. The Armenians were for a long time under

Persian rule. The influence of Iranian, Greek and Turkish on Armenian is pronounced and accounts for the mixed character of its vocabulary.

4. **The Albanian Branch:** Albanian is a remnant of the language of ancient Illyria, spoken in the north-western regions of the Balkans. Records of the language, only since the fifteenth century, are available. Its vocabulary shows the influences of Latin, Greek, Turkish and Slavonic and hence it has been found rather difficult to identify its original character. Albanian was once regarded to be a member of the Hellenic group. But now its status as an autonomous branch has been recognized.
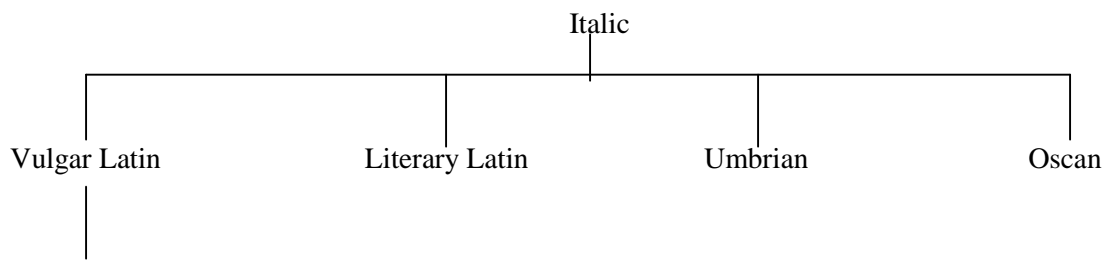
5. **The Hellenic or Greek Branch:** Literary Greek has a long history and may be traced back to the ninth century BC. The main dialectal groups of the Greek branch are Ionic, Aeolic, Arcadian-Cyprian, Doric and North-West Greek. These dialects were used in different parts of the Aegean Sea. Of these dialects, Attic which grew out of Ionic was the most important and established itself as the literary language. The emergence of Attic as the literary language was due to the all-round supremacy enjoyed by Athens in the great Age of Pericles (495-429 BC). The Athenians achieved excellence in architecture, sculpture, philosophy and literature. Athens was the nucleus of cultural, intellectual and political activity. The dramatist Aeschylus, Euripides, Sophocles and Aristophanes, the historians Herodotus and Thucydides, the orator Demosthenes and the philosophers Plato and Aristotle enriched the cultural and intellectual life of Athens. Alexander by his extensive conquests, helped in spreading Attic, the language of Athens. For this reason, Attic superseded the other dialects and developed into the literary language.

6. **The Italic Branch:**
(a) By the sixth century BC, a number of languages belonging to the Italic branch were spoken in Italy. The branch included Umbrian, Oscan and Latin. Latin was the language of Latium and its principal city Rome. The other languages of the Italian branch were superseded by Latin, which on account of the political importance of Rome, developed into literary or classical Latin and spread to different parts with the extension of the Roman Empire.
(b) The Romance Languages: In addition to the literary form of the language, there was a popular form of Latin called Vulgar Latin (Vulgar from Latin *vulgus*, the common people). With the extension of the Roman Empire, Vulgar Latin was taken to France,   Spain, Portugal and Roumania. In these countries, separation and contact with native populations resulted in vulgar Latin having independent development and grew into separate languages: French, Provençal Spanish, Portuguese, Italian and Roumanian. In the southern half of France the language called Provençal differed markedly from that of the north. These languages are called Romance Languages. Each one of these languages has its own spelling and pronunciation. But their affinity with Latin is evident in vocabulary.

It is not difficult to understand the divergence of the Romance languages. The most interesting feature of the Romance group is that we can observe in historical time the formation of a number of distinct languages from a single parent speech by a process of progressive differentiation. By means of such a process over a greater area and a longer period of time can be explained the differences among the languages of the whole Indo-European family.

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                                    Italic
        ┌──────────────────┬──────────────┴──────────────┬──────────────────┐
   Vulgar Latin      Literary Latin                  Umbrian              Oscan
        │
        │
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The Romance Languages: French, Spanish, Portuguese, Italian, Roumanian, Provençal

7. **The Balto – Slavic or Slavonic Branch:** The languages belonging to this branch are spoken extensively over the eastern part of Europe. It is divided into two groups, the Baltic and the Slavonic, which in spite of differences, are held together by common characteristics. The Baltic group included Old Prussian or Prussian, Lettic and Lithuanian. Old Prussian is now extinct, having been displaced by German in the seventeenth century. Lettic is the language of the people of Latvia and Lithuanian is spoken in Lithuania. Lithuanian is important among the Indo-European languages because of its conservatism. It preserves some very old features which have disappeared from practically all the other languages of the family.

The Slavonic group falls into the three divisions – East Slavonic, West Slavonic and South Slavonic. The East Slavonic division includes the various forms of Russian. Polish, Czech and Serbian belong to the West Slavonic division. The South Slavonic division includes Serbian and Croatian (together called Serbo-Croatian), Bulgarian and Slovenian. The Slavic languages constitute a more homogeneous group than the languages of some of the other branches. They have diverged less from the common type and preserve some archaic features.

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                              Balto-Slavonic
                                   |
             ┌─────────────────────┴─────────────────────┐
           Baltic                                       Slavonic
             |                                             |
     ┌───────┼───────┐                      ┌──────────────┼──────────────┐
(Old) Prussian  Lettic  Lithuanian     East Slavonic   West Slavonic      South
                                            |                            Slavonic
                                         Russian                            |
                                                      ┌──────┬──────┐       |
                                                   Polish   Czech  Sorbian  |
                                                                   (Wend)   |
                                        ┌──────────┬─────────────┬──────────┤
                                     Serbian    Croatian      Slovenian  Bulgarian
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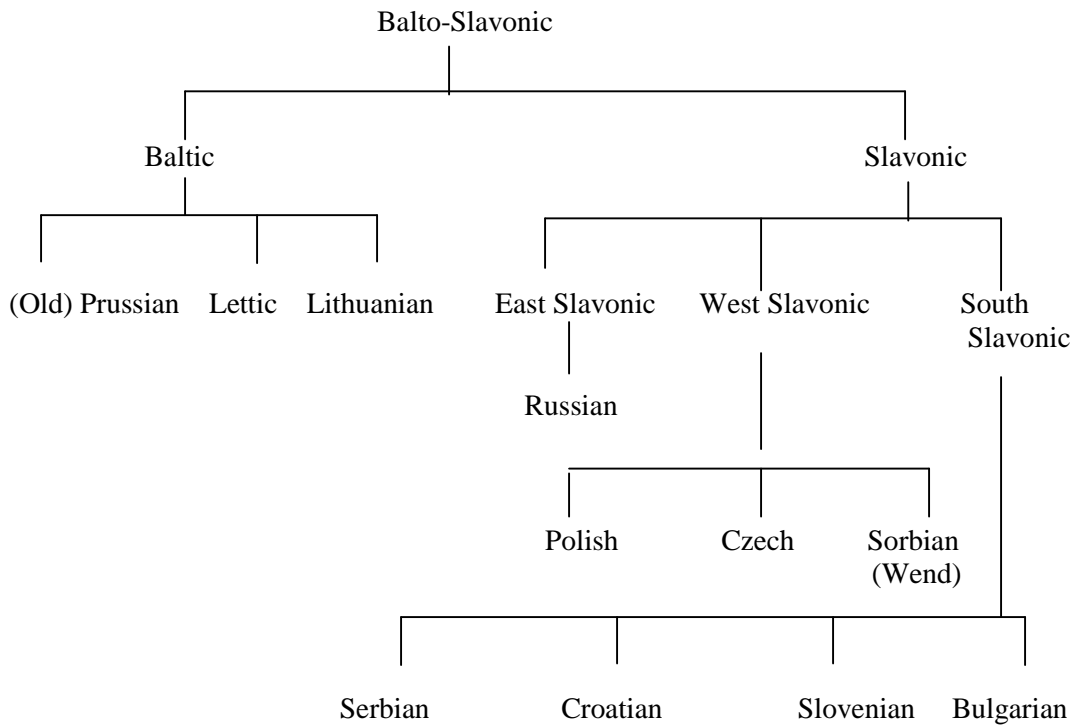
8**. The Celtic Branch:** At the beginning of the Christian era, Celtic, the language of the Celts was spoken extensively over Western Europe and Great Britain, before it was overshadowed by Latin and Teutonic. Celtic falls into three groups:
(a) Gallic or Gaulish was the language of the Celtic tribes in France and northern Italy. This language was superseded by Latin and Gallic now survives in a few inscriptions;
(b) Brittanic or Cymric was the form of Celtic spoken in Britain before the Anglo-Saxon invasion. This group is represented by Cornish (extinct since the eighteenth century), Welsh and Breton;
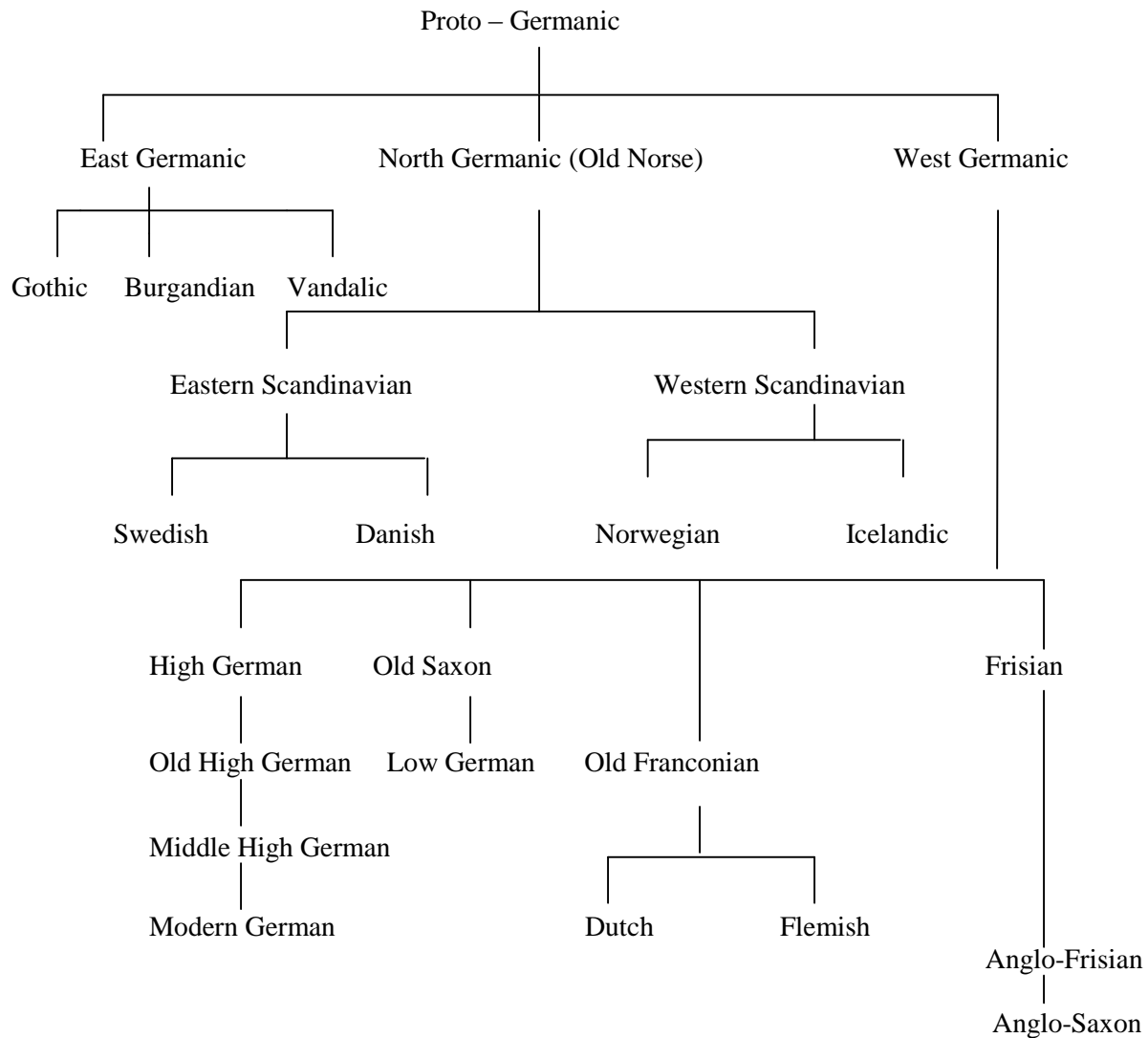(c) Gaelic includes Irish, Scotch and Manx.

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                                 Celtic
                                   |
          ┌────────────────────────┼────────────────────────┐
   Gallic or Gaulish         Brittanic  (Cymric)            Gaelic
                                   |                           |
                          ┌────────┼────────┐                 |
                       Cornish   Welsh    Breton              |
                                                   ┌──────────┼──────────┐
                                                 Irish   Scotch Gaelic  Manx
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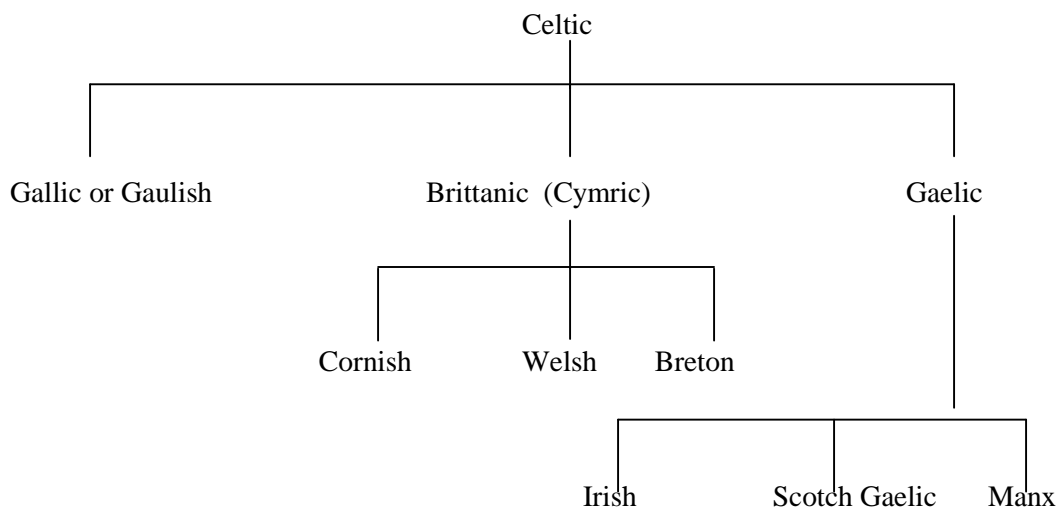
9. **The Teutonic or Germanic Branch:** For our study, this is the most important branch since English, in an immediate sense, belongs to this branch. Proto-Germanic or Primitive Germanic is the name given to the original form of the language before it split into its component units. The language was spoken by the Teutonic or Germanic tribes in northern Europe. Before the beginning of the Christian era, it split into three groups — East Teutonic, North Teutonic and West Teutonic — each group having its own members.

(a):East Germanic: The only representative of this group is Gothic, the language of the Goths. In the third century AD the Goths settled in the region around the Black Sea. In the fourth century, they adopted Christianity. A form of Gothic survived in the Crimea till the seventeenth century. It has since died out. The only record of Gothic is a translation of the Bible by Bishop Ulfias (311-383). Burgundian and Vandalic are the other languages belonging to the East Teutonic group. But available knowledge of these languages is very meagre and confined to a few proper names.

(b): North Germanic: This group includes the languages of Scandinavia and Denmark. The earliest form of the common Scandinavian languages is known as Old Norse. From about the eleventh century, the original language broke into dialects which subsequently developed into separate languages. The eastern division includes Swedish and Danish. Norwegian and Icelandic belong to the Western division. Norwegian as a literary language became extinct in the fourteenth century and Danish with an admixture of Norwegian is the written language of Norway.

(d): West Germanic: This group falls into two divisions – High German and Low German. High German is the language of southern Germany and had three stages of chronological development – Old High German (before 1100). Middle High German (1100-1500) and Modern German (since 1500). It is the official and literary language of a Germany.

The Low German division comprises Old Saxon, Old Franconian and Frisian. Old Saxon developed into Low German, the language of northern Germany. Dutch, the language of Holland and Flemish, the language of Belgium, developed from Old Franconian. It was Frisian, the language of the Frisians that contained the seeds of English. Elements of this language might have been absorbed by the Anglo-Saxons (the Germanic tribes Angles and Saxons taken as one) giving rise to the Anglo-Frisian dialect, out of which evolved Old English. It was this language, which was carried across the English Channel in the sixth and seventh centuries AD by the Germanic tribes, Angles, Saxons and Jutes and established as Anglo-Saxon on the English soil. We now call it Old English, which, after a series of changes, developed into modern English.

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                              Proto – Germanic
                                     |
          ┌──────────────────────────┼──────────────────────────┐
    East Germanic          North Germanic (Old Norse)       West Germanic
   ┌──────┼──────┐                   |                            |
 Gothic Burgandian Vandalic          |                            |
              ┌──────────────────────┴──────────────────────┐     |
       Eastern Scandinavian                     Western Scandinavian
          ┌──────────┴──────────┐                  ┌──────────┴──────────┐
       Swedish             Danish              Norwegian             Icelandic
       ┌──────────┬──────────────────────┬──────────────────────────────────────┐
  High German  Old Saxon            Old Franconian                          Frisian
       |           |                     |
Old High German Low German              |
       |                          ┌──────┴──────┐
Middle High German             Dutch        Flemish                  Anglo-Frisian
       |                                                                   |
Modern German                                                         Anglo-Saxon
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Recent Discoveries. Besides the nine principal branches described above, recent discoveries have added two new groups to the family: **Hittite** and **Tocharian**. Until recently the Hittites have been known to us chiefly from references in the Old Testament. Their language was preserved only in a few uninterrupted documents. In 1907, however, an archaeological expedition uncovered the site of the Hittite capital in Asia Minor, at Boghazköi, about ninety miles east of Angora, containing the royal archives of nearly 10,000 clay tablets. The texts were written in Babylonian cunciform characters and some were in Babylonian (Akkadian), the diplomatic language of the day. The results so far attained make it fairly certain that by its structure **Hittite** should be accounted an Indo-European language. In vocabulary, however, the evidence is less clear. A large proportion of the words used comes from an unidentified non-Indo-European source. The contamination with foreign elements appears to be as great as in Albanian. By some scholars Hittite is treated as co-ordinate with Indo-European, and the period of joint existence is designated Indo-Hittite. It is sufficient, however, to think of Hittite as having separated from the Indo-European community

some centuries (perhaps five hundred years or more) before any of the other groups began to detach themselves. **Tocharian** is the name given to the language in which some fragmentary texts were discovered in the early part of the present century in central Asia (Chinese Turkestan). Some of them contain the name of a king who according to Chinese evidence reigned in the early part of the seventh century of our era. To the philologist the discovery is of some importance since the language belongs with the Hellenic, Italic, Teutonic, and Celtic groups as a *Centum* language rather than with the eastern or *Satem* groups, with which we should expect it to be most closely related.

1.3.7. The Home of the Indo-European Family

The languages thus brought into relationship by descent or progressive differentiation from a parent speech are conveniently called a family of languages. Various names have been used to designate this family. In books written a century ago the term Aryan was commonly employed. It has now been generally abandoned and when found today is used in a more restricted sense to designate the languages of the family located in India and the plateau of Iran. A more common term is Indo-Teutonic or Indo-Germanic, the latter being the most usual designation among German philologists. But it is open to the objection of giving undue emphasis to the Germanic languages, and the term now most widely employed is Indo-European, suggesting as it does more clearly the geographical extent of the family. The parent tongue from which the Indo-European languages have sprung had already become divided and scattered before the dawn of history. Consequently we have no written record of the common Indo-European language. By a comparison of its descendants, however, it is possible to form a fair idea of it and to reconstruct with approximate accuracy its vocabulary and inflections. The surviving languages have various degrees of similarity to one another.

We do not know much about the original population who must have spoken this parent tongue at one time. Judging by the large variety of people who have spoken these languages from early times, from the short dark population of the Italic peninsula to the tall blond type of Scandinavia, it is quite possible that the people of the original Indo-European community were not all of one race but already represented some ethnic mixture. Neither can we form any very definite idea of the date at which this people lived as a single, more or less coherent community. The period of their common life must have extended over a considerable stretch of time. It is customary to place the end of their common existence somewhere between 3500 and 2000 B.C. With respect to the location of this community at a time shortly before their dispersal, we may be fairly sure that the only regions in which it is reasonable to seek the original home of the Indo-European family are the mainland of Europe and the western part of Asia.

Prior to the middle of the nineteenth century it was customary to assume an Asiatic home for the family. Such an opinion was the natural result of biblical tradition which placed the Garden of Eden in the neighborhood of Mesopotamia. This notion seemed to find confirmation in the discovery that Sanskrit, situated in Asia, was not only an Indo-European language but was in many ways closest in form to the parent speech. It was observed that by far the larger part of the languages of this family have been in Europe from the earliest times to which our knowledge

extends. It was more natural to suppose that the few representatives of the family in Asia should have made their way eastward than that nearly all the languages of Europe should have been the result of Asiatic incursions. A line running roughly from Scandinavia to Greece separates the Western and Eastern groups and suggests a line of cleavage from which dispersion eastward and westward might have taken place.   Not far from the region traversed by this line the most conservative language of the Indo-European family is found, Lithuanian. Conservatism is often associated with fixed and isolated peoples.   Scholars are not all in agreement about the precise region. Some would place it in what is now central Germany or even Scandinavia. The opinion which seems to be most popular today favours a location slightly to the east of the Teutonic area, somewhere in the district stretching from Lithuania to the steppes of southern Russia.

The civilization which had been attained by the people community at the time of their dispersal was approximately that known as neolithic. Copper was however, already in use to a limited extent. The Indo-Europeans were no longer purely romadic but had settled homes with houses and some agriculture.

1.3.8. Characteristics of the Indo-European Family

Indo-European is but one of a number of families into which the world's languages may be divided; and it must be remembered too that there are still many languages, and even whole groups, that have not been examined scientifically or committed to writing yet, and hence cannot be fitted into any scheme of classification. Broadly speaking, it may be said that two outstanding characteristics indicate the 'Indo-Europeanness' of a language; its structure and its vocabulary. Indo-European languages generally lend themselves in structure, to that description of forms invented by the ancient Greeks and named by them 'Parts of Speech'. A language may have inflexions fully retained relatively from the original Indo-European, like Russian, or it may have lost most of its distinctive word-endings like modern English: it may, as the grammarians say, be 'synthetie' with full inflexions or 'analytic' with few or none. But if we can think of its forms fairly readily as nouns, verbs, etc., that is to say under the traditional classical terms of 'Parts of Sepeech', it will probably be found to be Indo-European. Chinese, with its forms consisting not of parts of speech, but of what seem now to be merely monosyllabic roots, is therefore not Indo-European. Or again, even in Europe, there are what are called 'Finno-Ugrian' or 'Uralian' languages – Hungarian and Finnish for instance, which do not shew parts of speech, or even words in our ordinary sense always. Here a kind of phrase-complex takes the place of a clause or group of words and all kinds of things can be said about an object by building up a single root with prefixes and suffixes.   These languages are sometimes classed as 'agglutinative' or 'incorporating'. Many of the languages of Central Asia now in the U.S.S.R., and the Dravidian languages in India are of this kind.   In the matter of vocabulary, secondly, Indo-European languages have so much in common, namely a shared nucleus of fundamental roots, that this common basis of vocabulary (often changed beyond recognition except by the linguistic specialist) may serve to distinguish them from all others. Thus, for instance, most of the names of family relationships, of elementary domestic materials and of familiar animals, if compared in their historical early forms and traced back to what must have been their pre-written ancestors, can be

seen to be shared by the Indo-European languages and not to be found in those forms except by 'borrowing' outside those groups.

1.3.9. Summary

It is clear from this discussion that the major languages of Europe and Western Asia are related to one another, and in fact can be traced back in time to a common language, usually called the Indo-European or Proto-Indo-European. This parent language can only be reconstructed from a comparison of the early forms of languages from which have descended the major modern European and Western Asian languages. The nine major branches of the Indo-European family of languages – Indian, Iranian, Armenian, Hellenic, Albanian, Italic, Balto-Slavic, Teutonic and Celtic – have been discussed in detail. It is obvious that the languages just described represent the progressive differentiation of an original speech, which we may for convenience call the Indo-European mother tongue. Going by the information gathered, philologists have described the probable original area once inhabited by the Indo-European tribes. Indo-European is only one of the many language families present in the world. It is of chief interest to us because English is a member of this family.

1.3.10. Sample Questions:

1.   Trace the Indo-European family of languages.

2.   Discuss the relationship between the major European languages and Western Asian languages.

3.   What are the different branches of the Indo-European family of languages?

1.3.11. Suggested Reading:

1.   A.C. Baugh.   -   A History of the English Language.

2.   C.L. Wrenn.   -   The English Language.

3.   Otto Jesperson. -   Growth and Structure of the English Language.

4.   C.L. Berber.   -   The Story of Language.

<div align="right">Prof. S. Jagadisan</div>

Lesson – 4

The Germanic Languages and the Origin of English

Structure

1.4.1. Objectives

The lesson aims to give information regarding

i.   the characteristic features of the Germanic branch of languages

ii.   the place of English in the Germanic branch

iii.   the origin of English

iv.   the Teutonic invasion of Britain.

1.4.2. Introduction

In the previous lesson we have seen that English belongs to the Germanic or Teutonic branch of the Indo-European family of languages. It means that it shares certain characteristics common to all the Teutonic languages. In this lesson, we shall learn what the characteristic features are of the Teutonic languages, which set them apart from the other branches. We shall also see how the English language originated as a result of the invasion of Britain by certain Teutonic tribes – the Jutes, Saxons and Angles. We also need to know about the languages in Britain prior to the invasion of the Teutons who are the founders of England and its language, English.

1.4.3. The Germanic Branch

Probably in the millennium preceding the Christian era there grew up in Northern Europe a type of Indo-European from which descended all those languages which we call Germanic or

Teutonic. Its forms can only be reconstructed on probabilities by working back from known languages. It is merely for convenience that it is usually referred to as 'Primitive Germanic'. C.L. Wrenn thinks that a better term might be 'Common Germanic', since we do not know for certain that it was ever a language in the full sense of the term but only that there were a number of prehistoric forms to which the known Germanic languages can be traced back. No Primitive Germanic writing of any kind is existing and the forms of words assumed for that language are just as hypothetical as those postulated for Indo-European.

During the centuries immediately before Christ, the <u>Common Germanic</u> collection of forms used among the tribes of Northern Europe developed within itself separatist tendencies. With the progress of the migrations of its users into Western and Central Europe, there arose those historical languages (i.e. in historical times) from one section of which English is descended. The details of these different languages have been discussed in the previous lesson. An 'Eastern' group of Germanic languages has only left written monuments in the Gothic translations of the Bible made near the end of the fourth century A.D. But a 'Northern' group has given us the Scandinavian tongues with monuments from almost all periods since the fourth century. A 'Western' group, to which English belongs, has given us the languages of Germany, Holland, Friesland, Flemish, Belgium and England, with historical records which in England go back to the seventh century A.D.

All these languages, along with their dialects, had certain characteristics which distinguish them and all their developments from other Indo-European groups. Two characteristics especially stand out as marking off the Germanic branch of languages – the system of fixed stress and the two-tense system of the verb. Let us discuss the distinguishing features of Germanic languages in detail.

1.4.4. Characteristic features of the Teutonic branch

1. The Consonant Shift: In the first place, the Germanic languages show the shifting of certain consonants described in Lesson 2 under the heading Grimm's Law. For example, the original Indo-European sounds /p,t,k/ were preserved as such in Latin and Greak, but changed to/f,þ,h/ in the Germanic languages.

2. Stress: The most distinctive feature of the Germanic branch is a strong tendency to fix the stress (weight or emphasis) of a word on its root syllable or as near to its beginning as possible. Indo-European had functions of importance for both the stress and the accent or intonation; during its development and before the emergence of separate groups of descending languages, it seems that stress came to dominate. But this stress was free, that is it could be on different parts of the same word according to context and meaning. This free stress has been preserved in some conservative languages such as Russian, for instance, where we have *dom* ' house' as against *domá* 'of a house', or *pis'mó* 'letter' but *pis'ma* 'letters'. Now it is the Germanic language characteristic more than any other group to fix the stress as near as may be to the beginning of the word. Inevitably, as we may hear every day from ordinary speech, the syllables at the end of a word in such a language as

puts a strong stress at the beginning, will tend to be first blurred in utterance and finally even lost completely.

The significance of this stress system will be clearer if we compare two sets of words in modern English. Something like the Indo-European stress system is found in many words borrowed in recent times from the classical languages. For example, 'family, fa'miliar, famili'arity or 'photograph, pho'tographer, photo'graphic. The changed Germanic system is shown in such groups as 'love, 'lover, 'loving, 'lovingly, 'lovely, 'loveliness, 'loveless, 'lovelessness, or 'king, 'kingdom, 'kingship, 'kingly, 'kingless etc*. As we can see in those words where the Germanic stress system has come into force, the syllable that is most important has also the strongest stress. The relatively insignificant modifications of the chief idea which was indicated by formative syllables (suffixes) are subordinate. In Indo-European, the stress was sometimes on the first syllable of the word, sometimes on the second, or on the third etc., without any seeming reason and without any regard to the intrinsic importance of that syllable. In the Germanic system a complete revolution simplified matters so that nearly all words were stressed on the first syllable. This is a perfectly logical system whereby the most important syllable is stressed. As Jesperson says, "the language of our forefathers seems therefore to have gained considerably by replacing the movable stress by a fixed one".

To the question as to why the Germanic accent has changed in this way, there are two possible answers. The change may have been either a purely mechanical process, by which the first syllable was stressed without any regard to signification, or else it may have been a psychological process, by which the root syllable became stressed because it was the most important part of the word, (and in a majority of cases, the root syllable happens to be the first syllable). It is this fixing of the stress near the beginning of a word in the Germanic languages that is the primary cause of the reduction and loss of inflexions which has been so marked a characteristic of English. It is, as has been said, a common Germanic tendency; but its effects in inflexional reduction have been varied in speed among the different Germanic languages, though clearly perceptible in all. It is a mistake, as some have done, to think of this simplifying of inflexions, which is so marked a quality in English, as necessarily anything to do with progress. There are advantages in a fully-inflected language like some of the Slavonic group, which English cannot have, such as the avoidance of ambiguity, for instance. This loss of inflexions, then, is mainly just the natural result which follows from the Germanic fixation of the primary stress, the syllables farthest away from this stress tending to become weak and later to cease to be heard.

3.   Two-tense system: Indo-European had an elaborate system of verb-conjugation, in which the multitude of forms, that in historic times came mainly to indicate the time or tense of the action, shewed rather the way the action was thought *of* or looked *at* by the speaker, or its 'aspect' as the grammarians have called it. Thus, for example, one series of forms in the verb shewed the action as continuing or progressing (*durative* aspect); another

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*   Stress is indicated by a small vertical bar before the syllable.

indicated that it was thought of as quite independent of time (*aorist, punctual* or *momentaneous* aspect); a third meant that the action was considered as presenting a state resulting from an already completed act (*perfective* aspect); while yet a fourth implied that it was being repeated several times (*iterative* aspect). These and many other of what seem to us now refinements and complexities of the verbal system, which survive in some groups of languages fairly fully, as in Greek, have been simplified in varying degrees in different languages. But the outstanding feature of the Germanic verb is that it has properly only two tenses, a present and a past, which are indicated by the primary forms of the verb[*]. The other tenses are shown by means of auxiliary verbs and compound tenses, etc. Now this extreme simplification of the verb in Germanic has fundamentally affected the character of the languages concerned, resulting not only in a multiplying of compound tenses but also in a great increase of flexibility of expression, greater subtlety and, at times, in greater opportunities for looseness in the language.

4. Strong and Weak Verbs: A third characteristic of Germanic is its peculiar development of the two main classes of its verbs into the so-called strong and weak kinds. *Strong* verbs (the term was first used by Jakob Grimm of *The Fairy Tales* who made the first scientific comparative German grammar from 1822) are those which indicate their tense by change of vowel according to regular series, as in the modern forms *drive, drove, driven*. Such series of vowel-variation in relation to change of meaning were called by Grimm *Ablaut*-series and are known in English as vowel-gradations: we see such a gradation in *fidus, foedus, fides.* But the distinctive feature of Germanic is that it uses such gradations to show regularly change of tense in the verb, whereas in other languages this is only a less frequent device. But this method of showing tense by change of vowel in a series was originally only used in primary verbs, that is in those which denoted simple actions and were not merely derived from the forms of other words. Verbs which denote actions derived from others words (such as *to love* from the noun *love*) Grimm called *weak* because they are secondary or derivative and because they do not change their root-vowel in conjugation. Weak verbs, then are those which are secondary or derived, which shew their tense not by gradation of vowel, but merely by adding something (a suffix ending in *d*

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[*] Note: Students familiar with Wren and Martin etc. grammar books may be surprised at reading this. In schools and colleges, students are taught that there are three tenses in English – past, present and future. As the lesson tells us, that is a factual error. English <u>does not have a future tense</u>. It has only two simple tenses, a past and a present, like all Germanic languages. The mistake arose because traditional grammarians confused <u>tense</u> and <u>time</u> <u>reference</u>. They defined tense in terms of time reference thereby giving wrong definitions which do not reflect the reality of the language. See for example, the definition of future tense in Wren and Martin grammar: "Those verbs which refer to the future time are said to be in the future tense". Now look at the examples below:

 1. He <u>leaves</u> us tomorrow. (present tense – future time reference)
 2. He <u>is leaving</u> us tomorrow. (present tense – future time)
 3. He <u>will leave</u> us tomorrow. (present tense – future time)

In these examples the same tense (present tense) of the underlined verbs is used to refer to future time. So the definition is misleading. Both the tenses can refer to three times – past, present and future. Correctly speaking, what we usually refer to as progressive and perfective tenses are termed as <u>Aspect</u> by linguists and modern grammarians. Aspect refers to the way we look at the action – is it seen to be continuing, or is it seen to have been completed, etc. For more details and correct information, we should refer to modern grammars based on advances made in linguistics, such as the <u>University Grammar of the English Language</u> by Randolph Quirk and Sidney Greenbaum.

or *t*) to their end (such as *love – loved*). But this distinction of strong and weak verbs as a Germanic characteristic is less satisfactory, because it has become blurred to some extent through later changes of sound.

5. Weak and strong declension of the adjective: Germanic languages also possess a 'weak' as well as a 'strong' declension of the adjective. (See Lesson 5 for details).

English, being a Germanic language, shares all these features with the other Germanic languages. In additon, English has other features in common with languages like German.

1. These features enable us to distinguish a West Teutonic group as contrasted with the Scandinavian languages (North Teutonic) and Gothic (East Teutonic). These features have to do with certain phonetic changes.

2. And finally, English, along with the other languages of northern Germany and the Low countries, did not participate in the further modification of certain consonants, known as the Second or High German Sound Shift. The effect of this shifting may be seen by comparing the English and the German words in the following pairs:

English	-	German
Open	-	Offen
Water	-	Wasser
Pound	-	pfund
Tongue	-	Zunge
Better	-	Besser

The discussion so far of the characteristic features of Teutonic languages also gives us an idea of the position of English in this branch and the manner of its relation with the other members of this branch. The rest of the lesson will be devoted to tracing the origin of the English language.

1.4.5.The Languages in England before English

We are accustomed to thinking of English as an inseparable adjunct to the English people. But we are likely to forget that it has been the language of England for a comparatively short period in the world's history. Since its introduction into the island about the middle of the fifth century, it has had a career extending through only fifteen hundred years. Yet this part of the world had been inhabited by man for thousands of years, 50,000 according to more moderate estimates, 250,000 in the opinion of some. During this long stretch of time, most of it dimly visible through prehistoric mists, the presence of a number of races can be detected; and each of these races had a language. Nowhere does our knowledge of the history of mankind carry us back to a time when man did not have a language. Unfortunately, we know little about the early languages of England.

The first people in England about whose language we have definite knowledge are the Celts. It used to be assumed that the coming of the Celts to England coincided with the introduction of bronze into the island. We have already described the Celtic languages in England and called

attention to the two divisions of them, the Gaelic or Goidelic branch and the Cymric or Britannic branch. Celtic was the first Indo-European tongue to be spoken in England and is still spoken by a considerable number of people. One other language, Latin, was spoken rather extensively for a period of about four centuries before the coming of English. Latin was introduced when Britain became a province of the Roman Empire. Since this was an event that has left a certain mark upon later history, it will be well to consider it separately.

1.4.6. The Romans in Britain

In the summer of 55 B.C. Julius Caesar, having completed the conquest of Gaul, decided upon an invasion of England. Probably his chief purpose was to discourage the Celts of Britain from coming to the assistance of their kinsmen in Gaul, should the latter attempt to throw off the Roman yoke. The expedition this year almost ended disastrously, and his return the following year was not a great success. In crossing the Channel some of his transports encountered a storm which deprived him of the support of his cavalry. The resistance of the natives was unexpectedly spirited,. It was with difficulty that he effected a landing, and he made little headway. Since the season was far advanced, he soon returned to Gaul. The expedition had resulted in no material gain and some loss of prestige. Accordingly the following summer he again invaded the island, after much more elaborate preparations. This time he succeeded in establishing himself in the southeast. But after a few encounters with the natives, in which he was moderately successful, he exacted tribute from them (which was never paid) and again returned to Gaul. Britain was not again troubled by the Roman arms for nearly a hundred years.

The Roman Conquest: It was in A.D.43 that the Emperor Claudius decided to undertake the actual conquest of the island. With the knowledge of Caesar's experience behind him he did not underestimate the difficulty of the task. Accordingly an army of 40,000 men was sent to Britain and within three years had subjugated the tribes of the central and southeastern regions. Subsequent campaigns soon brought almost all of what is now England under Roman rule. The progress of Roman control was not uninterrupted. A serious uprising of the natives occurred in A.D. 61 under Boudicca (Boadicea), the widow of one of the native chiefs, and 70,000 Romans and Romanized Britons are said to have been massacred. Under the Roman Governor Agricola (78-85) the northern frontier was advanced to the Solway and the Tyne and the conquest may be said to have been completed. The Romans never penetrated far into the mountains of Wales and Scotland. Eventually they protected the northern boundary by a stone wall stretching across England at approximately the limits of Agricola's permanent conquest. The district south of this line was under Roman rule for more than three hundred years.

Romanization of the Island: It was inevitable that the military conquest of Britain should have been followed by the Romanization of the province. Where the Romans lived and ruled, there Roman ways were found. A score of small cities and more than a hundred towns, with their Roman houses and baths, temples and occasional theaters, testify to the introduction of Roman habits of life. Roman dress, Roman ornaments and utensils, and Roman pottery and glassware seem to have been in general use. By the third century Christianity had made some progress in the

island. Romanization had proceeded very much as it had done in the other provinces of the empire. The difference is that in Britain the process was cut short in the firth century.

The Latin Language in Britain: Among the other evidences of Romanization must be included the use of the Latin language. A great number of inscriptions have been found, all of them in Latin. The majority of these proceed no doubt from the military and official class and, being in the nature of public records, were therefore in the official language. But they do not really indicate a widespread use of Latin by the native population. Latin did not replace the Celtic language in Britain as it did in Gaul. Its use by native Britons was probably confined to members of the upper classes and the inhabitants of the cities and town. On the whole, there were certainly many people in Roman Britain who habitually spoke Latin or spread to cause it to survive, as the Celtic language survived, the upheaval of the Teutonic invasions. Its use probably began to decline after 410, the approximate date at which the last of the Roman troops were officially withdrawn from the island.

1.4.7. The Teutonic Conquest

About the year 449 an event occurred which profoundly affected the course of history. In that year, as commonly stated, began the invasion of Britain by certain Teutonic tribes, the founders of the English nation. For more than a hundred years bands of conquerors and settlers migrated from their continental homes in the region of Denmark and the Low Countries and established themselves in the south and east of the island, gradually extending the area which they occupied until it included all but the highland in the west and north. We have our earliest accounts of the events of this period from Bede's *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* and *The Ecclesiastical History of the English People.* Bede in his *Ecclesiastical History*, completed in 731, tells us that the Teutonic tribes which conquered England were the Jutes. Saxons, and Angles. From what he says and from other indications it seems most likely that the Jutes and the Angles had their home in the Danish peninsula, the Jutes in the northern half (hence the name Jutland) and the Angles in the south, in Schleswig-Holstein, and perhaps a small area at the base. The Saxons were settled to the south and west of the Angles, roughly between the Elbe and the Ems, possibly as far as the Rhine. A fourth tribe, the Frisians, some of whom almost certainly came to England, occupied a narrow strip along the coast from the Weser to the Rhine together with the islands opposite.

Britain had been exposed to attacks by the Saxons from as early as the fourth century, even while the island was under Roman rule. At the same time the unconquered Picts and Scots in the north were kept out only at the price of constant vigilance. Against both of these sources of attack the Roman organization seems to have proved adequate. But the Celts had come to depend on Roman arms for this protection. They had, moreover, under Roman influence settled down to a more peaceful mode of life and had lost some of their barbaric power in war. Consequently when the Romans withdrew in 410 the Celts found themselves at a disadvantage. They were no longer able to keep out the warlike Picts and Scots. Several times they called upon Rome for aid, but finally the Romans, fully occupied in defending their own territory at home, were forced to refuse assistance. It was on this occasion that Vortigern, one of the Celtic leaders, is reported to have

entered into an agreement with the Jutes whereby they were to assist the Celts in driving out the Picts and Scots and to receive as their reward the isle of Thanet.

These temporary allies proved to be something more serious to reckon with than their northern enemies. The Jutes, having recognized the superiority of England over their continental home, decided to stay in the island and began making a forcible settlement in the south-east, in Kent. The settlement of the Jutes was a very different thing from the conquest of the island by the Romans. The Romans had come to rule the native population, not to dispossess it. The Jutes came in numbers and settled on the lands of the Celts. They met the resistance of the Celts by driving them out. Moreover the example of the Jutes was soon followed by the migration of other continental tribes.

1.4.8. The Names 'England' and 'English

The Celts called their Teutonic conquerors Saxons indiscriminately, probably because they had had their first contact with the Teutons through the Saxon raids on the coast. Early Latin writers following Celtic usage, generally call the Teutons in England *Saxones* and the land *Saxonia.* But soon the terms *Angli* and *Anglia* occur beside *Saxones* and refer not to the Angles individually but to the Teutons generally. Aethelbert, king of Kent, is styled *rex Anglorum* by Pope Gregory in 601, and a century later Bede called his history the *Historia Ecclesiastica Gentis Anglorum.* In time *Angli* and *Anglia* become the usual terms in Latin texts. From the beginning, however, writers in the vernacular call had always their language *Englisc* (*English*). The word is derived from the name of the Angles (O.E.*Engle)* but is used without distinction for the language of all the invading tribes. In like manner the land and its people are called *Angelcynn* (Angle–kin or race of the Angles), and this is the common name until after the Danish period. From about the year 1000 *England (*land of the Angles) begins to take its place. The name *English* is thus older than the name *England.* The English language is the result of the mixture of the dialects spoken by the Teutonic tribes who settled in England.

1.4.9. The terms 'Anglo-Saxon' and 'Old English'

The earliest period of English was formerly called 'Anglo-Saxon', and the term may still be used; but 'Old English' has tended to replace it with most scholars. But neither term may be strictly accurate. The term Anglo-Saxon was never used of the language till the late seventeenth century, and even then only in its Latin form, since the first grammars were written in Latin. But as a name for the Germanic early inhabitants of England, writers of the ninth century using Latin had been using *Anglo-Saxones* to distinguish the English Saxons from their kinsmen who had remained on the German mainland. But king Alfred, who first interested himself in English culture, calls the general language of England *Englisc,* and its people, whether Angles, Saxons or Jutes, *Engle* (Angles). The expression 'Old English' is found in a prose work of the earliest thirteenth century.

Therefore, the term 'Old English' seems to have certain advantages over 'Anglo-Saxon' as the name of the language, though the latter is historically partly justified as the name of the

peoples (C.L. Wrenn). However, for Wrenn, the growing habit among journalists and political writers of using the term Anglo-Saxon as if it were the same as 'English–speaking' is not acceptable. It should be confined to the Germanic inhabitants of Britain before the Norman Conquest and to their language. English, beginning with Anglo-Saxon or Old English, has developed many qualities of sound and syntax which differentiate it both from the original common Germanic and from all the other Germanic tongues. And naturally Old English is distinguished by a number of special sound-changes which separate it in varying degrees from the other related Low German languages. These features will be discussed in detail in the next lesson.

1.4.10. Summary

In this lesson we have discussed the characteristic features of the Germanic branch to which belongs English. Some of the significant features are a fixed stress system, a two-tense system of the verb, the first consonant shift, strong and weak conjugation of the verb, strong and weak declension of the adjective etc. English shares all these features with the other members of the branch and a few other features peculiar to the West Teutonic languages. The origin of the English language has also been discussed. So Celtic was the first Indo-European language spoken in Britain. Because of the Roman Conquest of the island, Latin was the second Indo-European language spoken there. A little after the withdrawal of the Roman troops, we have the Teutonic Conquest. The Teutonic tribes conquered the Celtic people in Britain and settled there. They are the founders of the English nation and the mixture of the dialects of these Angles, Saxons and Jutes gave rise to the English language. So, we can say that English is a language spoken in Britain only from A.D. 450.

1.4.11. Sample Questions

1. What are the characteristic features of the Germanic or Teutonic branch of languages?

2. How is English a Germanic language in terms of its position and nature?

3. Trace the origin of the English language and the English nation.

4. Write a note on the conquest of Britain by the Teutonic tribes. What is its impact on the language?

1.4.12. Suggested Reading

1. C.L. Wrenn.   -   The English Language.

2. A.C. Baugh.   -   A History of the English Language.

3. Simeon Potter.   -   Our Language.

4. Otto Jesperson.   -   Growth and Structure of the English Language.

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Dr. K. Ratna Shiela Mani

Lesson – 5
Old English – I : Characteristic Features

Structure

1.5.1   Objectives
1.5.2   Introduction
1.5.3   The Dialects of Old English
1.5.4   Characteristics of Old English
1.5.5   Pronunciation
1.5.6   Spelling
1.5.7   Vocabulary
1.5.8   Grammar
(a) The Noun, (b) Grammatical Gender, (c) The Adjective, (d) The Adverb,
(e) The Definite Article, (f) The Personal Pronoun, (g) The Verb.
1.5.9.   Old English Literature
1.5.10. Summary
1.5.11. Technical terms
1.5.12. Sample Questions
1.5.13. Suggested Reading

1.5.1 Objectives

A reading of the lesson will help you.

i.   to identify the characteristic features of Old English
ii.   to understand the how Old English spelling, pronunciation, vocabulary and grammar differ from those of present day English.
iii.   to have an idea of the extensive and rich literature during the Old English times.

1.5.2. Introduction

In the previous lesson, we have studied the position of English in the Germanic branch of languages. We also traced the beginnings of the English language and England as a political entity, with the Teutonic Conquest of Britain in the year 449 A.D.

The Germanic or Teutonic tribes consisting of the Angles, the Saxons and the Jutes came to England in the course of the fifth century A.D. and occupied different parts of England by the end of the eighth century. The name England has developed from Englaland (land of the Angles). The history of the English language falls into three broad periods. The development of any language is a continuous process and any historical division is arbitrary and designed for convenience. The threefold historical division enables us to identify the characteristics of English during each one of these periods.

Old English Period (450 to 1150) extends from the Teutonic occupation of England till the Norman Conquest (1066)[*]. This is also called the period of full inflexions. Middle English Period (1150-1500) extends from the Norman occupation of England to the Renaissance or the dawn of the Modern Age. This is called the period of reduced or levelled inflexions. Modern English Period is since 1500, and is called the period of lost or levelled inflections.

1.5.3. The Dialects in Old English

In Old English there were four dialects. (A dialect is a regional form of a language. Each dialect has its own peculiar pronunciation, grammar and forms of words)

   (i) The Northumbrian dialect was spoken in the North of the river Humber, and   (ii) The Mercian dialect was spoken in the region between the Humber and the river Thames. These two dialects together are called Anglian spoken by the Angles in Northumbria and Mercia. Not much is known about these two dialects. (iii) The Kentish dialect was spoken by the Jutes in the South East in Kent, and is known from still scantier remains. (iv) The West Saxon dialect was spoken in Wessex, Sussex and Essex by the Saxons.

   These dialects developed in isolation. In the Old English period, England was divided into seven independent kingdoms called the Anglo-Saxon Heptarchy. The seven kingdoms were 1.Northumbria, 2.Mercia, 3.East Anglia, 4.Wessex, 5.Sussex, 6.Essex 7.Kent. The political importance of these kingdoms was constantly shifting. Of the four dialects mentioned above, West Saxon came to assume the status of the literary language for various reasons: (i) Wessex enjoyed political supremacy and solidarity; (ii) .Most of the literary texts were written in that dialect; (iii) Wessex was safe from the Scandinavian invasion which took place in the ninth and tenth centuries; (iv) Alfred, King of West Saxon Kingdom was an ardent patron of letters.

      The West Saxon dialect is made the basis of study of Old English because of its position as a literary standard and because of the abundance of materials found in it.

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[*] The Norman Conquest refers to the occupation of England by the Normans from Normandy in France.

1.5.4. Characteristics of Old English

Old English looks and reads like an entirely strange language. The difference between Old English and Modern English may be studied with reference to pronunciation, spelling, vocabulary and grammar.

1.5.5. Old English Pronunciation

Old English was a phonetic language. Pronunciation was based on spelling. Every letter was pronounced. There was no silent letter or syllable. For example, riht (Modern English 'right') was pronounced as it was spelt, whereas in 'right', gh is not pronounced, and the vowel 'i' has undergone change of sound. Cneo (knee) is pronounced Kneo, whereas in Modern English 'K' is silent; in cwene (queen) the final 'e' was pronounced in Old English; in Wæter (water) the final 'r' was pronounced, whereas in modern English it is silent; in Heort (heart) the medial 'r' was pronounced. Many modern English words have developed from corresponding Old English forms with a change in pronunciation.   Thus the Old English word stān is the same word as Modern English stone, but the vowel is different. A similar correspondence can be seen in the following pairs: hālig – holy, gān – go, bān – bone, rāp – rope, hlāf – loaf, bāt – boat. Other vowels have likewise undergone changes in fōt – (foot), cēne - (keen), metan (ete), fȳr (fire), riht (right), hū (how), hlūd (loud). Words like hēafod (head), fæger (air), or sāwol (soul) show forms, which have been contracted in later English. All these cases represent genuine differences of pronunciation.

1.5.6. Old English Spelling

Though there were differences in pronunciation between Old English and Middle English, some of the first look of strangeness which Old English has to the modern reader is due simply to differences of spelling. Old English spelling was marked by a few peculiarities which account for the difference between Old English and Modern English[*]. They are:

- The symbol æ was used to represent the sound as in 'cat', 'pat', eg. glæd (glad) dæg (day), wæter (water).
- Modern English th was represented by two symbols þ as in thanks, thick, mouth:
  eg., wiþ and ð as in this, thus, then (e.g. ð ā (then), which we no longer employ.
- The sound represented by the symbol sh was represented in Old English by sc:
  eg., scip- (ship), sceap, (sheep), fisc (fish).
- The symbol 'c' served for the sound 'k' in Old English: Cene (keen), cyning (king), þancian (thank).
- The symbol 'f' was used to represent the sound 'v' besides the sound 'f': heofon- heaven; ofer – over; seofon – seven; giefan – give.
- The symbol 'ċ' was used to represent the sound 'ch' as in 'church': Ċiriċe - church; ċild - child; ċeosan - choose.

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[*] Students are advised to familiarise themselves with the sounds of English speech and the phonetic symbols for various sounds. Spelling and pronunciation should be learnt in relation to each other

- The combination 'cg' was used to represent the sound '_ʤ_' as in ecg - edge; brycg - bridge.

1.5.7. Old English Vocabulary

The Old English vocabulary was marked by an absence of words borrowed from Greek, Latin and French. In this respect Old English differs from Modern English. Modern English contains a large number of words from Greek, Latin, French, Scandinavian and the Eastern languages. Old English depended on its internal resources for the expansion of its vocabulary: that is to say, it made use of suffixes and prefixes and combination of existing words (called compounding- words formed in this way are called compound words). Old English vocabulary was essentially Teutonic in character.   A large part of this vocabulary has disappeared from the language. When the Norman Conquest brought French into England as the language of the higher classes, much of the Old English vocabulary related to literature and learning died out and was replaced later by words borrowed from French and Latin. Nearly 85% of the Teutonic element in the Old English vocabulary has disappeared. The surviving words are basic elements of vocabulary, and as they recur frequently, they make up a large part of any English sentence. Apart from pronouns, prepositions, conjunctions, auxiliary verbs, and the like, they express fundamental concepts and relationships like mann (man), wīf (wife), cild (child), hūs (house), benc (bench), mete (meat, food), gærs (grass), lēaf (leaf), fugol (fowl, bird), gōd (good), hēah (high), strang (strong), etan (eat), drincan (drink), slæpan (sleep), libban (live), feohtan (fight). But the fact remains that a considerable part of the vocabulary of Old English is unfamiliar to the modern reader.

Resourcefulness was a characteristic feature of Old English. The language in this stage shows great flexibility, a capacity for bending old words to new uses. By means of prefixes and suffixes a single root is made to yield a variety of derivatives, and the range of these greatly extended by the ease with which compounds were formed. The method can be made clear by an illustration. The word mōd, which is our word mood (a mental state), meant in Old English 'heart', 'mind', 'spirit', and hence 'boldness' or 'courage', sometime 'pride' or 'haughtiness'. From it, by the addition of a common adjective ending, was formed the adjective mōdig with a similar range of meanings (spirited, bold, high-minded, arrogant, stiffnecked), and by means of further endings the adjective mōdiglic magnanimous, the adverb mōdiglīce boldly, proudly, and the noun mōdignes magnanimity, pride. Another ending converted mōdig into a verb mōdigian, meaning to bear oneself proudly or exultantly, or sometimes, to be indignant, to rage. Other forms conveyed meanings whose relation to the root is easily perceive gemōdod disposed, minded, mōdfull haughty, mōdlēas spiritless. From the same root more than a hundred words were formed. They would clearly show the remarkable capacity of Old English for derivation and word formation, and what variety and flexibility of expression it possessed. It was more resourceful in utilizing its native material than Modern English, which has come to rely to a large extent on its facility in borrowing and assimilating elements from other languages.

Self-explaining Compounds: These are compounds of two or more native words whose meaning in combination is either self-evident or has been rendered clear by association and usage. In modern English steamboat, railroad, electric light, sewing machine are examples of such words. Words of this character are found in most languages, but the type is particularly prevalent in Old

English, as it is in modern German. Where in English today we often have a borrowed word or a word made up of elements derived from Latin and Greek, German still prefers self-explaining compounds.   Thus for hydrogen German says <u>Wasserstoff</u> (water-stuff), for telephone <u>Fernsprecher</u> (far-speaker), and for fire insurance company <u>feuer/versicherungs/gesellchaft.</u> So in Old English many words are formed on this pattern. Thus we have <u>leohtfæt</u> lamp (<u>leoht</u> light + <u>fæt</u> vessel), <u>medu-heall</u> mead-hall, <u>dægred</u> dawn (day-red), <u>elohūs</u> alehouse, <u>ealoscop</u> minstrel, <u>ēarhring</u> earring, <u>eorþcræft</u> geometry, <u>fiscdēag</u> purple (<u>lit.</u> fish-dye), <u>fiellesēocnes</u> epilepsy (falling sickness) and many more. As a result of this capacity Old English seems never to have been at a loss for a word to express even the abstractions of science, theology, and metaphysics, which it came to know through contact with the church and Latin culture.

Prefixes and Suffixes: The flexibility of the Old English vocabulary comes from the generous use made of prefixes and suffixes to form new words from old words or to modify or extend the root idea. In this respect it also resembles modern German. Among the words mentioned in the preceding paragraphs there are several which are formed with the suffixes –<u>iġ</u>, -<u>full</u>, -<u>lēas</u>, -<u>lice</u>, -<u>nes</u>, and -<u>ung</u>. Others frequently employed include the adjective suffixes –<u>sum</u> (<u>wynsum</u>) and –<u>wīs</u> (<u>rihtwīs</u>), the noun suffixes –<u>dōm</u> (<u>cyning dōm,</u> <u>eorldōm</u>) –<u>end</u>, and –<u>ere</u> denoting the agent, -<u>hād</u> (<u>cildhād),</u> -<u>ing</u> in patronymics, -<u>ung</u> (<u>dagung</u> dawn), -<u>scipe</u> (<u>frēondscipe</u>), and many more. In like manner the use of prefixes was a fertile resource in word-building. It is particularly a feature in the formation of verbs. There are about a dozen prefixes that occur with great frequency, such as <u>ā</u>-, <u>be</u>-, <u>for</u>-, <u>ge</u>-, <u>mis</u>-, <u>of-,</u> ofer<u>-,</u> on-, <u>tō</u>-, <u>un</u>- , <u>undedr</u>-, and <u>wiþ</u>-. Thus, with the help of these, Old English could make out of a simple verb like <u>settan</u> (to set) new verbs like <u>āsettan</u> place, <u>besettan</u> appoint, <u>forsettan</u> obstruct, <u>foresettan</u> place before, <u>gesettan</u> people, garrison <u>ofsettan</u> afflict, <u>onsettan</u> oppress, <u>tōsettan</u> dispose, <u>unsettan</u> put down and <u>wiþsettan</u> resist. The prefix <u>wiþ</u>- enters into more than fifty Old English verbs, where it has the force of <u>against</u> or <u>away</u>.   Such, for example, are <u>wiþcēosan</u> reject (<u>cēosan</u> = choose), <u>wiþcweþan</u> deny (<u>cweþan</u> = say), <u>wiþdrīfan</u> repel, <u>wiþsprecan</u> contradict, and <u>wiþstandan</u>. Of these fifty verbs <u>withstand,</u> is the only one still in use, although in Middle English two new verbs <u>withdraw</u> and <u>withhold</u> were formed on the same model. The prefix <u>ofer</u>- occurs in over a hundred Old English verbs.

1.5.8. Old English Grammar

Old English Grammar was different from Modern Grammar. Old English was an inflected language and its inflectional character is illustrated in its grammar and syntax.

Inflection is the terminal modification of a word to indicate distinctions of case, number, person, tense, mood. The modification is brought about by the addition of an inflectional suffix to the base form of a word. Such a modification leads to a change in the form, meaning and application of the word. For instance, if the inflectional sign or suffix 's' is added to the word <u>boy</u>, the word boy becomes plural in form, 'boys'. The plural form should be followed by the plural form of the verb. Similarly, if the sign of the apostrophe '<u>s</u> is added to the word <u>boy</u>, it will indicate the possessive or genitive case, <u>boy's book</u> (case, number, person, tense, mood are grammatical terms).

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Synthetic and Analytical Languages: There are two kinds of language: synthetic and analytical. In a synthetic language, the relationship between the words and the meaning depend on the inflected forms of words. An analytical language makes use of prepositions, auxiliary verbs and a fixed word order (syntax). In the case of the Indo- European languages, inflections take the form of endings for the noun, the pronoun, the adjective and the verb. The Latin sentence <u>Nero interfecit Agrippinam</u> means " Nero killed Agrippa". The meaning would not change whatever be the syntax or word order, such as <u>Agrippinam interfecit Nero</u>. Nero is the form of the nominative case and the ending -<u>am</u> in <u>Agrippinam</u> indicate the accusative or objective case whatever be its position in the sentence. In English, the two sentences, "Nero Killed Agrippa" and "Agrippa killed Nero" would convey two different meanings. If we take the Sanskrit sentence <u>Ramaha vanam gachati</u> (Rama goes to the forest) and shift the position of the words, the meaning will not change: <u>Gatchati Ramaha vanam, vanam gachati Ramaha</u>. But in English, the proper word order should be followed. In a synthetic language, the word order is fixed and auxiliary verbs and prepositions are used.

In a synthetic language, the meaning remains unchanged, whatever be the position of the words. The words are inflected to be in agreement with one another in respect of number, gender and case. No such liberty can be taken in the analytical language, because the word order is fixed. A synthetic language has grammatical concord whereas an analytical language has syntactic concord. Old English with its elaborate system of inflections was a synthetic language. Modern English, with its fixed word order, its minimum inflections and use of prepositions and auxiliary verbs is an analytical language. The history of English may be described as that of a synthetic language growing into an analytical language.

The inflectional character of Old English may be understood with reference to the parts of speech. The field of language study dealing with inflections is called Accidence.

(a) The Noun: The noun was inflected for two numbers, singular and plural, three genders and four cases. Nominative case refers to the subject or the agent of action. Accusative or Objective case refers to the object. Genitive or Possessive case refers to possession, ownership or belonging. Dative case refers to the direction of the action- from, to. The endings of these four cases vary with different nouns, but they fall into certain broad categories or declensions. There is a vowel declension and a consonant declension, also called the strong and weak declensions, according to whether the stem ended in Germanic in a vowel or a consonant, and within each of these types there are certain subdivisions. The stems of nouns belonging to the vowel declension ended in one of four vowel: *a, ō, i,* or *u,* and the inflection varies accordingly.

Their nature may be gathered from two examples of the strong declension and one of the weak: <u>stān</u> (stone), a masculine <u>a</u>- stem; <u>giefu</u> (gift), a feminine <u>ō</u>- stem; and <u>hunta</u> (hunter), a masculine consonant-stem:

Sing. N. stān   - gief-u - hunt-a   Plur. N. stān-as - gief-a   - hunt-an
          G. stān-es - gief-e - hunt-an   G. stān-a   - gief-a   - hunt-ena
          D. stān-e - gief-e - hunt-an   D. stān-um - gief-um - hunt-um
          A. stān   - gief-e - hunt-an   A. stān-as - gief-a   - hunt-an

The forms <u>as</u>, <u>es</u>, <u>a</u>, <u>e</u>, <u>um</u> are inflectional signs to signify the change of form.

It is apparent from these examples that the inflection of the noun was much more elaborate in Old English than it is today. All strong nouns in Old English in masculine gender were declined in this way. Similarly all strong nouns in Old English in feminine gender and neuter gender underwent inflectional modifications for two numbers and four cases. <u>Weak nouns</u> in Old English had a different set of inflections. Majority of Old English weak nouns have been replaced by strong forms for the plural number. Only three nouns in Modern English retain weak forms, <u>child</u>- children; <u>ox</u>- oxen.

Irregular Plural forms: In Modern English, the plural is formed by the addition of the suffix <u>es</u> or <u>s</u> from Old English <u>as</u>. But there are a few nouns which form their plural by a change of vowel. <u>Tooth- teeth</u>; <u>foot- feet</u>; <u>mouse- mice</u>; <u>man- men</u>; <u>goose- geese</u>. These irregular plural forms are due to a sound change called mutation or <u>umlaut</u>. In early Old English, the plural of some nouns was formed by the addition of the suffix - <u>iz</u>. Thus toþ (teeth) had its plural toþiz (toþ+iz = toþiz). On account of the influence of the vowel 'i', <u>toþiz</u> became <u>teþiz</u>. Subsequently the suffix <u>iz</u> was dropped leaving the form <u>teþ</u>. Owing to further sound change, teþ has developed into 'teeth'. This rule applies to the plural forms. eg. <u>foot</u> (fōt), <u>man</u> (mann), <u>goose</u> (gōs), <u>mouse</u> (mūs).

(b) Grammatical Gender: Gender was not determined on the basis of sex, but on the basis of inflectional forms of the nouns. Gender in modern English is natural (that is, it is related to sex), whereas in Old English it was grammatical. While names designating males are generally masculine and females feminine, those indicating neuter objects are not necessarily neuter. <u>Stān</u> (stone) and <u>mōna</u> (moon) are masculine, but <u>sunne</u> (sun) is feminine as in German. In French the corresponding words have just the opposite genders: <u>Pierre</u> (stone) and <u>lune</u> (moon) are feminine while <u>soleil</u> (sun) is masculine. Often the gender of Old English is quite illogical. Words like <u>mægden</u> (girl), <u>wīf</u> (wife), <u>bearn</u> and <u>cild</u> (child), which we expect to be feminine or masculine, are in fact, neuter, while <u>wīfmann</u> (woman) is masculine because the second element of the compound is masculine. The simplicity of Modern English gender has already been pointed out in Lesson-1 as one of the chief assets of the language.

(c) The Adjective: An important feature of the Teutonic languages is the development of a two-fold declension of the adjective. Thus, the adjectives in Old English were declined for strong and weak forms, for three genders and four cases. The strong form of the adjective was used only with the noun. The weak form was used when the noun was preceded by the definite article or the possessive or demonstrative pronoun.
Eg: <u>gōd mann</u> (good <u>man</u>) has the strong form of the adjective; <u>sē gōda mann</u> (the good man) - the weak form of the adjective.

Given below is a table of inflected forms of the nominative singular masculine in the strong and weak declensions respectively.

		STRONG DECLENSION			**WEAK DECLENSION**		
		Masc.	Fem.	Neut.	Masc.	Fem.	Neut.
Sing.	N	gōd	Gōd	gōd	gōd-a	gōd-e	gōd-e
	G	gōd-es	gōd-re	gōd-es	gōd-an	gōd-an	gōd-an
	D	gōd-um	gōd-re	gōd-um	gōd-an	gōd-an	gōd-an
	A	gōd-ne	gōd-e	gōd	gōd-an	gōd-an	gōd-e
	I	gōd-e	----	gōd-e			
Plur	N	gōd-e	Gōd-a	gōd		gōd-an	
	G	gōd-ra	Gōd-ra	gōd-ra		gōd-ena or gōd-ra	
	D	gōd-um	Gōd-u,	gōd-um		gōd-um	
	A	gōd-e	Gōd-a	gōd		gōd-an	

The strong adjective had eight forms each for the masculine gender, feminine gender and neutral gender. Similarly the <u>weak</u> adjective had eight forms each for the masculine gender, feminine gender and neutral gender. Compared with the large number of forms of the adjective in Old English, modern English adjective has only one form. One single form of the adjective is used with the noun, irrespective of number and gender, whereas in Old English the adjectives and the nouns had to be inflected to be in agreement with each other.

(d) The Adverb: Adverbs were formed by adding -<u>e</u> to the adjective ─ <u>deop</u> (deep- adjective); <u>deope</u> (adverb -deeply); <u>blind</u> (adjective); <u>blinde</u> - (adverb). Certain adjectives ending in -<u>lic</u> formed their adverbs by the addition of -<u>e</u>: <u>freondlic</u> (friendly - adjective) <u>freondlice</u> (adverb), -<u>lice</u> came to be regarded as the adverbial suffix and it was added to the adjectives. The modern adverbial suffix-<u>ly</u> (happily, gladly) can be traced to this suffix <u>lice</u> which was used in Old English.

(e) The Definite Article: The definite article in Old English had specific forms for number, gender and case. In modern English only one form of the article is used irrespective of number, gender and case.

	Masculine	Feminine	Neuter	Common Plural
Nominative	sē	sēo	ð æt	ð ā
Aeeusative	ð one	ð ā	ð at	ð ā
Genitive	ð æs	ð ǣre	ð æs	ð āra
Dative	ð ǣm	ð ǣre	ð ǣm	ð ǣm

In Old English, the definite article had to agree with the noun in respect of the gender, number and case. The definite article was also used as i) the demonstrative pronoun ii) relative pronoun and iii) personal pronoun (he, she, it)

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(f) The Personal Pronoun: Besides the definite article which was used as the personal pronoun, Old English had regular forms for the personal pronouns. A specific feature of the pronoun was that it had a dual number, i.e. a set of forms to refer to two persons or two things.

First Person	Singular	Dual	Plural
Nominative	ic (I)	wit (we two)	we
Accusative	mei, me	unc	usic, us
Genitive	min	uncer	ure
Dative	me	unc	us

Second Person	Singular	Dual	Plural
Nominative	ðu	git (you two)	ye
Accusative	ðe (e)	inc	eow
Genitive	ðin (e)	incer	eower
Dative	ðe	inc	eow

Third Person	Masculine	Neuter	Feminine	Common Plural
Nominative	he	hit	heo	hie (they)
Accusative	hine (him)	hit	hie (her)	hie (them)
Genitive	his	his	hire	hiera (their)
Dative	him	him	hire	him

The pronouns in Modern English, I, me, us, you, your, he, she, it, his, her, its have developed from the corresponding Old English forms.

(g) The Verb: The verbs in Old English fell into two categories. 1) strong or irregular verbs and 2) weak or regular verbs. The difference between them lies in the method of formation of past tense. This distinction is observed in the case of verbs in Modern English. The strong verbs form their past tense and past participle by a vowel change or a modification.
eg. Sing – sang - sung ; drink – drank – drunk ; eat – ate – eaten

The weak verbs form their past tense and past participle by addition of d, ed or t.
e.g. move - moved - moved; play – played – played; learn – learnt – learnt;

The strong verbs fell into seven classes. The series of verbs with seven classes is known as ablaut or gradation series. The verbs had specific forms for the different tenses, persons, numbers and moods. They were conjugated for three persons, two numbers, two tenses, three moods – indicative, subjective and imperative for the gerund and present participle. The present tense was used to signify the future.

The principal parts of the Old English strong verbs had four forms.

Infinitive Present tense	Past tense or Preterite (singular)	Past Tense or Preterite (plural)	Past participle

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Class I	w r̄itan (to write)	wrāt	writon	writen
Class II	ċēosan (choose)	ċēas	curon	coren
Class III	singan (sing)	sang	sungon	sungen
Class IV	stelan (steal)	stæl	st ǣlon	stolen
Class V	tredan (tread)	træd	tr ǣdon	treden
Class VI	tacan (take)	tōc	tōcon	tācen
Class VII	blāwan (blow)	blēow	blēowon	blāwen

The seventh class of words are known as reduplication verbs since the vowel <u>eo</u> in the past tense, singular is repeated in the past tense plural and the vowel <u>a</u> in the present tense is repeated in the past participle.

Model Conjugation of Strong Verbs
Verb: <u>writan</u>

	Present Tense		Past Tense	
	Sing .	Pl.	Sing.	Pl.
	Ic write	We writaþ	ic wrāt	we writon
	ð u writest	ye writaþ	ð u write	ð u writon
	he writeþ	hie writaþ	he wrāt	ð u writon

Gerund(verb noun): to writtenne; Present Participle: writende

<u>Weak verbs in Old English</u>: The weak verbs outnumbered the strong verbs in Old English. Most of them were derived from nouns, adjectives or strong verbs to which a suffix was added:
(eg) Noun: dom (Judgement) + jan→ deman- to judge ; Modern English- deem.

Adjective: ful+ jan→ fyllan (to fill)
Strong verb dranc + jan→ drencan→ to drench
(past tense)

Weak verbs formed their past tense by the addition of <u>ede</u> or <u>ode</u>. Old English weak verbs fell into three classes. They had only three principal forms –present, past, past participle.

	Infinitive (Present tense)	Past tense	Past participle
Class I	werian	wrede	wered (defend)
Class II	þancian	þancode	þancod (thank)
Class III	libban	lifde	lifd (live)

1.5.9. Old English Literature

English literature has maintained an unbroken continuity from early times. According to this view, the history of English literature goes back to the Old English period. It can be divided into three periods- Old English, Middle English and Modern English. Old English reads like a strange language and needs close attention and great effort to understand it.

The Angles, the Saxons and the Jutes had settled down in England by the middle of the sixth century. Christianity was introduced in England about the same time. There was a considerable body of Old English or Anglo- Saxon literature. Old English poetry falls into two divisions- war poetry and religious poetry. The outstanding Old English epic is <u>Beowulf</u>. Nothing

is known of its authorship. It is probable that the Teutonic invaders brought a number of ballads (folk songs) to England and these ballads might have grown into an epic at the hands of a Northumbrian poet in the eighth century. The poem, which bears the name of the hero, celebrates his brave exploits. Beowulf fought and killed the monster Grendel, who, for twelve years, ravaged the land of the King of Danes. He then killed Grendel's mother. Finally he went to destroy a dreadful dragon and in that fight, he inflicted and also received a fatal wound.

Anglo-Saxon poets sang of the things that entered most deeply into their experience – of war and of the things that entered most deeply into their experience – of war and of exile, of the sea with its hardships and its fascination, of ruined cities, and of minstrel life. One of the earliest products of Teutonic tradition is a short poem called Widsith in which a scop or minstrel pretends to give an account of his wanderings and the many famous kings and princes before whom he has exercised his craft. Deor, another poem about a minstrel, is the lament of a scop who for years has been in the service of his lord, and now finds himself thrust out by a younger man. The Wanderer is a tragedy in the medieval sense, the story of a man who once enjoyed a high place and has fallen upon evil times. His lord is dead and he has become a wanderer in strange courts, without friends. The Seafarer is a monologue in which the speaker alternately describes the perils and hardships of the sea and the eager desire to dare again its dangers. In The Ruin the poet reflects on a ruined city, once prosperous and imposing with its towers and halls, its stone courts and baths, now but the tragic shadow of what it once was. Two Great War poems, the Battle of Brunanburh and the Battle of Maldon celebrate with patriotic fervor stirring encounters of the English, equally heroic in victory and defeat.

More than half of Anglo-Saxon poetry is concerned with Christian subjects. Translations and paraphrases of books of the Old and New Testament, legends of saints, and devotional and didactic pieces constitute the bulk of this verse. The most important of this poetry had its origin in Northumbria and Mercia in the seventh and eighth centuries. The earliest English poet whose name we know was Cædmon, a lay brother in the monastery at Whitby. The story of how the gift of song came to him in a dream and how he subsequently turned various parts of the Scriptures into beautiful English verse comes to us in the pages of Bede. Cynewulf, is an Anglian poet about 800 A.D. who wrote at least four poems on religious subjects Juliana and Elene, Christ, The Fates of the Apostles etc. All of these poems have their counterparts in other literatures of the Middle Ages. They show England in its cultural contact with Rome and being drawn into the general current of ideas on the continent, no longer simply Teutonic but cosmopolitan.

In the development of literature prose generally comes late. Verse is more effective for oral delivery and more easily retained in the memory. It is therefore a rather remarkable fact that English possessed a considerable body of prose literature in the ninth century, at a time when most other modern languages in Europe had scarcely developed a literature in verse. This unusual accomplishment was due to the inspiration of one man, the Anglo-Saxon king who is justly called Alfred the Great (871-99). Alfred's greatness rests not only on his capacity as a military leader and statesman but in an effort to restore England to something like its former state he undertook in mature life to learn Latin and either translated these books himself or caused others to translate them for him First as a guide for the clergy he translated the Pastoral Care of Pope Gregory, and then, in order that his people might know something of their own past, inspired and may well have arranged for a translation of Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People. Alfred also

caused a record to be compiled of the important events of English history, past and present, and this as continued for more than two centuries after his death is the well-known <u>Anglo-Saxon Chronicle</u>. King Alfred was the founder of English prose, but there were others who carried on the tradition. Among these is Aelfric, the author of two books of homilies and numerous other works, and Wulfstan, whose <u>Sermon to the English</u> is an impassioned plea for moral and political reform.

So large and varied a body of literature, in verse and prose gives ample testimony to the universal competence, at times to the power and beauty, of the Old English language.

1.5.10. Summary

Language is a natural human growth, partly mental and partly physical. It follows, therefore, that it never ceases to change, but is a continuing development in a constant state of flux. To divide the history of any language into 'periods' historically must, then, be only a somewhat artificial rough-and-ready method which has it advantages and is generally followed.

Old English is characterized by a homogeneous Anglo-Saxon language, with a basically Teutonic vocabulary. But it had an exceptional resourcefulness in relying on its own elements for coining new words. By means of prefixes, suffixes and compounding, it was able to come up with numerous words to describe the new concepts. In grammar it is also characterized by having its inflexional system relatively full, with three or four case-endings for its nouns and adjectives and fuller verbal endings than existed at any time later. Even the definite article and f\personal pronoun were heavily inflected. In pronunciation it had no 'silent syllables' and its spelling was a rough attempt at being phonetic, that is to say its letters represented its sounds fairly closely. Its word-order was relatively free, since its inflexions prevented ambiguity. It also had preserved a rich body of literature.

1.5.11. Technical Terms

Inflections   : word endings to indicate distinctions of case, number, person, tense, mood.

Syntax   : principles of sentence structure

Declension   : system of endings of words

Indicative Mood   : statement

Subjunctive Mood   : wish, condition

Imperative Mood   : command, request

Umlaut   : In the early Anglo- Saxon, vowels underwent change on account of the influence of a vowel in the next syllable. Subsequently the vowel disappeared.

1.5.12. Sample Questions:

1. Write a note on the characteristic features of Old English.
2. In what manner does Old English differ from Modern English?
3. Write short notes on the following:
    i.   Old English literature
    ii.   Grammatical and Natural Gender
    iii. Dual number
    iv.   Old English Spelling and Pronunciation
    v.   Strong and weak conjugation of verbs
    vi.   Synthetic and Analytic Languages.

1.5.13. Suggested Reading

1. C.L. Wrenn.   - The English Language.
2. A.C. Baugh.   - A History of the English Language.
3. Simeon Potter. - Our Language.
4. Otto Jesperson. - Growth and Structure of the English Language.
5. C.L. Berber.   - The Story of Language.

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Prof. S. Jagadisan

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Lesson – 6

Old English – II : Foreign Influences

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Structure

      1.6.1 Objectives
      1.6.2 Introduction
      1.6.3 The Native Element
      1.6.4 The Celtic Influence
      1.6.5 The Latin Influence
            (A) Continental Borrowing: Zero Period
            (B) Latin through Celtic Transmission: First period
            (C) Christianisation of Britain: Second Period
      1.6.6. The Scandinavian Influence
            (A) The Viking Age
            (B) Nature and Extent of the Influence
            (C) Relationship between Scandinavian and Old English Words.
      1.6.7. Summary
      1.6.8. Sample Questions
      1.6.9. Suggested Reading

1.6.1 Objectives

A reading of the lesson helps the reader

(i)   to understand how certain important political and cultural events influenced the English language
(ii)   to trace the nature and development of English during its early period
(iii)   to identify the foreign influences on the English language during the Old English period.

1.6.2. Introduction

      The entire course of English history, in its political, religious, social and cultural aspects, is reflected in the English language. English continues to be a living language because it has kept itself open to influences from without. Any language is subject to the influence of the other languages. In the case of English, foreign influence has been enduring and unbroken, contributing to its abundance, variety and range. It should be remembered that, while being exposed to a variety of influences, English has retained its general ground of native words and basic grammatical structure. The abundance of words from Scandinavian, French, Latin, Greek, Spanish, Italian, Portuguese and the Eastern languages with subtle shades of meaning has made for a rich power of expression.

In the previous lesson, we discussed the origin of the English language and described it as the product of the dialects brought to England by the Jutes, Saxons, and Angles. These dialects formed its basis, the sole basis of its grammar and the source of the largest part of its vocabulary. But there were also other elements which entered the language. In the course of the first seven hundred years of its existence in England, English was brought into contact with three other languages, the languages of the Celts, the Romans, and the Scandinavians. From each of these contacts, it shows certain effects, and especially additions to its vocabulary. Let us see the influence of these three foreign elements in Old English in detail. But before that, let us briefly take note of the native Teutonic nature of the language, which was discussed elaborately in Lesson 5.

1.6.3. The Native Element in English Vocabulary

The Germanic tribes, the Angles, the Saxons and the Jutes brought their vocabulary to England. The native or the Teutonic element (it may also be called the Anglo- Saxon element) occupies an important place in common speech as well as in literature. The framework of the English language is essentially Teutonic. The native vocabulary (most of which is now extinct) is preserved in the Anglo- Saxon or Old English literature. Many Anglo-Saxon words and compounds were replaced by loan words later. The words which have survived from the original Anglo-Saxon vocabulary are expressive of simple, basic concepts. "I am hungry, thirsty, weary, cold, naked; Give me food, drink, bed, fire, clothing." All the words in this sentence are native or Anglo- Saxon words. Other examples are:

- Prefixes and suffixes: be (belittle); -with (withdraw); un- (undo, unmake); dom- (wisdom); ship- (kingship)
- Words signifying family relationships: man, woman, father, mother, brother, sister, daughter.
- Pronouns: except third person plural, they, them. Auxiliary Verbs: be, have, do, will, shall.
- Names of parts of the body: head, eye, ear, heart, tongue, hand, neck, foot.
- Words referring to the periods of the day, objects or forces of nature and astronomical bodies: day, night, sun, moon, star, wind, thunder, hill, wood, tree.
- Names of animals: cow, ox, herd, horse, mouse.
- Words relating to agriculture: sow, seed, mow, milk, acre, corn, grain, wheel, yoke.
- Names of food: bread, oats, barley, wheat.
- Names of trees: oak, elm, ash, beech
- Names of weapons or tools: spear, sword, knife, axe, spade.
- Names referring to titles: king, queen, lord, lady.
- Names of colours: black, white, red.
- Names referring to measure: high, long, deep, narrow.
- Names referring to moral qualities: good, evil, kind, wise, greed.

Foreign words borrowed since the 12[th] century have outnumbered the native or Anglo- Saxon words. Though limited in number, the Anglo- Saxon words are basic words that express simple concepts or describe common daily activities.

1.6.4. The Celtic Influence on English Vocabulary

Introduction: Celtic is one of the branches of the Indo-European languages. It belongs to the Centum or Western group. An account of the Celts in Britain was given in the previous lesson. The Celts came under the Roman rule for nearly four hundred years following the Roman invasion of England by Caesar in 55 BC. Following the withdrawal of the Romans from England about 410 AD, England was invaded by the Germanic tribes. The language of the Celts left its impact on Old English during the Anglo- Saxon occupation of England. The mixture of the two peoples, the Celts and the Teutons (the Angles, the Saxons and the Jutes) was followed by influence on their languages. As the Celts were the conquered people, the influence of Celtic on English is limited and marginal. It may be seen in names of places and rivers.

Place Names: Kent from Canti or Cantion is of Celtic origin; Diera and Bernicia – names of old Northumbrian kingdoms are form Celtic tribal names; in Devonshire; the first element – Devon is a modification of a Celtic tribal name Dumnonii; Cumberland is the land of the Briton or Cymri; the name London is of Celtic origin. The first syllable in each of the following place names is from a Celtic source: Winchester, Salisbury, Exeter, Gloucester, Worcester, Lichfield. The names Dover and York are Celtic in origin. The original name of Canterbury was Durovernum. The Celtic influence is seen in the names of rivers: Thames, Avon, Ouse, Wye, Elbe. Celtic words meaning hill are found in places names. Barr- Welsh Bar (summit); Bredon - (Bre - hill); Bryn Mawr - (Bryn - hill, Mawr - great). The element cumb meaning valley in place like Duncombe, Winchcombe, Holcombe is Celtic. Torr meaning peak occurs in Torcross, Torhill.

Outside place names, Celtic influence is negligible. The number of other words may not exceed twenty. These words fall into two groups: (i) words from popular speech, (ii) words from Christianity.
(i) Words from popular speech: bin (basket, now retained in dustbin); bratt (cloak); broc, (brock or badger); crag, cumb (valley); dun (dark), ass.
(ii) Words from Celtic Christianity: In 563 AD, St. Columba with his twelve monks went from Ireland to preach to his kinsmen in Britons. Words which came into English as a consequence of the influence of Christianity are ancor (hermit) dr ȳ (magician), cine (a gathering of parchment leares), cross, clugge (bell) gabolrind (compass), mind (diadem) etc.

To sum up, Celtic exerted minimal influence on English. It was the language of the conquered people and the relation between the two groups⌐the Celts and the Teutons⌐did not foster any marked influence. Many words died out and the surviving words have localised or specialised meanings.

1.6.5. The Latin Influence

The second great influence exerted upon Old English was that of Latin was not the language of a conquered people. It was the language of a race with a higher civilization, a race from which the Teutons has much to learn. Contact with that civilization, at first commercial and military, later religious and intellectual, extended over many centuries and was constantly

renewed. It began long before the Anglo-Saxons came to England and continued throughout the Old English period. For several hundred years, while the Teutons who later became the English were still occupying their continental homes, they had various relations with the Romans through which they acquired a considerable number of Latin words. Later when they came to England they saw the evidences of the long Roman rule in the island and learned from the Celts a few additional Latin words which had been acquired by them. And a century and a half later still, when Roman missionaries reintroduced Christianity into the island, this new cultural influence resulted in a really extensive adoption of Latin elements into the language. There were thus three distinct occasions on which borrowing from Latin occurred before the end of the Old English period, and it will be of interest to consider more in detail the character and extent of these borrowings.

The three periods of Latin influence on Anglo-Saxon or Old English:

A. Continental borrowings or Zero Period (Pre- Christian period to 400 AD)

The earliest Latin words to enter English owe their adoption to the contact between the Romans and the Germanic tribes on the Continent. A large member of Latin words found their way into the Teutonic dialects. The number of Germans living in the Roman empire was considerably large and they belonged to different social classes. The intimate and unbroken contact between the Romans and the Germans resulted in the flow of the Latin words into the language of the Germanic tribes who would have brought those words to England at the time of their occupation of England.

The words which the Anglo-Saxons borrowed in that early stage, reflect the new ideas which they acquired from the Romans. They covered different fields of activity. English words like camp *(*battle*)*, segn (banner), pīl (pointed stick, javelin), weall (wall), pytt (pit), str ǣt (road, street), mīl (mile). The words cēap (bargain); and mangian (to trade) with its derivatives mangere (monger), mangung (trade, commerce), and mangung-hūs (shop) are fundamental, while pund (pound) and mynet (coin) are other terms. Monger, pound, inch, pint, ounce, money and mint relate to trade, measure and coins. To the field of wine trade belong words of Latin origin like wīn (wine) and flasce (flask). Names of household articles and food include cytel (kettle), mēse (table), pyle (pillow), sigel (brooch, necklace), cuppe (cup), disc (dish), līne (rope, line) and gimm (gem). Roman words for certain foods are cīese (cheese), spelt (wheat), pipor (pepper), senep (mustard), popig (poppy), ynne (onion), plūme (plum), pise (pea) and minte (mint). Roman contributions to the building arts are seen in such words as cealc (chalk), copor (copper), pic (pitch), tigele (tile), while miscellaneous words such as mūl (mule), draca (dragon), pāwa (peacock), pīpe (musical instrument), cirice (church), biscop (bishop), cāsere (emperor), and Sæternesdreg (Saturday) may be mentioned.

To sum up about the words borrowed in the Zero period, mostly nouns denoting concrete objects were borrowed. The number of adjectives and verbs was negligible.   The influence was limited to the spoken language. It was not classical or literary Latin, but Vulgar (or popular) Latin

(the ancestor the Romance languages), which influenced the language of the Germanic tribes. Words following this influence passed into English through Anglo-Saxon.

B. Latin through Celtic Transmission (Latin Element in the First Period, 400-650):

The Latin element introduced during 400-650 is known as <u>Latin Influence of the First Period</u>. Since the Roman occupation of Britain, the use of Latin was confined to the upper classes, to the town - dwellers and the country gentlemen. Inscriptions in a corrupt form of Latin on tiles and pottery suggest that the skilled workers understood a little Latin. The well-to-do people would have gone West and escaped the Anglo-Saxon invasion. People belonging to the lower classes would have become the servants of the Teutonic conquerors. Thus the conquered people would have spoken Anglo Saxon with a sprinkling of Latin. Their knowledge of Latin would have been meagre and this accounts for the limited influence of Latin during this period. The form of Latin which affected Anglo-Saxon during this period is called <u>Romano-Celtic</u> or <u>Britto - Roman</u>.

After the Teutonic conquest of Britain, there was actually no direct contact between the Latin and Old English. So the few Latin words which found their way into English would have been only through Celtic transmission. The Celts, indeed, adopted more than six hundred Latin words but the relationship between the Celts and the English were such that they were not passed on. An important contribution of Latin during this period survives in place names. Latin 'Castra' meaning <u>town</u> gave rise to the form <u>Ceaster</u> in Old English. <u>Ceaster </u>was added to the native element. The modern place names <u>Dorchester</u>, <u>Manchester</u>, <u>Gloucester</u>, <u>Winchester</u>, <u>Leicester</u>, <u>Worcester</u>, <u>Lancaster</u>, and <u>Doncaster</u> illustrate this influence.

A part from place names, the words borrowed during this period were very few. The modern English equivalents are given here. (i) Legal and official: <u>seal,</u> <u>master</u> (from Latin <u>magister</u>), <u>provost</u>, <u>sign</u> (in the sense of banner or mark), (ii) Dress and ornaments: <u>cowl</u>, <u>mantle</u>, <u>strap</u>, <u>pearl</u>, (iii) Household articles: <u>pestle</u>, <u>mortar</u>, <u>oil</u>, <u>cup</u>, <u>chest</u>, <u>pail</u>, <u>pot,</u> (iv) Plants: <u>coriander</u>, <u>lettuce,</u> (v) Religion: (Learned words): <u>gloss</u> in the sense of 'interpret'<u>,</u> <u>monk</u>, <u>nun</u>, <u>minister</u>, <u>monastery</u>, <u>relic</u>, <u>priest</u>, <u>bishop</u>, <u>church</u>, (vi) Other words: <u>anchor</u>, <u>quiver</u>, <u>island</u>, <u>mountain.</u>
In general, Latin influence during the first period was minimal.

C. The Christianising of Britain: Latin Influence of the Second Period (650 to the end of the Old English Period 1150):

The greatest influence of Latin upon Old English took place because of the introduction of Christianity into Britain in 597. The new religion of course was not really new in the island, but the date marks the beginning of a systematic attempt on the part of Rome to convert the inhabitants and make England a Christian country. The event significant here is the arrival of St. Augustine with forty monks in the kingdom of Kent. What they had before them was not an easy task; it was not simply substituting one ritual for another, but altering the whole philosophy of a nation. By the time Augustine died seven years later, the kingdom of Kent had become wholly Christian, and gradually within a hundred years, all England was permanently Christian.

The introduction of Christianity was followed by the construction of churches, which became centres of learning. Learning spread from these centres. In the eighth century, thanks to the Church, England enjoyed a position of intellectual supremacy. Arts and letters received a new impetus. Skilled workers in stone and glass were brought from the Continent to improve the church buildings. Embroidery and church music became new interests. The church thus became the nucleus of Roman civilisation. The adoption of the new religion was followed by the introduction of new words to express new concepts. The enrichment of the vocabulary did not take place overnight. Some Latin words entered Anglo Saxon almost immediately, while some others gained currency in the tenth and eleventh centuries.

Latin words which entered the English language in the second period (650-1150), may be divided into two stages: 1) Early adoptions and 2) Later adoptions which accompanied the Benedictine Reform.

1. The early adoptions were words descriptive of the church dignitaries and ideas relating to the church.

    Religion: abbot, abbess, alms, altar, angel, anthem, deacon, disciple, hymn, litany, martyr, mass, offer, organ, pope, priest, psalm, shrine, temple, manna etc;

    Names of articles of clothing and household use : cap, sock, silk, purple, chest, mat sack; words denoting foods: beet, caul (cabbage), lentil (O.E. lent) millet (O.E. mil), pear, radish, doe, oyster (O.E. ostre), lobster;

    Names of trees, plants and herbs: box, pine, aloes, balsam, fennel, hyssop, lily mallow, marshmallow, myrrh and the general word plant.

    A certain number of words having to do with education and learning reflect another aspect of the church's influence. Such are school, master, grammatic (al), verse, meter gloss, notary (a scribe).

    Words borrowed earlier in the Zero Period and the First Period got established in this period.

2. **Benedictine Reform:** The rapid spread of the influence of Chistianity in the Second Period of Latin influence was arrested by certain circumstances. The Danish or Scandinavian invasion and ravages of England led to the plundering of the churches at the end of the eighth century. This affected the morale of the clergy who became easy-going and morally lax. Education and learning were neglected. Abuses crept into the Church. Efforts to check the rot met with very little success to start with. In the middle of the tenth century, an effective reformation of the church was initiated. King Alfred has made a start. Besides restoring churches and founding monasteries, he strove for twenty years to spread education in his kingdom and foster learning.

The church was reformed and reorganised on Benedictine principles. The clergy were called upon to lead a life of prayer, poverty and service. Education and learning received a new impetus. The monasteries once again became centres of literary activity. The literature that was produced was mainly religious in character. As a result of this development, new words were adopted in the language of the Anglo-Saxons. The words that were borrowed were not popular words. They were learned words expressing specialised meanings. They were taken from written

sources and did not always pass into the spoken form of the language. A wide variety of words descriptive of different areas of activity came into use <u>Consul</u>, <u>cubit</u>, <u>amber</u>, <u>adamant</u> (diamond), crystal, asphalt, crown, sponge, table, chorus, verse, fiddle, metre, organ (musical term), cook, <u>castle</u>, <u>column</u>, <u>palace</u>, <u>theatre</u>, <u>almond</u>, <u>balsam</u>, <u>beetroot</u>, <u>cucumber</u>, <u>palm</u>, <u>peach</u>, <u>rose</u>, <u>dolphin</u>, <u>phoenix</u>, <u>pelican</u>, <u>tiger</u>, <u>vulture</u>, <u>plaster</u>, <u>apostle</u>, <u>dean</u>, <u>demon</u>, <u>paradise</u>, <u>preach</u>, <u>saint</u>, <u>accent</u>, <u>chronicle</u>, <u>decline</u> (grammatical term), <u>grammar</u>, <u>philosopher</u>, <u>title</u>, <u>calendar</u>, <u>comet</u>. Words like <u>orange</u>, <u>ginger</u>, <u>palm</u>, <u>lion</u>, <u>camel</u>, <u>pepper</u>, <u>silk</u> came from Persian/ Arabic/ Hebrew through Latin into English.

Though the influence of Latin was considerable, the Anglo-Saxon did not always use foreign words to express new concepts. The lower classes would have found it difficult to understand the new ideas (some of which were abstract) and employ the new words. In order to make the new ideas intelligible to the common people, they (the new ideas conveyed by the Latin words) were expressed in native or Anglo-Saxon terms. These words are called translation words. These Translation words died out in course of time to be replaced by the original Latin equivalents. For example, baptise   - <u>fullian</u> or <u>dyppan,</u> congregation   - <u>gesomnung</u>, martyr - <u>þrōwere</u> (sufferer), prophet   - <u>wītega</u> (wise one), patriarch - <u>hēahfæder</u>, saint - <u>hālga</u> (holy one), evangelium by - <u>god spell</u> (good tidings) <u>god spell</u> has later developed into 'gospel'.

Often Old Anglo-Saxon words assumed new meanings. <u>God</u> in Anglo-Saxon was adequate, so the Latin word <u>deus</u>, was not adopted. Likewise, heaven and hell were also English words originating in Anglo-Saxon paganism. Prior to the introduction of Christianity, <u>Easter</u> referred to the celebration of the Spring festival associated with goddess of dawn (Eastron). With the introduction of Christianity, the word <u>Easter</u> assumed a new significance and referred to the festival of the Resurrection of Christ. The word <u>bless</u> from <u>bletsian</u> meant sprinkle with blood. In Old English, it was used earlier to refer to the virtual of sprinkling the blood of a sacrificed bull on worshippers to communicate magical power. That original meaning of the word <u>bless</u> has given way to the modern meaning.

To sum up, Latin words were assimilated into Anglo-Saxons by direct adoption; Latin element encouraged the formation of translation words to express new ideas; New words were formed by adding native or Anglo-Saxon suffixes to Latin words: <u>Cristen</u> + <u>dom</u> – <u>Cristendom</u>; <u>preost</u> + <u>had</u> – <u>preosthad</u> (priesthood); <u>martyr</u> + <u>dom</u> – <u>martyrdom</u>; Latin introduced a large number of words expressive of abstract thought. Christianity changed the way of life of the Anglo-Saxons. The change in the religious and moral system and the outlook on life is reflected in the vocabulary. Latin influence on Anglo-Saxons in the second period was considerable. It paved the way for the further incorporation of foreign words into English in the subsequent periods.

1.6.6. The Scandinavian Influence on the English Language

Introduction: The historical background

The Viking Age: The period from the middle of the 8th century to the beginning of the 10th century is known as the <u>Viking Age</u>. The Vikings or the Scandinavians included the Swedes, the

Norwegians and the Danes. The term Viking means "Creekdweller". It refers particularly to the Scandinavians who in the 8[th], 9[th] and 10[th] centuries went by ships and attacked places in Western and Northern Europe. Their activities began in plunder and ended in conquest. The Swedes established a kingdom in Russia; Norwegians colonized parts of the British Isles, the Faroes and Iceland, and from there pushed on to Greenland and the coast of Labrador; the Danes founded the dukedom of Normandy and finally conquered England. The pinnacle of their achievement was reached in the beginning of the eleventh century when Cnut, king of Denmark, obtained the throne of England, conquered Norway, and from his English capital ruled the greater part of the Scandinavian world. The daring sea-rovers to whom these unusual achievements were due are commonly known as Vikings, and the period of their activity, extending from the middle of the eighth century to the beginning of the eleventh, is popularly known as the Viking Age. It was to their attacks upon, settlements in, and ultimate conquest of England that the Scandinavian influence upon Old English was due.

The Scandinavian or Danish invasion of England falls into three stages. From (787-850) was the period of early invasion when small bands plundered England. The second period (850-878) was a period of attack and settlement – large armies plundered many parts of England. Their attack was resisted or repulsed by the Anglo-Saxons. The second period of attack culminated in the defeat of the Danes at the hands of King Alfred and their surrender or capitulation. According to the Treaty of Wedmore (878), signed by Alfred and Guthrum, Wessex was saved and the territory to the north and east of London became a Danish settlement called Danelaw. One important aspect of this treaty was the acceptance of Christianity by the Danes. This facilitated the fusion of the two races. The third period (878-1042) was the period of political assimilation and adjustment. England's troubles were far from over. There were fresh invasions from outside and under Alfred's son Edward and grandson Athelstan, the English began a series of counterattacks. By the middle of the century, a large part of eastern England, though still strongly Danish in blood and custom, was once more under English rule.

Toward the end of the century, however, a new and formidable series of invasions began under Olaf Tryggvason in 991 and the English were defeated. Olaf, king of Norway was joined by Svein, King of Denmark in 994 in a new attack on London. The Danish forces marched over England, murdering and pillaging. Finally in 1014, supported by his son Cnut, Svein seized the English throne by driving Ethelred, the English king into exile. Upon his death the same year his son succeeded him. Three years of fighting established Cnut's claim to the throne, and for the next twenty-five years, England was ruled by Danish kings.

Amalgamation of the two races: The close kinship that existed between the two races greatly facilitated the amalgamation of the two races.   Though the Danes came to England with the intention of plunder, many of them settled there and made it their home. The Scandinavian influence (also called the Norse influence) was fostered by the intermarriage between the Danes and the English and the similarity between the two tongues. In some places Danish or Norse was the usual language while in others English was the prevailing speech. But there is evidence that in most of these places, there was a considerable number of people who were bilingual. The Scandinavians were a cosmopolitan and accommodating type of people. The relation between the Scandinavians and the Anglo-Saxons was not always or everywhere hostile. The influence of

Scandinavian on Anglo-Saxon, to start with, was confined to five areas – Lincoln, Stamford, Leicester, Derby and Nottingham. The dialects spoken by the Danes, Norwegians and the Swedes belonged to the Germanic family of which Anglo-Saxon was also a member. Except for grammar and pronunciation, the bulk of the vocabulary was common to Old English or Anglo-Saxon and Norse or Scandinavian. "The natural affinities between the Saxons and the Norsemen – of race, Germanic tradition, and language – asserted themselves and the blending of the two languages became inevitable" (C.L.Wrenn: The English Language).

The following table shows the historical divisions of the influence of Scandinavian on English. The dates shown are approximate and arbitrary.

A.	**787-850**	:	Period of attack and plunder. No appreciable influence.
B.	**860-990**	:	Period of early settlement; establishment of Danelaw: the two languages were spoken side by side.
C.	**990-1016**	:	The influence became pronounced on account of the increased influx of Scandinavians.
D.	**1016-1050**	:	The period of fusion of the two communities.
E.	**After 1050**	:	The two races merged and presented an united front to the Normans.

Nature and Extent of Scandinavian Influence: The Scandinavian influence on English has left its mark in the English place names. Nearly 1400 places in the north and East of England owe their names to Scandinavian. Yorkshire, Lincolnshire, Cumberland, Northumberland and Westmoreland were dense Danish or Norse settlements. Six hundred place names ending in -by show the influence of Scandinavian. By from Scandinavian byr means "village", "farm" or "town"; eg. Derby, Rugby, Whitby. Three hundred place names like Woodthorp, Althorp, Linthorp, contain the Scandinavian word thorp meaning "village", "farm" or "outskirts". An equal number of place names have the ending thwaite which means "an isolated piece of land"; eg. Applethwaite, Braithwaite. The ending toft, meaning a "piece of ground" or "private property" is found in place names like Brimtoft, Lowestoft, Nortoft. Other Scandinavian endings of place names are:
Beck (brook): Birkbeck, Troutbeck; Booth – Bootham; Brack and breck (slope): Haverbrack, Norbreck ; Carr (wet ground): Bartleycarr; Fell (hill): Scafell, Whinfell; Garth (yard, a measure of land): Applegarth, Arkelngarth; Gill or Ghyll (ravine); Gaisgill, Garrigill; Keld (spring): Hallikeld, Trinkeld; Mel (sand dune): Cartmel, Rathmel; Rigg (ridge): Crossrigg, Lambrigg; Scough (wood): Ayscough, Myerscough; Slack (shallow valley): Nettleslack, Witherslack; Scarth: Starscarth.
Proper names: Personal names ending in –son reveal Scandinavian influence, eg: Jackson, Johnson, Robinson.

The earliest words to be borrowed from Scandinavian into English were legal and nautical or navigational terms. They did not exceed twenty. Most of them have died out, eg: boatswain (nautical term, pronounced "bosun" meaning an officer on ship); Law had different meanings—a set of laws, decree, area with a legal system; hold meant a piece of land; Husting meant an assembly. Other words which are in common use are husband (meaning householder), fellow, outlaw, mark in the sense of weight of gold or silver, wrong, call, egg.

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Scandinavian influence became more pronounced after the peaceful settlement of the Danes in England. It is important to remember that the Danish invasion did not revolutionise the English ways of life and thought. Their civilisation was more or less similar to that of the Anglo-Saxons. The languages spoken by the two communities belonged to the same Germanic branch and had similarities. The words which came into English from Norse or Scandinavian in this early period expressed simple ideas.

Nouns: axle - tree, bank, boon, calf, birth, down (feather), egg, fellow, gate, kid, knife, leg, loan, reindeer, race, root, skill, sister, sky, trust, window, wing.

Adjectives: awkward, flat, happy, ill, loose, law, meek, odd, rotten, scant, sly, tight, ugly, weak, wrong.

Verbs: bask, call, cast (throw), crawl, die, drown, flit, gape, get, gasp, glitter, guess, hit, lift, raise, screech, scream, take, thrive, thrust.

The list given above illustrates the simple character of the Scandinavian words. It also reveals that many of the new words supplied no real need in the English vocabulary. They made their way into English simply as the result of the mixture of the two races. The influence should have been a matter of give and take as there was a close intermingling of the two races. Scandinavian and Anglo-Saxon words were used side by side. Words passed from one language to the other and the survival of the words belonging to either was a matter of chance.

The Relationship Between Words: The relationship between a word in Modern English and its Anglo-Saxon (Old English) or Scandinavian ancestor may be explained in one of the following ways:

1. When the words in both the languages had more or less identical forms and meanings, the modern forms of the words represent both the ancestors. eg. burn, drag, fast, thick.
2. Where there were differences in form, the Anglo-Saxon word survived. For example, Anglo-Saxon words like bench, goat, leap, had corresponding Scandinavian forms. When the same idea was expressed by two different words – one Anglo-Saxon and the other Scandinavian – the English word established itself; eg. think, lose, swell.
3. The native or the Anglo-Saxon words were replaced by Scandinavian words. Words from both the languages would have been used side by side before the Scandinavian words gained currency. Here are some examples with the Scandinavian words given first:
   egg – æg; syster (sister) ￢ sweostor; bon (boon) – ben; wrong – unriht; take - niman; cast (throw) ￢ weorpan; cut ￢ snithan; sky ￢ wolcen (welkin); window ￢ eagthyrel (eyehole).
   In these cases, the Scandinavian words superseded the Anglo-Saxon words.
4. In a few cases, both the forms survived, but with different meanings. The Scandinavian words are given first: wing – feather; nay – no; raise – rear; skin – hide; fro – from; skirt – shirt; hale – whole; bask – bathe; scatter ￢ shatter; dike – ditch; want ￢ wish; bark – rind; cut ￢ carve.

5. In some cases, an obsolete Anglo-Saxon word enjoyed a fresh lease of life on account of Scandinavian influence; eg. the word <u>till</u> occurs only twice in the Anglo-Saxon texts in the pre-Scandinavian period. Under the Scandinavian influence its use became widespread.
6. The Scandinavian form survived in the dialect, where as the Anglo-Saxon or narrative form belongs to the standard language. The Anglo-Saxon words are given first: <u>dew</u> - <u>dag;</u> <u>neat</u> (cattle) – <u>nowt;</u> <u>church</u> – <u>krik;</u> <u>yard</u> (a piece of enclosed ground) – <u>garth.</u>

Influence on Meaning: The meanings of a few Anglo-Saxon words were influenced by the meanings of corresponding Scandinavian words.

1. The Old English word <u>dream</u> meant "joy". The modern meaning has come from the Scandinavian or Norde form <u>draumr</u>. <u>Bread</u> in Old English meant fragment, piece or <u>crumb</u>. The modern meaning is due to the influence of the Scandinavian word.
2. The word <u>earl</u> has developed from Old English <u>eorl</u> which means "warrior". The corresponding Scandinavian form was <u>jarl</u> (pronounced "yarl" meaning governor) The word <u>earl</u> now signifies a title. This meaning developed on account of the meaning of the Scandinavian word.
3. <u>dwell</u> – Old English <u>dwellan</u> or <u>dwelian</u> – meant to "thwart" or "lead astray". The modern meaning "stay" has come from Scandinavian <u>dvelja</u> – to "tarry" or "remain".
4. The Old English word <u>ploh</u> meant "measure of land". The modern meaning of <u>plough</u> arose from the Scandinavian <u>plogr</u>.

Old English had the words <u>death,</u> <u>dead,</u> and <u>diedan</u> (to put to death). There was no intransitive verb "die". Either it was lost or not recorded. The sense "to die" was conveyed by two words <u>swelten</u> and <u>steorfan</u>. The form <u>sweltan</u> has disappeared. <u>Steorfan</u> has given rise to <u>starve</u> with a change of meaning. The word <u>die</u> has come from Old English or Scandinavian <u>deyja</u>. "An Englishman cannot <u>thrive</u> or be <u>ill</u> or <u>die</u> without Scandinavian words. They are to the language what <u>bread</u> and <u>egg</u> are to daily fare". The underlined words in this statement are from Scandinavian.

Scandinavian Influence on Grammar and Syntax: Scandinavian influence on English in the Old English period, was not confined to nouns, verbs and adjectives. It extended to pronouns and form words or function words. The pronoun forms for the third person <u>they</u>, <u>their</u>, <u>them</u>, came from Scandinavian. The Anglo-Saxon forms were "hie", "hiera" and "him". The Scandinavian forms got established because they were found to be less confusing and were easier to use. Similarly, the plural auxiliary "are" was adopted from Scandinavian "aron". It replaced the Old English form "sindon". The form or function words like <u>at</u>, <u>both</u>, <u>less</u>, <u>rather</u>, <u>same</u>, <u>though</u>, <u>till</u>, <u>together</u> and <u>worse</u> were drawn from Scandinavian. The adverbs <u>aloft,</u> <u>athwart,</u> <u>aye</u> (ever), <u>seemly</u>, hence (heþen) and whence (hweþen) are also derived from Scandinavian.

Inflections are seldom transferred from one language to another. A certain number of inflectional elements peculiar to the Northumbrian dialect have been attributed to the Scandinavian influence; for example, the <u>–s</u> of the third person singular, present tense of verbs and the participial ending <u>–and</u> (bindand), corresponding to <u>–end</u> and <u>–ind</u> in the Midlands and South (now replaced by <u>-ing</u>). It is much more important to recognize that in many words the

English and Scandinavian languages differed chiefly in their inflectional elements. The body of the word was so nearly the same in the two languages that only the endings would put obstacles in the way of mutual understanding. In the mixed population which existed, these endings must have led to much confusion, tending gradually to become obscured and finally lost. So we find that the wearing away and levelling of grammatical inflections in the Danish regions in the north was a couple of centuries in advance of the same process in the more southern parts of the country. Thus the tendency toward the loss of inflections which was characteristic of the English language (also Germanic languages, as explained in Lesson 4) in the north even in Old English times, was strengthened and accelerated by the conditions that prevailed in the Danelaw. So some credit must be given to the Danes for a development which, spreading to other parts later, resulted in simplifying English grammar.

Likewise, it is not often that languages influence each other in matters of syntax (sentence construction). Because of the intimacy that existed between the speakers of the two languages, English acquired certain Danish habits of expression. Some examples are the omission of the relative pronoun in relative clauses (rare in Old English); and the retention or omission of the conjunction that; the rules for the uses of shall and will in Middle English; and some illogical uses of these auxiliaries (as seen in Shakespeare) can be traced to Danish usage.

To sum up, it was during the 9th, 10th and 11th centuries that Scandinavian affected English. This was the period during which mingling of the two races – the Anglo-Saxons and the Danes – took place. It has already been pointed out that the two languages – Anglo-Saxon and Scandinavian – were "cousin languages" closely related to each other. The influence therefore was a matter of give and take. The influence of Scandinavian reveals the intimate fusion of two closely related languages and races. The number of borrowed words existing in Standard English for which we have evidence is about 900, and the number is even greater in the dialects.

1.6.7. Summary

From the lesson we can have an idea of some of formative influences on Old English. The fathers of the English language are the Teutonic conquerors of Britain and the fusion of their dialects resulted in the English language. In its grammar and a large part of its vocabulary therefore English was Teutonic in character. However it came under the influence of three other languages due to certain important political events. The Teutons absorbed a few Celtic words especially in place names), from the Celts whom they conquered. Latin was the second language that exerted a great influence on English. Contact with Latin was spread over three periods – Continental borrowing, Latin through Celtic transmission and the reintroduction of Christianity. Of these three periods, the second period was minimal in its influence while the third resulted in extensive adoption of Latin words. These again fall into two phases – the early borrowings, and those occasioned by the later Benedictine Reform. The third important influence is that of the Scandinavians on account of the Danish invasion and settlement of England. The amalgamation of the two races (who were one-time neighbours on the continent) resulted in a large number of Scandinavian words entering the English language. English borrowed even some grammatical words and syntactic rules revealing the extensive nature of the influence.   In general we can say that Latin supplied words of a religious and learned character having specialised meanings while

Scandinavian supplied words expressing simple, everyday concepts because of the give and take nature of the influence.

1.6.8. Sample Questions

1.   Discuss the Latin element in Old English

2.   Trace the Scandinavian influence on Old English

3.   Write short notes on the following:
  (i)   The Celtic influence   (iii)   the Benedictine Reform
  (ii)   The Teutonic element   (iv)   the Viking Age
  (v)   The role of churches and monasteries as centres of learning in the spread of Latin.

1.6.9. Suggested Reading

    1.   C.L. Wrenn.   -   <u>The English Language</u>.

    2.   A.C. Baugh.   -   <u>A History of the English Language</u>.

    3.   Simeon Potter. -   <u>Our Language</u>.

    4.   Otto Jesperson. -   <u>Growth and Structure of the English Language</u>.

    5.   C.L. Berber.   -   <u>The Story of Language</u>.

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                                                        Prof. S. Jagadisan

Lesson – 7

The Norman Conquest and The
Re-establishment of English (1066 – 1200)

Structure

1.7.1. Objectives

From this lesson, the reader will understand

i. the political events which affected England and their impact on English.
ii. that the Norman Conquest paved the way for the French influence on English
iii. how the development of the English language was affected by the Norman Conquest and the subsequent re-establishment of English.

1.7.2. Introduction

In Lesson 6 the three foreign influences on English – Celtic, Latin and Scandinavian – on account of certain political developments, have been traced. In this lesson the political developments as they affected the course of the English language at the close of the Old English period have been broadly divided into two periods. The first period (1066 – 1200) is defined by the Norman Conquest and its consequences – the subjection of the English people and their language. England was ruled by the Norman dukes thereby making French the language of the nobility and English was spoken only by the masses. The second period (1200 – 1500) is characterized by the Re-establishment of English. It is marked by certain changes in the political

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* see Lesson 6 for the Scandinavian influence in Old English

conditions in Europe which worked to the advantage of the English language. English once again was used by all sections of the people and in all the important spheres – religion, education, parliament, law etc.

1.7.3. The Norman Conquest

Toward the close of the Old English period an event occurred which has a greater effect on the English language than any other in the course of its history. This event was the Norman Conquest in 1066. What the language would have been like if William the Conqueror had not succeeded in making good his claim to the English throne can only be a matter of conjecture. As A.C. Baugh says,

> it would probably have pursued much the same course as the other Teutonic languages, retaining perhaps more of its inflections and preserving a preponderatingly Teutonic vocabulary, adding to its word-stock by the characteristic methods of word-formation already explained, and incorporating much less freely words from other languages. In particular it would have lacked the greater part of that enormous number of French words which today make English seem on the side of vocabulary almost as much a Romance as a Teutonic language. (p. 127)

The Norman Conquest changed the whole course of the English language. An event of such far-reaching consequences must be considered in some detail.

The Origin of Normandy: On the northern coast of France directly across from England is a district extending some seventy-five miles back from the Channel and known as Normandy. It derives its name from the bands of Northmen who settled there in the ninth and tenth centuries, at the same time as similar bands were settling in the north and east of England. A generation after Alfred reached an agreement with the Northmen in England, a somewhat similar understanding was reached between Rollo, the leader of the Danes in Normandy, and Charles the Simple, king of France. In 912 the right of the Northmen to occupy this part of France was recognized; Rollo acknowledged the French king as his overlord and became the first duke of the Normans. In the following century and a half a succession of masterful dukes raised the dukedom to a position of great influence, overshadowing at times the power of the king of France.

The adaptability of the Scandinavian, always a marked characteristic of this people, showed itself very quickly. Readily adopting the ideas and customs of those among whom he came to live, the Norman had soon absorbed the most important elements of French civilization. Moreover he injected fresh vigour into what he borrowed. He profited from his contact with French military forces and, adding French tactics to his own impetuous courage, soon had one of the best armies in Europe.   He took important features of Frankish law, including the idea of the jury, and with a genius for organization which shows up as clearly in the Norman kingdom of Sicily as in Normandy and later in England, made it one of the outstanding legal systems of the world. He accepted Christianity and began the construction of those great Norman cathedrals that

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are still marvels to the modern architect. But most important of all, for us, he soon gave up his own language and learned French. So rapidly did the old Scandinavian tongue disappear in the Norman capital that the second duke was forced to send his son to Bayeux that he might learn something of the speech of his forefathers. It is essential to note that in the eleventh century; at the time of the Norman Conquest, the civilization of Normandy was essentially French, and the Normans were among the most advanced and progressive of the peoples of Europe.

For some years before the Norman Conquest the relations between England and Normandy had been fairly close. In 1002 Aethelred the Unready had married a Norman wife, and, when driven into exile by the Danes, took refuge with his brother-in-law, the duke of Normandy. His son Edward, who had thus been brought up in France, was almost more French than English. At all events, when in 1042 the Danish line died out *and Edward, known as the Confessor, was restored to the throne from which his father had been driven, he brought with him a number of his Norman friends, enriched them, and gave them important places in the government. A strong French atmosphere pervaded the English court during the twenty-four years of his reign.

The Year 1066: When in January 1066, after a reign of twenty-four years, Edward the Confessor died childless, England was again faced with the choice of a successor. And there was not much doubt as to where the choice would fall. At his succession Edward had found England divided into a few large districts, each under the control of a powerful earl. The most influential of these nobles was Godwin, earl of the West Saxon earldom. He was a shrewd, capable man and was soon Edward's principal adviser. Except for one brief interval he was the virtual ruler of England until the time of his death. His eldest son Harold succeeded to his title and influence, and during the last twelve years of Edward's reign exercised a firm and capable influence over national affairs. The day after Edward's death Harold was elected king.

His election did not long go unchallenged. William, the duke of Normandy at this time, was a second cousin to the late king. While this relationship did not give him any right of inheritance to the English throne, he had nevertheless been living in expectation of becoming Edward's successor. Edward seems to have encouraged him in this hope. Even Harold had been led, though unwillingly, to acknowledge his claim but later did not feel bound by it. Only by force could William hope to obtain the crown to which he believed himself entitled. Perhaps the difficulty involved in an armed invasion of England would have discouraged a less determined claimant. But William was an exceptionally able man. He had had to face a number of crucial contests with rebellious barons, powerful neighbors and even his overlord, the French king. But he had emerged triumphantly from them all, greatly strengthened in position and admirably schooled for the final test of his fortune. William the Great, as the chroniclers called him, was not the man to relinquish a kingdom without a struggle. He began preparations to invade England. He came to terms with his rivals and enemies on the continent. He appealed to the pope for the sanction of his enterprise and received the blessing of the church. In September he landed at Pevensey, on the south coast of England, with a formidable force. His landing was unopposed. Harold was occupied in the north of England meeting an invasion by the king of Norway, another claimant to the throne. He hurried south and drew up his forces on a broad hill at Senlac, not far from Hastings, where the battle began in the morning. So advantageous was Harold's position and

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* see Lesson 6 for the Scandinavian influence in Old English

so well did the English defend themselves that in the afternoon they still held their ground. But then happened an accident: Harold, always in the think of the fight, was pierced in the eye by a Norman arrow. His death was instantaneous. Two of his brothers had already fallen. Deprived of their leaders, the English became disorganized and the confusion spread. The Normans were quick to profit by the situation, and the English were soon in full retreat. William had won the battle of Hastings and eliminated his rival, but he had not yet attained the English crown. It was only after he had burnt and pillaged the southeast of England that the citizens of London decided that further resistance would be useless. Accordingly they capitulated, and on Christmas day, 1066. William was crowned king of England.

1.7.4. The Norman Settlement

William's victory at Hastings and his subsequent coronation in London involved more than a mere substitution of one monarch for another. It was not as though he had been chosen originally as the successor of Edward. As A.C. Baugh says in that case "there would doubtless have been more French favorites at court, as in the time of the Confessor, and Normans in certain important offices, But the English nobility would have remained intact, and the English government would have continued with its tradition unbroken". But William's possession of the throne had been a matter of conquest and was attended by all the consequences of the conquest of one people by another.

One of the most important of these consequences was the introduction of a new nobility. Many of the English higher class had been killed on the field at Hastings. Those who escaped were treated as traitors, and the places of both alike were filled by William's Norman followers. This process was repeated several times during the next four years while the Conquest was being completed. As a result of these campaigns the Old English nobility was practically wiped out. For several generations after the Conquest the important positions and the great estates were almost always held by Normans or men of foreign blood.

In like manner Norman prelates were gradually introduced into all important positions in the church. The two archbishops were Normans. The English abbots were replaced more slowly, but as fast as vacancies occurred through death or deprivation they were filled generally by foreigners. Foreign monks and priests followed the example of their superiors and sought the greater opportunities for advancement which England now offered. There were also Normans in the lower walks of life who came into England with William's army. Many of them doubtless remained in the island, and their number was increased by constant additions throughout the rest of the eleventh century and the whole of the next. The numerous castles which the Conqueror built were apparently garrisoned by foreign troops. In the chroniclers of the period we find instances extending all through the twelfth century of foreign forces being brought to England. Likewise merchants and craftsmen from the continent seem to have settled in England in considerable numbers. It is quite impossible to say how many Normans and French people settled in England in the century and a half following the Conquest, but since the governing class in both church and state was almost exclusively made up from among them, their influence was out of all proportion of their number.

For two hundred years after the Norman Conquest, French remained the language of ordinary intercourse among the upper classes in England. At first those who spoke French were those of Norman origin, but soon through intermarriage and association with the ruling class, numerous people of English origin must have found it to their advantage to learn the new language. Very soon the distinction between those who spoke French and those who spoke English was not racial but largely social. The language of the masses remained English, and it is reasonable to assume that a French soldier settled on a manor with a few hundred English peasants would soon learn the language of his neighbours.

Use of French in England: Several circumstances promoted the continued use of French in England. The most important factor in the continued use of French by the English upper class until the beginning of the thirteenth century was the close connection that existed through all these years between England and the continent. From the time of the Conquest the kings of England were likewise dukes of Normandy. To the end of his life William the Conqueror seems to have felt more closely attached to his dukedom than to the country he governed by right of conquest. Not only was he buried there, but in dividing his possessions at his death he gave Normandy to his eldest son and England to William, his second son. Later the two domains were united again in the hands of Henry I. Upon the accession of Henry II English possessions in France were still further enlarged. Henry, as count of Anjou, inherited from his father the districts of Anjou and Maine. By his marriage with Eleanor of Aquitaine he came into possession of vast estates in the south, so that when he became king of England he controlled about two thirds of France, all the western part of the country from the English Channel to the Pyrenees.

Under the circumstances it is not surprising that the attention of the English should often be focused upon affairs in France. Indeed English kings often spent a great part of their time there. When we remember that except for Henry I, no English king till Edward IV (1461-83) sought a wife in England, it is easy to see how continentally minded English royalty was and how natural a thing would seem the continued use of French at the English court. What is true of the royal family is equally true of the nobility in general. According to A.C. Baugh, "the English nobility was not so much a nobility of England as an Anglo-French aristocracy". Nearly all the great English landowners had possessions likewise on the continent, frequently contracted continental marriages, and spent much time in France. The preference which the governing class in England showed for French was a natural result of circumstances. English was now an uncultivated tongue, the language of a socially inferior class. But there is also plenty of evidence of mutual respect and peaceful co-operation, to say nothing of intermarriage, between the Normans and the English from the beginning. During the period up to 1200, the attitude of the king and the upper classes toward the English language may be characterized as one of simple indifference. They did not cultivate English – which is not the same as saying that they had no acquaintance with it. Their activities in England did not necessitate it and their constant concern with continental affairs made French for them much more useful. How completely French was the English court at this time is clearly shown by the literature produced for royal and noble patronage. It is interesting to find a considerable body of French literature being produced in England from the beginning of the twelfth century, addressed to English patrons. The court of

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* see Lesson 6 for the Scandinavian influence in Old English

Henry I was the centre of much literary activity. Works of devotion and edification, saints' lives, allegories, chronicles, and romances of Horn, Havelok, Tristan, and other heroes poured forth in the course of the twelfth century. It is indicative of the firm roots which French culture had taken on English soil that so important a body of literature in the French language could be written in or for England, much of it under the direct patronage of the court.

1.7.5 The Fusion of the Two Races

Within a period of a hundred and fifty years the fusion of Normans and English took place. The fusion was rapid, because of national interest and the intercourse of everyday life. This early fusion of French and English in England is quite clear from a variety of evidences. It is evident in the marriage of Normans to English women. Norman nobles identified themselves with their new country founding monasteries on their estates, and chose burial for themselves and their families in their adopted land rather than in Normandy. The fusion seems to have gone forward rapidly in the reign of Henry I, and by the end of the twelfth century an English jurist was able to write: "Now that the English and Normans have been dwelling together, marrying and giving in marriage, the two nations have become so mixed that it is scarcely possible to-day, speaking of free men, to tell who is English, who of Norman race." Only the events of the next century, the loss of Normandy, and the growing antagonism toward France, were necessary to complete the union, psychological, as well as physical of all the inhabitants of England.

1.7.6. The Diffusion of French and English

There is a lot of evidence that French was the language of the court and the upper classes, while English was the speech of the mass of the people. In order to define the position of the two languages more specifically, two questions need to be answered:

(i)   When and how generally did the upper class learn English?
(ii)   How far down in the social scale was a knowledge of French at all general?

(i) Knowledge of English among the upper class: We have already seen that the use of French was not confined to persons of foreign origin, but that all those who were brought into association with the governing class soon acquired a command of it. It was a mark of social distinction. On the other hand the fact that English was the language of the greater part of the population made it altogether likely that many of the upper class would acquire some familiarity with it. The conclusion that seems to be justified by the somewhat scanty facts available about this period is that a knowledge of English was not uncommon at the end of the twelfth century among those who habitually used French; that among churchmen and men of education it was even to be expected; and that among those whose activities brought them into contact with both upper and lower classes the ability to speak both languages was quite general.

(ii) Knowledge of French among the middle class: If by the end of the twelfth century a knowledge of English was not unusual among members of the highest class, it seems equally clear that a knowledge of French was often found somewhat farther down in the social scale. Among

the knightly class French seems   to have been cultivated even when the mother tongue was English. Next to the knights, the inhabitants of towns probably contained the largest number of those among the middle class who knew French.   Thus in the period preceding the loss of Normandy in 1204, there were some who spoke only French and many more who spoke only English. There was likewise a considerable number who were genuinely bilingual as well as many who had some understanding of both languages while speaking only one. In this connection we may recall the situation of Belgium, where the majority of the people can get along in either Flemish of French, regardless of which of the two languages they habitually use.

1.7.7. Changing Conditions after 1200

How long the linguistic situation just described would have continued if the conditions under which it arose had remained undisturbed it is impossible to say. As long as England held her continental territory and the nobility of England were united to the continent by ties of property and kindred a real reason existed for the continued use of French among the governing class in the island. If the English had permanently retained control over the two thirds of France that they once held, French might have remained permanently in use in England. But shortly after 1200 conditions changed. England lost an important part of her possessions abroad. The nobility gradually relinquished their continental estates. A feeling of rivalry developed between the two countries, accompanied by an antiforeign movement in England and culminating in the Hundred Years' War. During the century and a half following the Norman Conquest, French had been not only natural but more or less necessary to the English upper class; in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries its maintenance became increasingly artificial. For a time certain new factors helped it to hold its ground socially and officially. Meanwhile, however, social and economic changes affecting the English-speaking part of the population were taking place, and in the end numbers told. In the fourteenth century English won its way back into universal use, and in the fifteenth century French all but disappeared. We must now examine in detail the steps by which this situation came about.

1.7.8. The Loss of Normandy

The first link in the chain binding England to the continent was broken in 1204 when King John lost Normandy. John, seeing the beautiful Isabel of Angouleme, fell violently in love with her and married her in great haste (1200), inspite of the fact that she was at the time formally betrothed to Hugh of Lusignan, the head of a powerful and ambitious family. To make matters worse John, anticipating hostility from the Lusignans, took the initiative and wantonly attacked them. They appealed for redress to their common overlord, the king of France. Philip saw in the situation an opportunity to embarrass his most irritating vassal. He summoned John (1202) to appear before his court at Paris, but on the day of the trial the English king did not appear, and the court declared his territory confiscated according to feudal law. Philip proceeded at once to carry out the decision of the court and invaded Normandy. In 1204 Rouen surrendered and Normandy was lost to the English crown. So far as it affected the English language, as in other respects as well, the loss of Normandy was wholly advantageous. King and nobles were now forced to look upon England as their first concern. Although England still retained large continental possessions,

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* see Lesson 6 for the Scandinavian influence in Old English

they were in the south of France and had never been so intimately connected by ties of language, blood, and property interests as had Normandy. It gradually became apparent that the island kingdom had its own political and economic ends and that these were not the same as those of France. England was on the way to becoming not merely a geographical term but once more a nation.

1.7.9. Separation of the French and English Nobility

One of the important consequences of the event just described was that it brought to a head the question whether many of the nobility owed their allegiance to England or to France. After the Norman Conquest a large number of men held lands in both contries. A kind of interlocking aristocracy existed, so that it might be difficult for some of the English nobility to say whether they belonged more to England or to the continent. Some steps toward separation of their interests had been taken from time to time. The example of the Conqueror, who left Normandy to his son Robert and England to William Rufus, was occasionally followed by his companions. But in 1204 the process of separation was greatly accelerated. For the most part the families that had estates on both sides of the Channel were compelled to give up one or the other. In some cases the great nobles preferred their vast holdings in England and in others vice versa. In any case, after 1250 there was no reason for the nobility of England to consider itself anything but English. The most valid reason for its use of French was gone.

French Reinforcements: At the very time when the Norman nobility was losing its continental connections and had been led to identify itself wholly with England, the country suffered from a fresh invasion of foreigners, this time mostly from the south of France. The invasion began in the reign of King John, whose wife, mentioned above was from the neighbourhood.   But what began as a mere infiltration in the time of John became a flood in that of his son. Henry III, in spite of his devotion to English saints, was wholly French in his tastes and connections. Not only was he French on his mother's side, but was related through his wife to the French king, St. Louis. So the relations between the royal families of France and England were intimate. As a result of Henry's French connections three great inundations of foreigners poured into England during his reign. The first occurred in the year 1233, during the rule of Peter des Roches, who dismissed all the native officers of his court from their offices, and appointed foreigners from Poitou in their places. In 1236 Henry's marriage to Eleanor of Provence brought a second stream of aliens to England. The new queen inherited among other blessings eight maternal uncles and a generous number of more distant relatives, who came to England. Ten years later, upon the death of his mother, there was a third alien influx, this one, like the first, from Poitou.

1.7.10. The Reaction against Foreigners and the Growth of National Feeling

The excesses of Henry III in his reckless bestowal of favour upon foreigners were not so completely unfavorable to the English language as might be supposed, according to A.C. Baugh (p.157). A reaction was bound to follow. Opposition to the foreigner became the principal ground for such national feeling as existed and drove the barons and the middle class together in a

common cause. The practical outcome of the opposition was the Provisions of Oxford (1258) and their aftermath, the Barons War (1258-65). Twice during these years the foreigners were driven from England, and when peace was finally restored and a little later Edward I (1272-1307) came to the throne we enter upon a period in which England becomes conscious of its unity. At this time the governmental officials were for the most part English and the king, in a summons to parliament (1295), attempted to stir up the feelings of his subjects against the king of France by claiming that it was "his detestable purpose, which God forbid, to wipe out the English tongue."

The effect of the foreign incursions in the thirteenth century was undoubtedly to delay somewhat the natural spread of use of English by the upper classes which had begun. But it was also to arouse such widespread hostility to foreigners. It also made those, who for a generation or several generations had so participated in English affairs as to consider themselves Englishmen, to unite against the newcomers who had flocked to England.

French Cultural Ascendancy in Europe: Another reason for the continued use of French was the wide popularity which the French language enjoyed all over civilized Europe in the thirteenth century. At this time France was commonly regarded as representing chivalrous society in its most polished form, and the French language was an object of cultivation at most of the other courts of Europe, just as it was in the eighteenth century.

1.7.11. English and French in the Thirteenth Century

The thirteenth century must be viewed as a period of shifting emphasis upon the two languages spoken in England. The upper classes continued for the most part to speak French, as they had done in the previous century, but the reasons for doing so were not the same. Instead of being a mother tongue inherited form Norman ancestors French became, as the century wore on, a cultivated tongue supported by social custom and by business and administrative convention. Meanwhile English made steady advances. By the middle of the century, when the separation of the English nobles from their interests in France had been about completed, English was becoming a matter of general use among the upper classes. It is at this time as we shall see in the next lesson, that the adoption of French words into the English language assumes large proportions. The transference of words occurs when those who know French and have been accustomed to use it try to express themselves in English. It is at this time also that the literature intended for polite circles begins to be made over from French into English. Still, there is enough evidence of the continued use of French by the upper class in this century. Even at the close of the century it was used in parliament, in the law courts, in public negotiations generally.

The clearest indication of the extent to which the English language had risen in the social scale by the end of the thirteenth century is furnished by a little treatise written to teach children French—how to speak and how to reply, French is treated as a foreign language and we may feel quite sure that the mother tongue of the children of the nobility in the year 1300 was, in many cases, English. We may sum up the situation by saying that in the latter part of the thirteenth century English was widely known among all classes of people, though not necessarily by every

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* see Lesson 6 for the Scandinavian influence in Old English

one. At the close of the thirteenth century and especially in the course of the next we see clear indications that the French language was losing its hold on England in the measures adopted to keep it in use. The tendency to speak English was becoming constantly stronger even in those two most conservative institutions, the church and the universities.

(i) Provincial Character of French in England. One factor that told against the continued use of French in England was the circumstance that Anglo-French was not "good" French. In the Middle Ages there were four principal dialects of French spoken in France: Norman, Picard (in the northeast), Burgundian (in the east), and the Central French of Paris (the Ile-de-France). The French introduced into England was possibly a mixture of various northern dialectal features, but with Norman predominating, and gradually developed, under the influence of English linguistic tendencies, into something quite different from any of the continental dialects. The difference was noticed quite early. It was the subject of humourous treatment in literature. One might well feel some hesitancy about speaking a language of which one had to be slightly ashamed.

(ii) The Hundred Years' War: The broken connections between England and the continent were followed by a conflict of interests and a growing feeling of antagonism that culminated in a long period of open hostility with France (1337 – 1453). Edward III was forced to invade France. The great victories of the English were followed by a depressing period of reverses. Though the contest was interrupted by long periods of truce, the feeling that remained uppermost in the mind of most people was one of animosity. It was impossible to forget that French was the language of an enemy country, and the Hundred Years' War is probably to be reckoned as one of the causes contributing to the disuse of French.

(iii) The Rise of the Middle Class: A feature of some importance in helping English to recover its former prestige is the improvement in the condition of the mass of the people and the rise of a substantial middle class. As we have seen, the importance of a language is largely determined by the importance of the people who speak it. During the latter part of the Middle English period the condition of the laboring classes was rapidly improving. The process by which these changes were being brought about was greatly accelerated by an event that occurred in the year 1349. In the summer of 1348 there spread in the southwest of England the first cases of a disease that in its contagiousness and fatality exceeded anything previously known. It spread rapidly over the rest of the country. In two or three days the victim usually died. The mortality was unbelievably high and quite sufficient to justify the name "The Black Death". The effects of so great a calamity were naturally serious. The mortality was greatest among the lower classes and the poor and the result was a serious shortage of labour. This is evident in the immediate rise in wages but there was also a general spirit of discontent, which culminated in the Peasonts' Revolt of 1381. By and large, the effect of the Black Death was to increase the economic importance of the Jaboring class and with it the importance of the English language which they spoke.

We may also note at this time the rise of another important group—the craftsmen and the merchant class. By 1250 there had grown up in England about two hundred towns with populations generally of from one to five thousand, some like London or York larger. These became free, self-governing communities electing their own officers, assessing taxes in their own

way, collecting them and paying them to the king. In such an environment there arose in each town an independent, sometimes a wealthy and powerful class, standing halfway between the rural peasant and the hereditary aristocracy. Such changes in the social and economic life benefited particularly the English-speaking part of the population thereby contributing to its final triumph.

1.7.12. General Adoption of English in the Fourteenth Century

An important development at the end of the fourteenth century is that the proceedings of the court (the deposition articles of Richard II, his renouncing the throne and Henry IV's speeches claiming the throne) were read out in Latin and English. The proceedings are conspicuous for the absence of French. There can be no doubt in the light of instances such as these that in the fourteenth century English is again the mother tongue of all England.

English in the Law Courts: In 1362 an important step was taken towards restoring English to its rightful place as the language of the country. For a long time, probably from a date soon after the Conquest, French had been the language of all legal proceedings. But in the fourteenth century such a practice was clearly without justification, and in 1356 the mayor and eldermen of London ordered that proceedings in the Sheriffs' court of London and Middlesex be in English.

English in the Schools: From a time shortly after the Conquest French had replaced English as the language of the schools. After 1349 English began to be used in the schools and by 1385 the practice had become general.

The Use of English in Writing: The last step which the English language had to make in its gradual ascent was its employment in writing. For here it had to meet the competition of Latin as well as French. The use of Latin for written communication and record was partly due to a habit formed at a time when most people who could write at all could write Latin, partly to its international character, and partly to the feeling that it was a language that had become fixed while the modern language seemed to be variable, unregulated, and in a constant state of change. Modern languages began to encroach upon this field of Latin at a time when French was still the language of the educated and the socially prominent. French accordingly is the first language in England to dispute the monopoly of Latin in written matter, and only in the fifteenth century does English succeed in displacing both. English also starts being used in <u>private and semiofficial correspondence</u>; the earliest English letters appear in the latter part of the century. It is rather similar with <u>wills</u>. The fifteenth century also saw the adoption of English for the <u>records of towns and gilds</u> and in a number of branches of the central government. The <u>records of parliament</u> tell a similar story. The <u>petitions of the commons</u>, on which statutes were based if they met with approval, are usually in French down to 1423. After 1423 they are often in English. The statues themselves are generally in Latin down to about 1300, in French until the reign of Henry VII. In 1485 they begin to appear in English alongside of French, and in 1489 French entirely disappears. The reign of Henry V (1413-22) seems to have marked the turning point in the use of English in writing. The example of the king in using English in his letters and other efforts promoted the use of English in writing.

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*   see Lesson 6 for the Scandinavian influence in Old English

1.7.13.Summary

As we understand from this lesson, the Norman Conquest had far-reaching consequences for the English language. This is what is usually referred to as the French influence on English. Originally Teutonic**,** the Normans in the dukedom of Normandy by the time of the Conquest were essentially French in language and civilization. The English nobility was wiped out and replaced by French nobles in government and religion. Thus French was the language of the upper classes while English was the language of the masses. But very soon, through intermarriage and settlement, the distinction between those who spoke English and those who spoke French was not racial but social. Because of close connections with the continent, there was in England not French or English nobility, but a kind of Anglo-French nobility.

Conditions changed after 1200 when the English king and nobles lost their vast possessions in France, and they were forced to look upon England as their nation and English as their sole language. The Hundred years' war with France gave rise to a sense national consciousness and pride. Other factors like improved economic conditions of the working and middle classes led to increased importance for English. Gradually English became the mother tongue of all sections of the people. It started replacing French as the language of the parliament proceedings, official and personal correspondence, of law, and finally in the churches and schools.

The Norman Conquest and its attendant conditions thus had far-reaching consequences on the course of the English language. It resulted in large-scale entry of French vocabulary into English, thus making it a Romance language as much as a Teutonic language. The changes in grammar and vocabulary in the Middle English are discussed in detail in the next lesson.

1.7.14 Sample Questions

1.   Trace the impact of the Norman Conquest on the English language.
2.   What are the conditions during the Middle English period leading to the re-establishment of English in all walks of life in England?
3.   Describe the course of English luring the Middle English period starting with the Norman Conquest.

1.7.15. Suggested Reading

1.   A.C. Baugh.   -   A History of the English Language.
2.   C.L. Wrenn.   -   The English Language.
3.   Simeon Potter.   -   Our Language.
4.   Otto Jesperson. -   Growth and Structure of the English Language.
5.   F.T. Wood.   -   An Outline History of the English Language.

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Lesson – 9

Middle English – II

Structure

1.9.1. Objectives

This lesson will enable the reader to

i.   know about the other foreign elements in English, apart from French
ii. have an idea of the richness of Middle English literature
iii. understand the dialectal diversity in the Middle English period
iv. trace the evolution of Standard English

1.9.2. Introduction

In the previous lesson we have seen some of the more important and obvious changes, which have taken place during the Middle English period. The changes in grammar may be described as a general reduction of inflections of the different word classes. In vocabulary the period saw the addition of thousands of words pertaining to all walks of life from French. In this lesson we shall see how Latin words continued to enter the English words in this period as they did in the Old English period. Many words from the languages of the Low Countries (to which English is related) also have been entering the English language. Another important change is the loss of a large part of the Old English word-stock. At the beginning of the period English is a language which must be learned like a foreign tongue; at the end it is Modern English.

Next the major periods and types of literature written during the Middle English period are discussed. Geoffrey Chaucer is the chief name in this regard. Finally the main dialects during this

period are outlined while noting the preeminence of the East Midland dialect. The evolution of Standard English and the factors contributing to it have also been discussed in detail.

1.9.3. Loss of Native Words

There seems to be a certain sense of economy which characterizes people in their use of language and causes them to get rid of a word when its function is fully performed by some other word. After the Norman Conquest duplications frequently resulted, for many of the French words that came into use bore meanings already expressed by a native word. In such cases one of two things happened: of the two words one was eventually lost, or, where both survived, they were differentiated in meaning. In some cases the French word disappeared, but in a great many cases it was the Old English word that died out. The substitution was not always immediate; often both words continued in use for a longer or shorter time, and the English word occasionally survives in the dialects today. Thus the O.E. *ēam,* which has been replaced in the standard speech by the French word *uncle,*is still in use (*eme*) in Scotland. The O.E. *anda* contested its position with the French *envy* until the time of Chaucer, but eventually lost out and with it went the adjective *andig* (envious) and the verb *andian* (to envy). The O.E. *æþele* yielded to F. *noble,* and *æþeling* became *nobleman.* In this way many common Old English words succumbed.

Other common words that were lost may be illustrated by *ādl* (disease), *ieldu* (age), *lof* (praise), *lyft* (air), *hold* (gracious), *earm* (poor), *slīpe* (cruel), *gecynde* (natural), *wuldor* (glory) with its adjective *wulding (glorious),* and *wlite* (beauty), *wltig* (beautiful). In all these cases the place of the English word was taken by the word in parentheses, introduced from French. Many common verbs died out in the same way, such as *andettan* (confess), *beorgan* (reserve, defend), *bieldan* and *elnian* (encourage), *dihtan* (compose), *flītan* (contend, dialectal flite), *gōdian* (improve), *healsian* (implore), *herian* (praise), *lēanian* (reward), *belīfan* (remain), *miltsian* (pity). Here likewise the words in parentheses are the French verbs that replaced the native word. But not all the Old English words that have disappeared were driven out by French equivalents. Some gave way to other more or less synonymous words in Old English. Many independently fell into disuse. Nevertheless the enormous invasion of French words not only took the place of many English words that had been lost but itself accounts for a great many of the losses from the Old English vocabulary.

1.9.4. Differentiation in Meaning

Where both the English and the French words survived they were generally differentiated in meaning. The words *doom* and *judgment*, to *deem* and to *judge* are examples. In O.E. dēma (judge), dēman (to judge), and dōm (judgement) gave way to the French words in matters of law, but we still use *deem* in the sense of to hold an opinion, and *dōm* has survived in special senses as in <u>the day of the doom etc</u>. In the fifteenth century *hearty* and *cordial* came to be used for feelings which were supposed to spring from the heart. We use them with a slight difference in meaning, *hearty* implying a certain physical vigor and downrightness, as in a *hearty dinner; cordial* a more quiet or conventional manifestation, as in a *cordial reception.* In the same way we have kept a number of words for *smell.* The common word in Old English was *stench.* During the Middle English period this was supplemented by the word *smell* (of unknown origin) and the

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French words *aroma, odor,* and *scent*. To these we have since added *stink* (for the verb) and *perfume and fragrance,* from French. Most of these have special connotations and *smell* has become the general word. *Stench* now always means an unpleasant smell. An interesting group of words illustrating the principle is *ox, sheep, swine,* and *calf* beside the French equivalents *beef, mutton, pork,* and *veal.* The French words primarily denoted the animal, as they still do, but in English they were used from the beginning to distinguish the meat from the living beast. Other cases of differentiation are English *house* beside *mansion* from French, *might* beside *power,* and the pairs *ask—demand, shun—avoid, seethe—boil, wish-desire.* In most of these cases where duplication occurred the French word, when it came into English, was a close synonym of the corresponding English word. The discrimination between them has been a matter of gradual growth, but it justifies the retention of both words in the language.

1.9.5. Curtailment of Old English Processes of Derivation

Since language is a form of human activity it often displays habits or tendencies which one recognizes as characteristic of the speech of a given people at a given time. These habits may be altered by circumstances. As we have already seen in Lesson 5 Old English, like other Indo-European languages, enlarged its vocabulary chiefly by a liberal use of prefixes and suffixes and an easy power of combining native elements into self-interpreting compounds. In this way the existing resources of the language were expanded at will and any new needs were met. In the centuries following the Norman Conquest, however, there is a visible decline in the use of these old methods of word-formation.

Prefixes. This is first of all apparent in the matter of prefixes. Many of the Old English prefixes gradually lost their vitality, their ability to enter into new combinations. The Old English prefix *for-* (corresponding to German *ver-*) was often used to intensify the meaning of a verb or to add the idea of something destructive or prejudicial. For a while during the Middle English period it continued to be used occasionally in new formations. Thus at about 1300 we find *forhang* (put to death by hanging), *forcleave* (cut to pieces), and *forshake* (shake off). It was even combined with words borrowed from French: *forcover, forbar, forgab* (deride), *fortravail* (tire). None of these new formations lived long, and the prefix is now entirely obsolete. The only verbs in which it occurs in Modern English are *forbear, forbid, fordo, forget, forgive, forgo, forsake, forswear,* and the participle *forlorn.* All of them had their origin in Old English. The prefix *to-* (German *zer-*) has disappeared even more completely. While the 1611 Bible has "all tobrake his skull", and expressions like *tomelt* and *toburst* lived on for a time, there is no trace of the prefix in current use. *With-* (meaning *against)* gave a few new words in Middle English such as *withdraw, withgo, withsake,* etc. *Withdraw* and *withhold* survive, together with Old English *withstand,* but other equally useful words have been replaced by later borrowings from Latin: *withsay* by *renounce, withspeak* by *contradict, withset* by *resist,* etc. Some prefixes which are still productive today, like *over-* and *under-,* fell into comparative disuse for a time after the Norman Conquest. Most compounds of *over-* which are not of Old English origin have arisen in the modern period. The prefix *on- (now un-),* which was used to reverse the action of a verb as in *unbind, undo, unfold, unwind,* and which in Middle English gave us *unfasten, unbuckle, uncover,* and *unwrap.* The productive power which these formative elements once enjoyed has in many cases been transferred to prefixes like *counter-, dis-, re-, trans-,* etc, of Latin origin. It is possible that some

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of them would have gone out of use had there been no Norman Conquest, but when we see their disuse keeping pace with the increase of the French element in the language, it is impossible to doubt that the wealth of easily acquired new words had weakened English habits of word-formation.

Suffixes. A similar decline is observable in the formative power of certain suffixes which were widely used in Old English. The loss here is perhaps less distinctly felt because some important endings have remained in full force. Such are the noun suffix *-ness* and the adjective endings *–ful*, *-less, -some,* and *–ish.*   But others equally important were either lost or greatly diminished in vitality. Thus the abstract suffix *-lock* (O.E.*lāc)* survives only in *wedlock*, *-red* (O.E. *ræden)* only in *hatred* and *kindred.* The ending *–dom* was used in Old English to form abstract nouns from other nouns *(kingdom, earldom, martyrdom)* and from adjectives *(freedom wisdom).* In Middle English there are some new formations such as *dukedom* and *thralldom,* but the suffix is to all intents and purposes now dead. When used today it is for the most part employed in half serious coinages, such as *fandom, stardom, topsy-turvydom.* The endings *–hood* and *–ship* have had a similar history. *Manhood, womanhood, likelihood* are new formations in Middle English showing that the suffix retained its power for a while. In fact it occasionally reasserts itself in modern times. *Boyhood and girlhood* date from the eighteenth century. Many of the Old English abstracts in *–ship* were lost. We have kept *friendsjhip* but not *fiendship,* and of those formed from adjectives in Old English the only one still in use is *worship* (worthship). Most of the new formations in Middle English had a short life. We have retained *hardship* but not *boldshp, busiship, cleanship, kindship,* etc. In all these instances the ending *–ness* was preferred. As in the case of prefixes we can see here a gradual change in English habits of word-formation resulting from the available supply of French words with which to fill the needs formerly met by the native resources of the language.

Self-explaining Compounds. One further habit which was somewhat weakened, although by no means broken, was that of combining native words into self-interpreting compounds. The practice was not abandoned in Middle English, but in many cases where a new word could have been easily formed on the native model, a ready made French word was borrowed instead.

It must not be thought that the extensive modification of the English language caused by the Norman Conquest had made of it something else than English. The language had undergone much simplification of its inflections, but its grammar was still English. It had absorbed several thousand French words as a natural consequence of a situation in which large numbers of people were for a time bilingual and then gradually turned from the habitual use of French to the habitual use of English.   It had lost a great many native words and abandoned some of its most characteristic habits of word-formation. Bu\t great and basic elements of the vocabulary were still English. The language which the Normans and their successors finally adopted was English, and while it was an English changed in many important particulars from the language of King Alfred, its predominant features were those inherited from the Teutonic tribes that settled England in the fifth century.

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1.9.6. Latin Borrowings in Middle English

The influence of the Norman Conquest is generally known as the Latin Influence of the Third Period in recognition of the ultimate source of the new French words. But it is right to include also under this designation the large number of words borrowed directly from Latin in Middle English. These differed from the French borrowings in being less popular and in gaining admission generally through the written language. Of course, it must not be forgotten that Latin was a spoken language among ecclesiastics and men of learning , and a certain number of Latin words could well have passed directly into spoken English. Their number, however, is small in comparison with those that we can observe entering by way of literature. The fourteenth and fifteenth centuries were especially prolific in Latin borrowings. Wycliffe and his associates are credited with more than a thousand Latin words not previously found in English. Since many of them occur in the so-called Wycliffe translation of the Bible and have been retained in subsequent translations, they have passed into common use. Many of them were but passing experiments. Nevertheless the permanent additions form Latin to the English vocabulary in this period are much larger than has generally been realized.

Some idea of their range and character may be gained form a selected but miscellaneous list of examples: *abject, adjacent, allegory, conspiracy, contempt, custody, distract, frustrate, genius, gesture, history, homicide, immune, incarnate, include, incredible, includes, incumbent, index, individual, infancy, inferior, infinite, innate, innumerable, intellect, interrupt, juniper, lapidary, legal, limbo, lucrative, lunatic, magnify, malefactor, mechanical, minor, missal, moderate, necessary, nervous, notary, ornate, picture, polite, popular, prevent, private, project, promote, prosecute, prosody, pulpit, quiet, rational, reject, remit, reprehend, rosary, script, scripture, scrutiny, secular, solar, solitary, spacious, stupor, subdivide, subjugate, submit, subordinate, subscribe, substitute, summary, superabundance, supplicate, suppress, temperate, temporal, testify, testimony, tincture, tract, tributary, ulcer, zenith, zephyr.* Here we have terms relating to law, medicine, theology, science, and literature, words often justified in the beginning by technical or professional use and later acquiring a wider application. Among them may be noticed several with endings like *–able, -ible, -ent, -al, -ous, -ive,* and others, which thus became familiar in English and, reinforced often by French, now form common elements in English derivatives. All the words in the above list are direct borrowings from Latin. But in many cases Latin words were being borrowed by French at the same time and the adoption of a word in English may often have been due to the impact of both languages.

Aureate Terms.   The introduction of unusual words form Latin (and occasionally elsewhere) became a conscious stylistic device in the fifteenth century, extensively used by poets and occasionally by writers of prose.   By means of such words as *abusion, dispone, diurne, equipollent, palestral, tenebrous,* poets attempted what has been described as a kind of stylistic gilding and this feature of their language is accordingly known as 'aureate diction'. The novelty which was sought after, and which such words had in the beginning, wore off with use; and words which were 'aureate' in Chaucer, like *laureate, mediation, oriental, prolixity,* have sometimes become part of the common speech. These innovations are of considerable interest in the history of style, but seen only as a minor current in the Latin borrowings in the history of language.

Language has need for the simple, the polished, and even the recondite word. The richness of English in synonyms is largely due to the happy mingling of Latin, French, and native elements. It has been said that we have a synonym at each level – popular, literary, and learned. While this statement must not be taken too far, a difference is often apparent, as in *rise—mount—ascend, ask—-question—interrogate, goodness—virtue—probity, fast—firm—secure, fire—flame—conflagration, fear—terror—trepidation, holy—sacred—consecrated, time—age—epoch.* In each of these sets of three words the first is English, the second is from French, and the third from Latin. The difference in tone between the English and the French words is often slight; the Latin word is generally more bookish.

1.9.7. Words from the Low Countries

The importance of the Romance element in English has overshadowed and caused to be neglected another source of foreign words in the vocabulary, the languages of the Low Countries—Flemish, Dutch, and Low German. The similarity of these languages to English makes it difficult often to tell whether a word has been adopted from one of them or is of native origin. Moreover, the influence was not the result of some single cause, like the introduction of Christianity or the Norman Conquest, confined more or less to a given period of time, but was rather a gradual infiltration due to the constant and close relations between England and the people of Flanders, Holland, and northern German. This intercourse extends from the days of William the Conqueror, whose wife was Flemish, down to the eighteenth century. All through the middle ages Flemings came to England in considerable numbers. In the English wars at home and abroad we repeatedly find Flemish mercenaries fighting with the English forces. Others came for more peaceful purposes and settled in the country. The woolen industry was the major industry of England with the Dutch and the Flemish in the Middle Ages. Thus there were many favoruable conditions for the introduction of Low German words into English. At the end of the Middle Ages we find entering the language such words as *nap* (of cloth), *deck, bowspirit*, *lighter, dock, freight, rover, mart, groat, guilder.* Later borrowings include *cambric, duck* (cloth), *boom* (of a boat), *beleaguer, furlough, commodore, gin, gherkin, dollar.* Dutch eminence in art is responsible for *easel, etching, landscape,* while Dutch settlers in America seem to have caused the adoption of *cruller, cookie, cranberry, bowery, boodle,* and other words. The latest study of the Low Dutch element in English considers some 2500 words.

1.9.8. The Middle English Dialects

One of the striking characteristics of Middle English is its great variety in the different parts of England. This variety was not confined, as it is to a great extent today, to the forms of the spoken language, but appears equally in the written literature. In the absence of any recognized literary standard before the close of the period writers naturally wrote in the dialect of that part of the country to which they belonged.

The language differed almost from county to county, and noticeable variations are sometimes   observable between different parts of the same county. The features characteristic of a given dialect do not all cover the same territory; some extend into adjoining districts or may be characteristic also of another dialect. Consequently it is rather difficult to decide how many dialectal divisions should be recognized. In a rough way, however, it is customary to distinguish

four principal dialects of Middle English: *Northern, East Midland, West Midland,* and *Southern.* Generally speaking, the Northern dialect extends as far south as the Humber river; East Midland and West Midland together cover the area between the Humber and the Thames; and Southern occupies the district south of the Thames, together with Gloucestershire and parts of the counties of Worcester and Hereford, thus taking in the West Saxon and Kentish districts of Old English. Throughout the Middle English period and later, Kentish preserves individual features marking if off as a distinct variety of Southern English.

The peculiarities that distinguish these dialects are partly matters of pronunciation, partly of vocabulary, partly of inflection. A few illustrations will give some idea of the nature and extent of the difference. The feature most easily recognized is the ending of the third person plural, present indicative, of verbs. In Old English this form always ended in –*th* with some variation of the preceding vowel. In Middle English this ending was preserved as –*eth* in the Southern dialect. In the Midland district, however, it was replaced by –*en*, probably taken over from the corresponding forms of the imperfect and the subjunctive or from preterite-present verbs and the verb to *be,* while in the north it was altered to –*es,* an ending that makes its appearance in Old English times. Thus we have *loves* in the north, *loven* in the Midlands, and *loveth* in the south, Another fairly distinctive form is the present participle before the spread of the ending –*ing.* In the north we have *lovande,* in the Midlands *lovende,* and in the south *lovinde.* In later Middle English the ending –*ing* appears in the Midlands and the south, thus obscuring the dialectal distinction. Dialectal differences are more noticeable between Northern and Southern; the Midland dialect often occupies an intermediate position.

Thus the characteristic forms of the pronoun *they* in the south were *hi, here* (hire, hure), *hem* while in the north forms with *th-* (modern *they, their, them*) early became predominant. In matters of pronunciation the Northern and Southern dialects sometimes presented notable differences. Thus O.E. *ā*, which developed into an $\bar{g}$ south of the Humber, was retained in the north, giving us such characteristic forms as Southern *stone* and *home*, beside *stane* and *hame* in Scotland today. Initial and *f* and *s* were often voiced in the south to *v* and *z.* In Southern Middle English we find *vor, vrom, vox, vorzope* instead of *for, from, fox, forso*e (forsooth). This dialectal difference is preserved in Modern English *fox* and *vixen,* where the former represents the Northern and Midland pronunciation and the latter the Southern. Similarly *ch* in the south often corresponds to a *k* in the north: *bench* beside *benk*, or *church* beside *kirk*. Such variety was fortunately lessened towards the end of the Middle English period by the general adoption of a standard written (and later spoken) English.

1.9.9. The Rise of Standard English

Out of this variety of local dialects there emerged towards the end of the fourteenth century a written language that in the course of the fifteenth won general recognition and has since become the recognized standard in both speech and writing. The part of England that contributed most to the formation of this standard was the East Midland district, and it was the East Midland type of the English that became its basis, particularly the dialect of the metropolis, London. To the attainment of this result several causes contributed.

(i) Middle position of East Midland dialect: In the first place, as a Midland dialect the English of this region occupied a middle position between the extreme divergences of the north and south. It was less conservative than the Southern dialect, less radical than the Northern. In its sounds and inflections it represents a kind of compromise, sharing some of the characteristics of both its neighbors.

(ii) East Midland district: In the second place, the East Midland district was the larger and most populous of the major dialect areas. The land was more valuable than the hilly country to the north and west, and in an agricultural age this advantage was reflected in both the number and the prosperity of the inhabitants. The prominence of Middlesex, Oxford, Norfolk, and the East Midlands generally in political affairs all through the later Middle Ages is but another evidence of the importance of the district and of the extent of its influence.

(iii) The Universities: A third factor, more difficult to evaluate, was the presence of the universities, Oxford and Cambridge, in this region. In the fourteenth century the monasteries were playing a less important role in the dissemination of learning than they had once played, while the two universities had developed into important intellectual centers. So far as Cambridge is concerned any influence which it had would be exerted in support of the East Midland dialect. That of Oxford is less certain since Oxfordshire is on the border between Midland and Southern and its dialect shows certain characteristic southern features. We can say that the dialect of Oxford had no apparent influence on the form of London English, which was ultimately adopted as standard. Such support as the East Midland type of the English received from the universities must have been largely confined to that furnished by Cambridge. Much the same uncertainty attaches to the influence of Chaucer. It was once thought that Chaucer's importance was paramount among the influences bringing about the adoption of a written standard. But it is nevertheless unlikely that the English used in official records and in letters and papers by men of affairs was greatly influenced by the language of his poetry. Yet it is the language found in such documents rather than the language of Chaucer that is at the basis of Standard English. Chaucer was a court poet and his usage may reflect the speech of the court and to a certain extent literary tradition. According to A.C. Baugh, "his influence must be thought of as lending support in a general way to the dialect of the region to which he belonged rather than as determining the precise form which Standard English was to take in the century following his death."

(iv) The Importance of London English: By far the most influential factor in the rise of Standard English was the importance of London as the capital of England. Indeed, it is altogether likely that the language of the city would have become the prevailing dialect without the help of any of the factors previously discussed. In doing so it would have been following the course of other national tongues—French as the dialect of Paris, Spanish as that of Castile, etc. London was and still is, the political and commercial centre of England. It was the seat of the court, of the highest judicial tribunals, the focus of the social and intellectual activities of the country. To it were drawn in a constant stream those whose affairs took them beyond the limits of their provincial homes. They brought to it traits of their local speech, there to mingle with the London idiom and to survive or die as the silent forces of amalgamation and standardization determined.

They took back with them the forms and usages of the great city by which their own speech had been modified. The influence was reciprocal; London English took as well as gave. It began as a Southern and ended as a Midland dialect. By the fifteenth century there had come to prevail in the East Midlands a fairly uniform dialect and the language of London agrees in all important respects with it. The history of Standard English is almost a history of London English, as A.C. Baugh says.

(v) The Spread of the London Standard: In the latter part of the fifteenth century the London standard had been accepted, at least in writing, in most parts of the country. With the introduction of printing in 1476 a new influence of great importance in the dissemination of London English came into play. From the beginning London has been the centre of book publishing in England. Caxton, the first English printer, in his numerous translations used the current speech of London, and the books that issued from his press and from the presses of his successors gave a currency to London English that assured more than anything else its rapid adoption. In the sixteenth century the use of London English had become a matter of precept as well as practice. But of course, it would be a mistake to think that complete uniformity was attained within the space of a few generations.

1.9.10.   Middle English Literature

The literature written in England during the Middle English period reflects fairly accurately the changing fortunes of English. During the time that French was the language best understood by the upper classes the books they read or listened to were in French. All of continental French literature was available for their enjoyment, and we have seen above how this source was supplemented by an important body of French poetry written in England (See Lesson 7). The rewards of patronage were seldom to be expected by those who wrote in English. Such incentives were most often found among members of the religious body, interested in promoting right living and in the care of souls. Accordingly, the literature in English that has come down to us from this period (1150-1250) is almost exclusively religious. *The Ancrene Riwle, The Ormulum (*c. 1200), a series of paraphrases and interpretations of Gospel passages, and a group of saints' lives are the principal works of this class. There was certainly a body of popular literature that circulated orally among the people, just as at a later date the English and Scottish popular ballads did, but such literature has left slight traces in this early period. The hundred years from 1150 to 1250 have been justly called the *Period of Religious Record*. What should be noted is the absence in English of works appealing to courtly tastes that marks the English language at this time as the language of the middle and lower classes.

The separation of the English nobility from France by about 1250 and the spread of English among the upper class is manifest in the next hundred years of English literature. Types of polite literature which had hitherto sufficed in French now appear in English. Of these types the most popular was the romance. Translations and adaptations from the French begin to be made, and in the course of the fourteenth century their number becomes really large. The religious literature characteristic of the previous period continues; but we now have other types as well. The period from 1250 is a *Period of Religious and Secular Literature* in English and indicates

clearly the wider diffusion of the English language. The general adoption of English by all classes, which had taken place by the latter half of the fourteenth century, gave rise to a body of literature which represents the high point in English literary achievement in the Middle Ages. The period from 1350 to 1400 has been called the *Period of Great Individual Writers*. The chief name is that of Geoffrey Chaucer (1340-1400), the greatest English poet before Shakespeare. Not to mention his delightful minor poems, he is the author of a long narrative poem telling the story of the unhappy love of *Troilus and Criseyde.* The most famous of his works. *The Canterbury Tales,* which besides giving us in the general prologue matchless portrait gallery of contemporary types, constitutes in the variety of the tales of veritable anthology of medieval literature. To this period belong William Langland, the reputed author of a long social allegory *Piers Plowman* (1362-87), John Wycliffe (d. 1384), putative translator of the Bible and author of a large and influential body of controversial prose, and the unknown poet who wrote not only the finest of the Middle English romances, *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, but three allegorical and religious poems of great beauty.

The fifteenth century is sometimes known as the *Imitative Period* since much of the poetry now written was written in emulation of Chaucer. It is also spoken of as a *Transition Period* since it covers a large part of the interval between the age of Chaucer and the age of Shakespeare. The period has been unjustly neglected. Beside writers like Lydgate, Hoccleve, Skelton, and Hawes we have the prose of Malory and Caxton. In the north the Scottish Chaucerians, particularly Henryson, Dunbar, Gawin Douglas, and Lindsay, produced significant work. These men carry on the tradition of English as a literary medium into the Renaissance. Thus, except in the fifteenth century, when little further extension of English was possible, Middle English literature follows and throws interesting light on the fortunes of the English language.

1.9.11.Summary

In this lesson we have focused our attention on the consequences of such large-scale influx of French vocabulary. The English language lost many words belonging to the native stock. There was a weakening of processes of derivation of new words (by prefixes, suffixes and compounding) so predominant in Old English. Instead there was preference to adopt a readymade French word. Where words from both languages survived, there came about a differentiation of meaning. As in Old English, Latin was the other major source of loan words. The languages of the Low countries also have been influencing English over a period of time.

We also looked at the dialectal position during Middle English period and traced the factors contributing to the rise of the East Midland dialect of the language towards the end of the fourteenth century. The invention of the printing press helped to spread the standard dialect to other regions of England. We finished by having an idea of the literature written in English during the Middle English period.

1.9.12. Sample Questions:

1. Trace the evolution of Standard English.

2. Write a note on Middle English literature.

3. Discuss the changes taking place in English linguistic habits as a consequence of large-scale borrowing of French and Latin words.

1.9.13. Suggested Reading:

1.   A.C. Baugh.   -   A History of the English Language.

2.   C.L. Wrenn.   -   The English Language.

3.   Simeon Potter.   -   Our Language.

4.   Otto Jesperson.   -   Growth and Structure of the English Language.

5.   H.C. Wyld.   -   A Short History of English.

Dr. K. Ratna Shiela Mani

Lesson - 10

The Renaissance Period - I

Structure

1.10.1 Objectives

After going through this lesson you will be able to understand

- changing conditions in Renaissance England
- how English came to be established as a creditable language
- changes in English spelling and the factors that shaped them
- how enrichment of English took place through borrowings and adaptations

1.10.2 Introduction

The Renaissance can be described as the cultural revival and beginning of modern science in Europe between the fourteenth and the seventeenth centuries. It is a great period of vigorous artistic and intellectual activity. If we look for specific historical beginnings of the Renaissance it is the year 1453 in which Constantinople, the seat of European learning, fell to the Turks. The scholars who had been living and working there fled to Western Europe, bringing with them much of their libraries. They settled at first mainly in Germany and Italy and that is how what we call now the Renaissance, that intellectual awakening of Europe started. The event had far-reaching effects in many countries of Europe. The full flood of the new learning reached England about the year 1500 and it had a marked influence upon the language and literature. About its impact on language F.T.Wood remarks thus in *An Outline History of the English Language*.

> So far as language is concerned, of course, many of the developments would have taken place without the impact of the Renaissance; but the new scholarship and all that it implied did produce new forces and add new words to the tendencies which were already discernible in the Middle English period, and therefore we are justified in regarding it as marking the beginning of the modern age in the history of the English language (p.89).

1.10.3 Changing Conditions

As far as language is concerned the beginning of the Modern English period is conveniently placed at 1500. At this time, some new conditions came into play which affected the growth of language in new directions and also accelerated the development of certain existing tendencies in language. According to A.C.Baugh, "the new factors were the printing press, the rapid spread of popular education, the increased communication and means of communication, and the growth of what may be called social consciousness. "

William Caxton who learned the process of printing on the continent introduced it in England in 1476 by establishing a printing press at Westminster. Printing made such a rapid progress that within a century people almost stopped using manuscript books. The progress of printing was so rapid that the number of books printed in Europe reached a great 35,000. Though most of them were in Latin, the effect of printing press was chiefly felt in modern languages. In England 20,000 titles appeared by 1640. The result was books which were a privilege of a few people earlier, came within the reach of a large number of men. It also made possible production of a thousand or a hundred thousand copies of a book in exactly the same form. And so A.C.Baugh remarks, "A powerful force thus existed for promoting a standard, uniform language, and the means were now available for spreading that language throughout the territory in which it was understood" (p.241).

Printing could make an immediate impact on language because of an important cultural factor. Education was making rapid progress and literacy was becoming much more common. It was roughly estimated that no less than a third of the people could read in Shakespeare's London. Thus education could facilitate the far-reaching influence of the printing press.

According to F.T.Wood three aspects of the influence of the printing press on language are significant.

1. It tended to establish a 'standard' language and to discredit dialects. Previously, as we have seen, though the East Midland dialect had for some while been gaining the ascendancy, each dialect had its own literature and authors tended to write in the language which was spoken in their own part of the country.   Printing altered this. Henceforth dialects bore the brand of inferiority, and though they continued to be spoken, they fell out of literary use.

2. It served to popularize and give currency to new coinages and newly introduced words. When a term 'got into print' it had become an accepted part of the language and was not confined to a small group of persons or to one part of the country.

3. It tended to fix spelling, about which there had been a great deal of uncertainty before. The publication of Johnson's Dictionary in the middle of the eighteenth century, of course was the really decisive factor here, but Caxton did manage to impose some kind of standardisation and to reduce the former chaos to something like order (p.93-94).

If these are the effects of introduction of printing press on English language, rapid means of transport and communication, and rise of social consciousness had their impact on language too. Means of transport and communication brought different parts of the world together stimulating the growth of language and similar is the effect of British Colonisation and expansion of trade. Diversification is one of the results of transportation while unification also resulted from easy travel and communication. The steamship, trains, and automobile brought together peoples isolated earlier while the post office, the telephone, the radio and talking film lead to intermingling of language and lessening of regional idiosyncrasies. Similarly we see class variation in language too decreasing because of greater intermingling of classes due to the rising middle class aspirations. Since rigidity between social classes has given place to freer play, an individual waiting to move into a higher class made efforts to adopt the standards of grammar and pronunciation of people with whom he wanted to be identified. The careful adoption of manners and speech of a higher class and awareness that there are standards of language has thus become an individual's part of social consciousness.

The forces mentioned above, spread of education, introduction of printing, improved modes of travel and communication and social consciousness could be described as both radical and conservative influences on language, radical in matters of vocabulary and conservative in matters of grammar. These forces promoted change in vocabulary and preserved mostly the existing status in grammar. Printing press, reading habit and all forms of communication facilitated the spread of ideas and stimulated the growth of vocabulary. But the same factors together with social consciousness worked actively towards the maintenance of a standard, especially in grammar and usage. Education exerted its influence not only through formal instruction in language – grammar, spelling, pronunciation, etc. – but also made easier the internalisation in men of a more or less standard English through books, magazines, and newspapers. Thus in modern times changes in grammar have been relatively slight and changes in vocabulary extensive. This is just the reverse of changes in the Middle English period in which the changes in grammar were revolutionary and in vocabulary limited except during the Norman Conquest.

1.10.4 The Problem of the Vernaculars

Due to the Norman Conquest, the development of language took place under peculiar conditions in England during the Middle ages. By the close of the Middle English period, the history of all important languages in Europe runs parallel in many ways. According to A.C.Baugh the modern languages faced three great problems in the sixteenth century. These are

  i. recognition in the fields where Latin had for centuries been supreme,
  ii. the establishment of a more uniform orthography, and
  iii. the enrichment of the vocabulary so that it would be adequate to meet the demands
      that would be made upon it in its wider use (p.244).

Each of these problems were considered extensively in the Renaissance England but they were also discussed in the same way in France, Italy, Germany and Spain. Italy had the additional

task of deciding upon the basis of her literary dialect, an issue which was resolved easily in France and England by the ascendancy of Paris and London.

Though English and other modern languages were acceptable as languages of popular literature, there was still a strong tradition which sanctioned the use of Latin in all fields of knowledge. This tradition was strengthened during the Renaissance in which people evinced great interest in the poetry, oratory and philosophy of classical languages. Greek and Latin were also the repository of the world's knowledge. Latin also had the advantage of universal currency, so that the educated all over Europe could freely communicate with each other in it. Beside the classical languages, which seemingly had attained perfection, the other languages seemed vulgar, immature, unpolished and limited in resource. Scholars alone had access to this worthy language and they jealously defended the classical tradition. They feared that the study of classical languages, and even education itself would suffer if the use of the vernaculars were carried too far. Many felt it would be dangerous if matters like the disputes of theology and discussions in medicine fell into the hands of the indiscreet.

Against this tradition, there were many who defended the use of modern languages in all fields of learning. In England there were many who defended English against those who wished to discriminate against it. Those are Elyot, Ascham, Wilson, Puttenham and Mulcaster. Of the champions of English the most enthusiastic was Richard Mulcastor, the Head Master of the Merchant Taylor's School. He defended English thus:

> But why not all in English, a tung it self both depe in conceit, and frank in deliverie? I do not think that anie language, be it whatsoever, is better able to utter all arguments, either with more pith, or greater planesse, then our English tung is, if the English utterer be as skilful in the matter, which he is to utter: as the foren utterer is. (A.C.Baugh, p.245).

Such statements expressed a widespread demand for English. The Revival of Learning brought to the notice of people the rich store of knowledge and experience preserved from the civilizations of Greece and Rome. There was much to be learned from their discussions of conduct and ethics, their ideas of government and the state, their theories of politics and education, their knowledge of military science and so on. If this knowledge remained the prerogative of scholars, it would have had a limited effect. If the others like diplomats, and courtiers had to profit by it, it had to be expressed in the language read by everybody.

Translations from Greek and Latin into English played a significant role in taking the knowledge to ordinary people. Translations of political writing, philosophy and literature of ancient, medieval and contemporary times poured from the writers we are familiar with. The significant names here are Aristotle, Cicero, Seneca, Virgil, Ovid, Horace, Homer, Erasmus, Calvin and Martin Luther. A.C.Baugh is right in remarking, "It would seem that while scholars were debating the merits of Latin and English the issue was being decided by the translators" (p.247).

The modern languages won recognition finally but after a struggle. Religious leaders, scholars and writers wanted to reach large number of people in the language they understood best. At the end of the century English slowly won recognition as a language of serious thought. A note of patriotic feeling and Protestant Reformation also contributed to this. We have to keep in mind that Wycliff refused to carry out his battle with Church in Latin and took his cause directly to the people in their own tongue, i.e., English. Now the need arose to make English meet further demands made on it both in speech and writing. Finally a number of combined forces such as democratizing social process, spread of education, large scale translations from Latin and Greek, rising national pride have tipped the scales in favour of English.

1.10.5 Orthography

One of the charges made against English in the sixteenth century is the instability, which was attributed to the variability of its spelling. Orthography, spelling or right writing was an important subject not just for the English, but for the French and the Italians also at this time. In these languages there was no generally accepted system that everybody could conform to. The English spelling in particular was neither phonetic nor fixed. Spelling of Modern languages in the Middle Ages tried to represent the pronunciation of words with a fair degree of success. It is also true of English inspite of the fact that Norman scribes introduced considerable confusion when they tried to write a language they imperfectly knew. The confusion increased when certain spellings gradually became conventional and the pronunciation changed slowly. In some cases a further discrepancy arose between sound and symbol, when letters were introduced where they were not pronounced like the b in debt or doubt because the similar word in Latin was spelled debitum and dubitare or when gh is introduced in delight and light on the analogy of light and night. In light and night, gh was actually pronounced earlier. To many English spelling seemed chaotic because of the above factors.

In reality, there were limits to the consistency and variability of English but it was not actually choatic. Except in the case of popular playwrights and pamphleteers, there was more or less a common core of practice by 1550. The average man of education in Shakespeare's day did not spell by mere whim or caprice but had formed fairly constant spelling habits. Such habits were personal and each individual's habit differed from the next man's. But each writer showed a fair degree of consistency within his own practice.

The sixteenth century efforts to draw up rules and to devise new systems show that bringing about greater agreement in the writing of English is a major issue. But not all attempts at phonetic writing found favour with people. Thomas Smith in 1568, John Hart in 1570 and William Bullokar in 1580 wrote books on English Orthography, each advocating his own system of reform. Smith's work was in Latin, he increased the alphabet to thirty four letters and he marked the long vowels. Hart made use of special characters for ch, sh, th etc. Bullokar invented few special characters but made liberal use of accents, apostrophes and numerous hooks above and below the letters.

More than the work of any of the above writers, it was Elementarie (1582) by Richard Mulcaster which won acceptance. He saw the futility of making English spelling phonetic in any

scientific sense. Moreover he was willing to compromise between the ideal and practical. He did not believe that English spelling needed desperate remedies nor did he try to correct an existing difficulty by substituting a new one. Since the differences between one sound and another were often too subtle, he saw that the same letter must sometimes represent different sounds. Another difficulty he saw was that pronunciation constantly changes. He thought phonetic reformers' systems were too cumbersome to follow. The basis of his reform was custom or usage and he thought it would be easily acceptable to people. These were some of the improvements to the existing English phonetic system he suggested.

a) To get rid of superfluous letters in <u>putt</u>, <u>ledd</u> and <u>grubb.</u>
b) Must not omit necessary letters such as <u>t</u> in <u>fetch</u> or <u>scratch</u>
c) Double consonants are allowed only when they belonged to separate syllables as in <u>wit</u>-<u>ting</u>.
d) To use final <u>e</u> regularly to indicate a preceding long vowel to distinguish between <u>made</u> and <u>mad,</u> <u>stripe</u> and <u>strip</u>
e) To add an <u>e</u> to words that end in a lightly pronounced <u>i</u>: as in <u>daie</u>, <u>maie</u> or <u>safetie</u>.

Analogy or what he calls proportion played an important role in his system. He said <u>where</u> should be spelt analogous to <u>here</u> and <u>there</u> but not irregularly as <u>where</u>, <u>wher</u> <u>whear</u>, <u>wheare</u> or <u>whair.</u> He is more interested in making everybody adopt the same spelling for a given word than in phonetic consistency.   It is impossible to estimate his influence on the subsequent ages and as A.C.Baugh remarks, "English spelling developed along the lines laid down by him is certain, but this may have been due largely to the fact that it was already developing along these lines and would have done so even without the help of his book". (p.256)

During the first half of the seventeenth century the movement towards uniformity steadily increased. Spelling was one of the problems which the English writers and scholars tried to tackle in the sixteenth century. During the period from 1500 to 1650 it was fairly settled. In this section you have seen the efforts of various scholars to improve English spelling and the factors that have shaped it finally. In the next section you will see how enrichment of English has taken place.

1.10.6 Enrichment of English

The English language seemed to have enriched itself and enlarged its vocabulary in an unprecedented manner during this period. In the words of F.T. Wood these were some of the influential factors.

All these factors, then – the influence of Renaissance schoarship, the religious controversies arising out of the Reformation, the various translations of the Bible, the efforescence of literature towards the end of the sixteenth century, the emergence of a national consciousness, the discoveries of new lands by navigators, with the consequent opening up of trade and the invention of printing-combined to make the language after 1500 'English' in a way that of Chaucer and his age had never been (p.94)..

The spirit of enquiry and experiment and the revival of interest in classical literatures resulted in a healthy desire for improvement of English. Once the monopoly of Latin in Europe, prevalent in the Middle Ages was broken, the deficiencies of the vernaculars came into the open. Translations which appeared in large numbers also convinced the translators of the limitations of their medium and tempted them to borrow terms from other languages whenever equivalent terms did not exist in target languages. Words were also borrowed from other languages sometimes in order to express an idea fully or with a patriotic desire to improve the national speech. Many writers made statements, Sir Thomas Elyot being one, about their deliberate efforts to relieve English of the charge of inadequacy and inelegance. English acquired thousands of new and strange words in the sixteenth and early seventeenth century. Though a great number of those words were from Latin they were also borrowed from Greek, French, Italian, Spanish, even old English and local dialects. Before we discuss the nature of such borrowing let us consider the conflicting views held by different people concerning their desirability.

The wholesale borrowing of words from other languages did not meet with universal approval. Some objected to the strangeness of new words whereas purists naturally took their stand on general principles. Despite being a classical scholar Sir John Cheke made a plea to keep English tongue 'cleane and pure, unmixt and unmangeled with borrowing of other tunges (o,261). Roger Ascham, who admired Cheke held a similar attitude. Some considered the use of learned words mere pedantry and tried to discourage the use by calling them 'inkhorn' terms. Sir Thomas Chalone, the translator of Erasmus' *Praise of Folly* (1549) compared adorning of writing with inkhorn terms to that of putting a gold ring on a sow's nose. The point he makes is that some of the borrowings are far-fetched and out of place. The strongest objection to the new words was made on the score of their obscurity. The exponent of this view Thomas Wilson made objection in the following terms in his *Arte of Rhetorique* (1553) and was used by Shakespeare later.

> Among all other lessons this should first be learned, that wee never affect any straunge Ynkehorne terms, but to speake as is commonly received: neither seeking to be over fine, nor yet living over-carelesse, using our speeche as most men doe, and ordering our wittes as the fewest have done. Some seeke so far for outlandish English, that they forget altogether their mothers language. (p.262)

These inkhorn terms are also called ink pot terms by others. The main charge is that borrowing strange and obscure words makes the mother tongue itself odd. But not everybody was against borrowing words from other languages. Dryden, for example, said, "I trade both with the living and the dead, for the enrichment of our native tongue". There were arguments that strange words would soon become familiar and the most simple everyday words of English of the day were at one time obscure foreign words. In the middle of the sixteenth century, the opposition to inkhorn terms was at its height but by the end of Elizabeth's reign it had largely spent its force.

The Renaissance has affected the subsequent development of English as a vehicle of expression. By giving rise to a number of synonyms, it enabled people to make nice distinctions in meaning. These distinctions would not have been possible without borrowed words. This is especially the case with borrowings. These synonyms generally fall into groups of three, one from a native root, one from the French and one from the Latin. Even if they have the same general idea, there are subtle nuances and differences in usage which can be appreciated by those who

work with words.   Look at the example of three adjectives connected notionally with the noun
<u>king</u>. <u>Royal</u> is of French origin, is the commonest and at the same time least colourful.   It merely
means 'pertaining to a king'.   We use it to describe something neutrally as in the royal coach, the
royal family, the royal signature and a royal personage. But <u>regal</u> which is from Latin root
suggests the pomp, splendour and majesty of kingship or rather external trappings that traditionally
accompany it.   The term <u>kingly</u> which is of native English orign refers to those gracious qualities
of character which we associate with the ideal king.

F.T.Wood maintains that " In a group of synonyms of this kind it will usually be found that
the more commonplace one is of French derivation, that the native one has an intimate and more
human signification, while that of Latin carries a suggestion of formality and impressiveness"
(p.96).

Here is a list of other synonyms.

<u>English</u>	<u>Latin</u>	<u>French</u>
Friendly	amicable	amiable
Childish	infantile	puerile
Greatmen		big men
Prisoner	captive	caitiff

Another important way in which English language was enriched during the Renaissance
period was by using an adjective of classical derivation to correspond to a native noun.   Thus
there is the Anglo-Saxon word <u>hand</u> but the adjective is <u>manual</u>. True that there is an adjective
<u>handy</u> which means quite a different thing. Similarly <u>nasal</u> is not the equivalent of <u>nosey</u> any
more than <u>urban</u> is of <u>towney</u>. As you know <u>Feminine</u> is quite distinct in meaning from <u>womanly,</u>
whereas <u>manly</u>, <u>masculine </u> and <u>virile </u> all have their own peculiar shades of meaning.   No one can
doubt that the English language is the richer for such nice distinctions.

Borrowings from Latin, Greek, French, Italian, Spanish and Portuguese took place
extensively. Not all words were retained permanently, some were used only a few times, others
reigned for a short period and then disappeared altogether. Some were in common use for a
sufficiently long time before suddenly dropping out of use. These were some of the rejected
words.

a) <u>Expede</u> (expedite) would have been parallel to impede.
<u>Cohibit</u> (to restrain)   … to inhibit, prohibit.
Demit (to send away)   … to commit, transmit but <u>dismiss</u> replaced it.

b) Cautionate (caution)

Consolate (console)   Preference for short words would have been

Attemplate (attempt)   the reason for the failure of these words' to
                                                        survive

Denunciate (denounce)

The most convincing reason for the failure of a word to survive is that it is not needed. The English language at this point needed many new words because of the changing conditions and the following are the words borrowed from other languages.

From Latin: In entering the language some words retained their original form whereas others underwent change.   Words that retained the Latin form are climax, appendix, epitome, exterior, delirium and axis. Words adopted by cutting off Latin endings are :

conjectural-is — (conjectural);   consult–are — (consult);
exclusion–em — (exclusion);   exotic–us — (exotic)

In adjectives further change is needed by the addition of – ous or – ity

Conspicu-us —   (conspicuous) ;   extern–us — (external); celerit–as — (celerity)

Nouns ending in – antia, - entia changed to those ending in – ance, - ence or – ancy, - ncy as in consonance,   obstinacy, concurrence, frequency.

Verbs borrowed from Latin at this time ended in – ate as in create, consolidate,   eradicate.

From the Latin the same word was borrowed twice in different periods. The reintroduced word changed both in form and meaning. Thus Latin words episcus and discus gave rise to bishop and dish in Old English period and to episcopal and disc in a later period.

There were also many Latin words which were borrowed from French since in France also the impact of the Renaissance was considerable. It was not always clear from which source a word was borrowed. Verbs like consist and explore could have been adopted from either French consister, and explorer or Latin consistere and explorare; conformation and conflagration from either Latin conformation –em, conflagration –em or French conformation and conflagration. Similarly fidelity could have been borrowed from Latin fidelitat-em or French fidelite.   When a word entered English from Latin through the route of French, French offered a precedent as well as assisted in its general adoption.

Words from Greek: Direct apatations from Greek in the Renaissance period were due to the revival of Greek study. These are: *acme, ephemeral, ostrasize, anonymous, heterodox, polemic, catastrophe, idiosyncracy, thermometer, criterion, lexicon, tonic.*

Other words from Greek which might have been borrowed from either Latin or Greek are:

Nouns : *allurement, atmosphere, denunciation, expectation, halo, jurisprudence*
Verbs :*consolidate, disregard, emanicipate, erupt, excavate, harass*
Adjectives : *abject, agile, appropriate, dexterous, habitual, external*
Many of the above words were permanent additions to English language.

Words from other languages: The foreign borrowings in the sixteenth century were not just confined to Latin and Greek. At this time the English language shows words borrowed from more than fifty languages. Besides Latin and Greek, the most important adopted words were from

French, Italian and Spanish. English travel in France and consumption of French books is reflected in words such as: *alloy, baluster, bizarre, chocolate, comrade, detail, duel, entrance, equipage, genteel, probability, progress, retrenchment, surpass, vogue.*

The English also travelled in Italy frequently and brought back with them not just manners and styles of dress but words as well. Some of these are: *alegebra, argosy, balcony, cameo, cupola, design, granite, piazza, portico, stanza, stucco, violin.*

Italian words such as *bankrupt, brusque, cavalcade, charlatan, gala, gazette, grotesque* were borrowed through French and adopted to French forms.

From Spanish and Portuguese: English adopted several words from Spanish and Portuguese: *alligator, apricot, armada, banana, bravado, cannibal, cocoa, corral, desperado, hurricane, maize, mosquito, mulatto, Negro, sarsaparilla.*

Many of these words reflect the Spanish enterprise on the sea and colonization of the American continent. Thus the spirit of adventure and exploration and the interest in the colonies being opened up contributed as much to the growth of English vocabulary as the intellectual movements.

Purists who were opposed to large-scale borrowings from foreign languages, calling them inkhorn terms or overseas language, attempted to enrich the English tongue by the revival of old words. Poets made use of the words that were familiar to them in Chaucer. These revivals and new formations that suggested the older period were sometimes called Chaucerisms. Spenser, Thomas Drant, the translator of Horace and Milton were foremost among the poets who revived old words. Some of these are: *astound, blameful, displeasance, euroot, doom, forby* (hard by, past)*, empight* (fixed)*, natheless, nathmore, whilere* (a while before).

Some like Spenser also coined new words like blatant, chirrup and delve (pit) while other poets used words of uncertain origin –such as askew, filch and flout. A number of words which were added thus to English vocabulary were very useful. Many of these words have passed through the language of poetry into common use. Similarly Latin words came into English through writing or churchmen and scholars, those from Romance languages through books, French and Italian words because of travelling Englishmen. Revival of old English words was due to the efforts of individuals and also due to other factors. So it is necessary to recognize individual writers and scholars as makers of English in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. One such great maker of English is certainly Shakespeare whose contribution to language we shall discuss in the next lesson.

1.10.7 Summary

In this chapter you have seen how English language developed from just an adequate tongue of common people to a great and powerful language capable of fulfilling the artistic, intellectual and scientific needs of a nation. English spelling was modified both by individual efforts and common practice to overcome some of the problems. Invention of the printing press, spread of education and growing social and national consciousness brought about a greater uniformity in the language. Overseas travel, revival of interest in classical literatures and explorations contributed to its greater diversity. Borrowings from foreign tongues, revival of old

words and coinages have expanded English vocabulary in an unprecedented way during the Renaissance period. Due to all the above factors the English language could transform itself from a 'vulgar tongue' to a worthy tongue and a national language. The Renaissance period is a great time of intense activity in all fields and it affected the growth of English in innumerable ways. In this lesson you have seen only some of the facets of evolution of English during the Renaissance and in the next lesson titled <u>Renaissance Period II</u> we shall discuss sound changes, grammatical features and Shakespeare's influence in detail.

1.10.8 Glossary

Classical languages	:	Greek and Latin
Dialect	:	a regional variety of language
Orthography	:	Spelling
Phonetic	:	related to the sounds made in spoken utterance

1.10.9 Sample Questions

1. What is the impact of Renaissance on the growth of the English Language?

2. Describe the problem of the vernaculars during the Renaissance.

3. Discuss the impact of the printing press on the English Language.

4. Is spelling reform possible? Give reasons for your answer.

5. Comment on Re-establishment of English.

6. Write a note on the enrichment of English during the Renaissance period.

7. Short notes

a) Inkhorn terms   b) Renaissance synonyms
c) Loan words from Italian   d) Printing Press
e) Chaucerisms   f) Loan words from Spanish

1.10.10 Suggested Reading

A.C.Baugh.   -   *A History of the English Language.* New Delhi: Allied Publishers, 1968.

F.T.Wood.   -   *An Outline History of the English Language.* Delhi: Macmillan, 1941.

H.C.Wyld.   -   *A Short History of English.* London: John Murray, 1914.

Henry Bradley.   -   *The Making of English*, Revised by Simeon Potter. Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1968.

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<p align="right">**Dr.C.L.L.Jayaprada**</p>

LESSON - 11

THE RENAISSANCE PERIOD - II

Structure

1.11.1 Objectives
1.11.2 Introduction
1.11.3 Shakespeare's Influence
1.11.4 Sound Changes
1.11.5 The Great Vowel Shift
1.11.6 Grammatical Features
1.11.7 Summary
1.11.8 Glossary
1.11.9 Sample Questions
1.11.10 Suggested Reading

1.11.1 Objectives

After going through this lesson, you will be able to understand

- the influence Shakespeare had on language
- how sounds changed from Old English to Middle English and Middle English to Modern English
- changes described in the Great Vowel Shift
- grammatical changes in the adjective, the pronoun and the verb

1.11.2 Introduction

       In the previous lesson titled "The Renaissance Period I" you saw how in the beginning of modernisation of Europe, the invention of printing press, spread of education, rising social and national consciousness, increased modes of transport and communication and discoveries of New Worlds have had an impact on the growth of the English language. Some of the linguistic issues we considered in detail are rise of vernaculars, including English, in opposition to classical languages, changes in English spelling to overcome some of the problems, greater uniformity in English brought about by printing and spread of education, greater diversity in language promoted by explorations and revival of interest in classical literatures and finally the enrichment of English through a multitude of borrowings from foreign languages. In this period of intense activity in all spheres of life, the English language flourished in innumerable ways. Some of these features were discussed in detail in the previous lesson. In this lesson we shall consider Shakespeare's influence on English, sound changes from Old to Middle and Middle to Modern English, the Great Vowel Shift and grammatical features of the English language during the Renaissance period.

1

1.11.3 Shakespeare's Influence

You have already seen how it is necessary to consider individual writers and scholars as makers of English in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. In the history of English Chaucer, Spenser, Milton, Dryden, Dr.Johnson and Shakespeare had been great and formative representative working critics of language. Shakespeare was specially sensitive in his use of language and paid attention to it. C.L.Wrenn is of the view that the influence of Shakespeare on the language as a maker of English is very much of the same kind as that of Bible translations. He remarks:

> … Shakespeare has been the master and the source, often not consciously used, of countless play-wrights, poets, prose-writers and popular journalists…

> Shakespeare was immensely interested, like Chaucer, Milton, Wordsworth and many more poets, in the English language. He constantly criticizes or satirizes linguistic and stylistic fashions among his contemporaries, while himself experimenting with all kinds of innovations, dialectical adaptations and archaisms (pp.156-157).

Shakespeare was known to have had the largest vocabulary among the English writers, except for a man like the Elizabethan translator Philemon Holland. Yet he agreed with Thomas Wilson who objected to the use of inkhorn terms in *Arte of Rhetorique*. He satirized men who frequently used the foreign words to be considered fashionable. Thus we have a pedantical Latinizing schoolmaster Holofernes and the fashional Spaniard Don Armado in *Love's Labours Lost*. The Italianate Englishman of his time is referred to in *As you Like It*. Jacques boasted of being a traveller and Rosalind addresses him thus: "Farewell, Monsieur traveller: look you lisp, and wear strange suits… or I will scarce think you have swam in a Gondola."

Shakespeare's special interest in language was evidenced everywhere in his plays, as for instance by the many puns and equivocations which are found in his early works. Thus the pun on the words trap and tropically in Hamlet (III, 2,250) depends entirely on the contemporary pronunciation of the o of tropically as an a that it was easily associated with trap when heard.

Shakespeare was remarkable in experimenting with the dramatic use of dialect. In doing so he made some lasting contributions to the English language. In The Taming of the Shrew Christopher Sly uses some provincialisms, probably Warwickshire word pheeze meaning to drive away and hence to settle the business of. In later plays the dialect words were used for poetic effect like the blood-bolter'd Banquo of Macbeth (IV, I.123) in the sense with 'blood in his matted hair' and here bolter'd seemed to have been from West Midland dialect. The most significant achievement of Shakespeare is in the employment of the rustical dialect for Edgar in the disguise of a peasant in King Lear. It is an early example of the stage convention that makes the rustics speak a kind of modified South-Western. It served two purposes (i), it was intelligible enough for Londoners and (ii), it was odd enough to sound comic. One dialect word in Shakespeare that came to stay in both general and spoken language is the West Midland dwindle. It appears in the phrase dwindle, peak and pine in Macbeth (I,3,23). Dwindle is the frequentative of dwine, peak in this phrase means 'waste away' and is probably western. It survives today only

in its adjective form peaky.   Some provincialisms he used in early plays and gave up later are pebblestone, shore, wood in the sense of mad, and forefather.

Of great significance is Shakespeare's use of language to individualize the characters in his plays.   His art of individualizing a character through his speech is fine and subtle. Mrs.Quickly and Dogberry misapply words from the classical languages in a distinct manner each.   The everyday speech of the artisans in A Mid-summer Night's Dream is comic in a different manner from the diction they use in their play within play. The gardeners in Richard II speak of politics in botanical similes. Now-a-days which was a vulgar word was used only by the grave-digger in Hamlet and a fisherman in Pericles.   The then comic word eke appears in Shakespeare 22 times and was always put in the mouth of vulgar or affected persons. No other author has shown such great skill in adapting language to character.

Shylock is one of Shakespeare's most interesting creations, even from the point of view of language. In the opinion of Otto Jesperson, in Elizabethan England there might not have lived many Jews on whose speech Shakespeare could have drawn on nor was there any evidence of Anglo-Jewish dialect at this time.   Yet Shakespeare succeeded in creating for Shylock a distinctive speech. Jesperson illustrates the point thus:

> Shylock has his Old Testament at fingers' ends, he defends his own way of making money breed by a reference to Jacob's thrift in breeding parti-coloured lambs, he swears by Jacob's staff and by our holy sabbath, and he calls Lancelot 'that foole of Hagar's off-spring.' We have an interesting bit of Jewish figurative language 'in my house's ears, I meane my Casements' (II, 5,34). Shylock uses some biblical words which do not occur elsewhere in Shakespeare: synogogue, Nazarite, and publican… (p.207).

Shylock is also made to sound a little different from his contemporaries by unusual words and constructions. It would make us see how amazingly creative Shakespeare is in making Shylock's speech distinctive when we see that he never uses such words as Bible, Holy Ghost and Trinity in his writings. Jesus, Christ, and Christmas are found only in some of his earliest plays; Saviour occurs only once and Creator only in two of his plays. He is unusually reticent about religious matters. His remarkable familiarity with technical expressions in many different spheres has often been noticed. The fact that he wrote upon so great a variety of subjects and touched upon so many human facts and relations accounts for his need for a great number of words in his writings. His vocabulary is more than 20,000 words whereas Milton is supposed to have used only around 8,000 words in his poetry.

Though Shakespeare was supposed to have read Wilson and quoted him, he was not greatly impressed by Wilson's extreme views. He did ridicule the use of inkhorn terms by Holofernes who quotes Latin, affects words like intimation, insinuation, explication and replication, yet he was daring and resourceful in use of words as well as ready to accept new words liberally. Among the words he uses are found agile, allurement, antipathy, catastrophe, consonancy, critical, demonstrate, dire, discountenance, emphasis, emulate, expostulation, extract, hereditary, horrid, meditate, modest, pathetical, prodigious, vast; the Romance words ambuscado, armada, barricade, bastinado, cavalier, mutiny, palisade, pell-mell and renegado. Words like

exist, initiate and jovial seemed to have been used only a year or two before finding place in Shakespeare's writing. In many other cases such as accommodation, apostrophe, assassination, dexterously, dislocate, frugal, indistinguishable, misanthrope, obscene, pedant, premeditated, reliance and submerged, his use is the earliest occurrence of the word in English. Some of the words used by Shakespeare were used in a different sense from the modern one. These meanings were closer to their etymological meaning in Latin. Thus to communicate meant to 'share or make common to many', atone meant 'to set at one, reconcile,' as when Desdemona in Othello says 'I would do much to atone them.' Enlargement meant 'freedom from confinement' and 'humorous' might mean 'damp' (as in the 'humorous night' of Romeo and Juliet) or capricious, moody, peevish, that is, showing the effect of various bodily humours and according to medieval belief bodily humours determine one's disposition. The word did not acquire its present meaning until the time of Addison. One could find an example from any page of Shakespeare. But the few examples given above are sufficient to reveal that their new meanings often remained close to their etymological meaning.

Shakespeare's pronunciation is much closer to the modern one than Chaucer's. He pronounced [e] for [i] and [ē] sound was still distinct in Shakespeare's time as [e:] and [i :] respectively. As a result sea and see, heap and keep sounded differently. There was also fluctuation in the Middle English pronunciation of words having [ō], flood rimed with mood and good at times. There were also some differences of the accent as we see in these examples from Shakespeare preservér, demónstrate, comméndable, sécure and welcomé. On the whole we will not have great difficulty in understanding Shakespeare's pronunciation. The reason is that in the course of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries the vowels of Middle English, especially the long vowels, underwent a wholesale but quite regular shifting. We shall consider these changes in the next section.

1.11.4 Sound Changes

Sound changes in English are as important in the history of language as the changes in grammar and vocabulary are – we shall consider the sound changes broadly here since the tracing of the evolution of even each vowel will be a stupendous task. Some sounds were less subject to change than others. For example Old English /e/ remained unchanged in certain contexts and O.E. bĕdd is still bed today. The ā in O.E. stān (stone) became a sound like that in law [st :n] about 1100 in central England, in Shakespeare's time it became /o: / and today it is pronounced /st∂ʊn/. In North England /a:/ instead of being rounded to an /o: / developed into /ei/ as in lane. It is heard in Scotland today. The changes in sounds from O.E. to M.E. were slight in comparison with those that occurred later. Changes in consonants have been insignificant: some voiced consonants became voiceless and vice versa and some consonants were occasionally lost. Thus /w/ before /o/ was lost when it followed another consonant; e.g., sō (O.E. swā), hō (who, O.E. hwā). Most of the short vowels, unless lengthened passed into M.E unaltered. But short æ became a and y [y] was unrounded to /i/ in most districts for eg. (O.E. cræft>craft; bryeg>brigge). The other short vowels / ă,ĕ,ĭ,ŏ,ŭ / remained unchanged. The long y developed in the same way as short ў (O.E. bryd>brīde, bride; fyr>fir; fire. The long æ in O.E. spelling represented two sounds: it stood for an ā in West German (O.E. clæne>clēne>clean) and for an ē outside the West Saxon area (dēd>dēd>deed). The first sound is a more open vowel. These two sounds have now become identical as in deed and clean.

The O.E. diphthongs were all simplified and all diphthongs in M.E. are new formations resulting from the combination of a simple vowel with a following consonant /z.w/ which vocalized. If the quality of O.E. vowels did not change much in passing into M.E., their quantity or length was subject to considerable alteration. For eg., O.E. long vowels were shortened by the early M.E. when followed by a double consonant or by most combinations of consonants (grĕtten, comparative of grēt;<O.E great; asken<O.E.axian, ask). Conversely, short vowels in open syllables were lengthened in M.E. (O.E. băcan, bake; ētan>ĕten>eat). Changes in the length of vowels from O.E. to M.E. are of great importance since they determine the course which these vowels pursue in their subsequent development in Modern English.

All Middle English long vowels underwent extensive alternation in passing into Modern English, but the short vowels, in accented syllables remained comparatively stable. Only in two short vowels a and u, the pronunciation from Chaucer's day underwent a change. By Shakespeare's day Chaucer's a had become an [æ] in pronunciation as in cat, thank, flax. The sound u underwent an unrounding. In Chaucer's pronunciation this vowel was like u in full. By the sixteenth century it became in most words an /Λ / sound as we have in but (eg. cut, sun, love). So far as short vowels are concerned a person today would have little difficulty in understanding the English of any period.

1.11.5 The Great Vowel Shift

The changes in long vowels, however, are considerable and these were underway by the fifteenth century and were completed late in the sixteenth century. All the long vowels gradually came to be pronounced with a greater elevation of the tongue and closing of the mouth. All those that could be raised (a,ε,ẹ,o,o) were raised, and those that could not without becoming consonantal (i,u) became diphthongs. The change may be visualized in the following diagram:

i: ⟶ ei   ou ⟵ u:

e: o:

ε :

a:
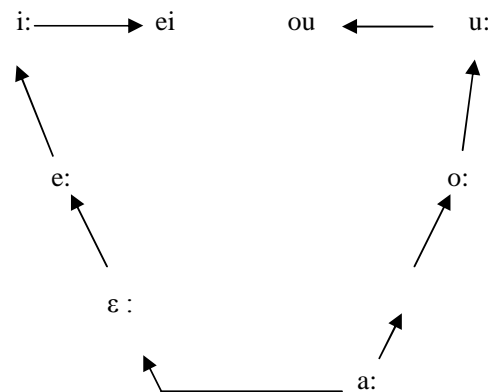
[:] shows that the vowel that carries it is a long vowel. Such a diagram indicates only roughly what happened. The arrows indicate a great general movement with slight differences in speed

with which the results were accomplished. The effects of the shift can be seen in the following comparison of Chaucer's and Shakespeare's pronunciation with the present day one.

Chaucer's spelling	Chaucer's pronunciation	Shakespeare's pronunciation	Present pronunciation	Present spelling
lyf	li:f	leif	laif	life
Deed	de:d	di:d	di:d	deed
Deel	dɛ:l	de:l	di:l	deal
Name	na:m∂	nɛ:m	ne:m	name
Hoom	h :m	ho:m	houm	home
Mone	mo:n	mu:n	mu:n	moon
Hous	hu:s	hous	haus	House

Most important of the above changes is the raising of Middle English /e:/ to /i:/, when deal was pronunced like our present day lane; it now rimes with lean. The change occurred at the end of the seventeenth century and had become general by the middle of the eighteenth. The Great Vowel Shift is in a way responsible for the unorthodox use of vowel symbols in English spelling. The spelling of English had become fixed before the shift and did not change when the quality of the long vowels changed. As a result our vowel symbols no longer correspond to the sounds which they once represented in English and still represent in the other modern languages.

Another reason why spelling does not accurately represent the pronunciation today is the unstressed middle or final syllables in the words such as introduce, elegant [∂,i], drama, kingdom, Monday are weakened and in rapid speech become indistinguishable.

1.11.6 Grammatical Features

An important feature of English grammar in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries was existence of certain forms and usages which did not survive later. The Old English inflections have already been reduced to their modern proportion. A few parts of speech might retain their original inflections and in the framing of sentences there might be differences of form and idiom but they do not cause much difficulty to the modern reader.

When it comes to changes in noun, the only inflections retained are those making the plural and possessive singular. The addition of –s for plural had become very common except in nouns like sheep and swine with unchanged plurals and a few others like mice and feet.   In the sixteenth century, there are certain survivals of the old weak plural –n. Most of these were substituted for –s forms, for example, fon (foes), kneen (knees), fleen (fleas). But beside the more modern forms Shakespeare occasionally has eyen (eyes), shoon (shoes), and kine (cows). Today except for the

poetical <u>kine</u> and mixed plurals like <u>children</u> and <u>brethern</u>, the only plural of this type in general use is <u>oxen</u>.

Another peculiarity of the period is the <u>his</u> genitive. Since the <u>–es</u> of the genitive, being unaccented, was so frequently written and pronounced as <u>–is</u>, <u>-ys</u> that it was identical with the pronoun <u>his</u>, which commonly lost its <u>h</u> when unstressed.   There was no difference in pronunciation between <u>stonis</u> and <u>ston</u> is (his) and the ending was sometimes written separately as though the possessive case were a contraction of a noun and the pronoun <u>his</u>.   People were troubled by the illogical consequences of the usage. Dr.Johnson points out that one can hardly believe in phrases like a <u>woman's beauty</u>, or a <u>virgin's delicacy</u> the possessive ending is a contraction of <u>his</u>. Perhaps he was aware that its true source was the Old English genitive but the error left its trace in the apostrophe we use for convenience today.

Another construction affecting the noun which was established during the period was the group possessive: <u>the Duke of Gloucester's niece</u>, <u>the King of England's nose,</u> and <u>somebody else's hat</u>.   The construction sounds illogical but the earlier construction was the <u>Duke's niece of Gloucester</u> which is equally awkward. But the expressions like <u>Duke of Gloucester</u> and <u>King of England</u> were so commonly heard in the fifteenth century as a unit that they began to add the possessive to it. Such use was not common before the sixteenth century and it may be thought of as belonging to the modern period. Today we may hear such expressions like <u>the writer of the book's ambition</u> or <u>the chief actor in the play's illness</u>.

When it comes to the adjective the major focus is on its forms of the comparative and superlative since it clearly lost its inflections denoting gender, number and case. In the sixteenth century these forms were slightly different. Comparatives such as <u>lenger</u>, <u>strenger</u> remind us that forms like <u>elder</u> were once common. Two common methods to form the comparative and superlative were by adding <u>–er</u>, <u>-est</u> and with adverbs <u>more</u> and <u>most</u> and these had been in the language since Old English times.   But there was more variation in their use.   Double comparatives or superlatives like <u>more larger</u>, <u>most boldest</u> were frequent in Shakespeare. Gradually the usage affecting the adjective stabilized into two forms in modern English i.e., adding <u>–er</u> and <u>–est</u> to the monosyllabic adjectives and using <u>more</u> and <u>most</u> with most adjectives of two or more syllables.

There have been several changes in the sixteenth century in the personal pronoun. Three changes were involved in this process: the disuse of <u>thou</u>, <u>thy</u>, <u>thee</u>; the substitution of <u>you</u> for <u>ye</u> as a nominative case; and the introduction of <u>its</u> as the possessive of <u>it</u>. At the beginning the distinction between <u>thou</u> and <u>ye</u> was simply that of number; <u>thou</u> was the singular and <u>ye</u> the plural form for the second person pronoun. In the thirteenth century the singular forms – <u>thou</u>, <u>thy</u>, <u>thee</u> were employed among familiars and in addressing children or persons of inferior rank. On the other hand the plural forms <u>ye</u>, <u>your</u>, <u>you</u> were used as a mark of respect in addressing superiors. The usage was widespread due perhaps to French influence and had been in practice until <u>ye</u>, <u>your</u>, and <u>you</u> came to be used as pronouns of direct address irrespective of rank or intimacy. By the sixteenth century the singular forms had all disappeared from the polite speech. Though the nominative <u>ye</u> and objective <u>you</u> were distinct they were unstressed and often pronounced alike [j∂]. Due to the confusion between the two forms in the fourteenth century, <u>you</u>

began to be used as a nominative. By a similar substitution ye appeared in the fifteenth century for the objective case. From then onwards the two forms seen to have been used pretty indiscriminately until ye finally disappeared. In the Authorized version of The Bible (1611) they were often nicely differentiated as was done by some men in the early sixteenth century. Milton and Shakespeare also seemed to have made no distinction between the two different functions of the two words. In the course of the seventeenth century you becomes the regular form for both cases.

A.C.Baugh finds the formation of a new possessive neuter its the most interesting development in the pronoun during this period. The neuter pronoun in the Old English period was declined hit, his, him, hit, which by the merging of the dative and accusative under hit in Middle English became hit, his, hit. In unstressed positions hit weakened to it and at the beginning of the period it was the usual form for the subject and object. His, however, remained the proper form of the possessive. It was thus identical with the possessive case of he and its occurrence in place of its is very common in written English down to the middle of the seventeenth century. Thus Portia's words How far that little candle throws his beams and the Biblical If the salt have lost his savor, wherewith shall it be salted? were not at all strange. With the substitution of natural gender for grammatical gender meaning had become the deciding factor in the gender of nouns and all lifeless objects were thought of as neuter. The personal pronouns of the third person singular, he, she, it had a distinctive form in the possessive case as well. Various substitutes were tried in order to avoid the use of his in the neuter.   Sometimes the simple form of it was used as a possessive when Horatio says It lifted up it head while describing the ghost in Hamlet. Finally on the analogy of the possessive of other nouns such as stone's, horse's, the form it's for the possessive of it came into existence. The word was spelled with an apostrophe down to 1800. Its occurrence was found neither in the Bible (1611) nor in Shakespeare, and Milton seemed to have used it only grudgingly. By the end of the seventeenth century it seemed to have gained acceptance so completely that Dryden commented that the use of his as a possessive of it was an archaism.

Another important development of the pronoun in the sixteenth century was the use of who as a relative. Old English had no proper relative pronoun. It made use of the definite article in its place (sé, séo, þæt) which had more demonstrative force than relative. Refined use of subordinate clauses rather than loose association required a greater variety of sentence co-ordinators. In the Middle English period þæt (that) was almost the universal pronoun. In the fifteenth century which began to alternate fairly frequently with that. The tendency to employ that as a universal relative pbronom has never been lost in the language. It was not until the sixteenth century that the pronoun who as a relative came into use. There is no example of nominative case in Chaucer. Chaucer used the oblique cases whose and whom infrequently as relative pronouns and it is clear that the use of who as a pure relative began with these forms. The earlier uses of who as an indefinite pronoun ("who hath ears to hear, let him hear") and as an interrogative in direct questions are the sources of the new construction. It has taken the forms of Whom do you want? (direct question), They asked whom you wanted (indirect question), and I know the man whom you wanted. The present common practice of the use of who as a relative pronoun is pre-eminently a contribution of the sixteenth century to the language.

There are certain differences of the use of the verb in the Elizabethan English and the modern one. Sometimes the differences are only slight. For example, Lennox asks in <u>Macbeth,</u> <u>Goes the King hence today</u>? It is only a common interrogative form without an auxiliary. Perhaps today we shall say <u>Does the king go today</u>? Similarly where we say <u>has been</u> Shakespeare often uses <u>is</u>: <u>Is execution done on Cawdor</u>? The most important difference is in the scarcity of progressive forms. For example, Polonius asks <u>What do you read, my Lord</u>? In the same way the compound participle, <u>having spoken thus</u> and <u>having decided to make the attempt</u> is also infrequent. There are only three such instances in Shakespeare and less than sixty in <u>The Bible</u>. The construction arose in the sixteenth century. But the impersonal uses of the verb were much more common than they are today. Shakespearean expressions such as <u>It yearns me not</u>, <u>it dislikes me</u>, <u>so please him come</u> are replaced by personal constructions in the modern English.

Apart from such verbal usage, certain differences in inflection were also found in Elizabethan English. These are the third person plural and many forms of the past tense and past participle, especially of strong verbs. The regular ending of the third personal singular in the South England was <u>–eth</u> in Middle English period. It was common in Chaucer as in <u>telleth</u>, <u>giveth</u>, <u>saith</u>, <u>doth</u> etc. In the fifteenth century forms with <u>–s</u> occasionally appear perhaps due to the Northern influence where these were common. In the course of the sixteenth century their number increases and by the end of the century forms like <u>tells</u>, <u>gives</u>, <u>says</u> predominate though the older usage in <u>doth</u> and <u>hath</u> is retained. In the early seventeenth century the <u>–s</u> form had become universal in spoken language. By the end of the sixteenth century the use of this <u>–s</u> as an ending also of the third person plural was noticeable. This is the result of the East Midland <u>–en</u>, <u>-e</u>, the characteristic endings of the plural in Chaucer. But alongside this predominant plural without ending, there were also occasional expressions like <u>troubled minds that wakes</u> in Shakespeare. Plural forms in <u>–s</u> are occasionally found even in the eighteenth century occasionally.

At the beginning of the modern period alterations in the forms of verbs from the strong to weak also took place. These get reflected in the language of Shakespeare and his contemporaries. Among verbs which developed weak forms in this period were <u>bide</u>, <u>crow</u>, <u>crowd</u>, <u>flay</u>, <u>mow</u>, <u>dread</u>, <u>sprout</u> and <u>wade</u> and thus we find their strong verbs which have since disappeared, still in common use. Strong forms also alternate with the weak in verbs which had begun to change earlier. Some of these are <u>waxen</u> and <u>waxed</u>, <u>sew</u> and <u>sowed</u>, <u>gnew</u> and <u>gnaw</u>, <u>holp</u> and <u>helped</u>. A number of weak forms like <u>blowed</u>, <u>growed</u>, <u>shined</u>, <u>shrinked</u>, <u>swinged</u> were in fairly common use, although these verbs ultimately remained strong. In certain common verbs the Renaissance period had different past tense forms for example: <u>brake</u>, <u>spake</u>, <u>drave</u>, <u>clave</u>, <u>tare</u>, <u>bare</u> and <u>sware</u> are seen in <u>The Bible</u>. <u>Brent</u> and <u>brast</u> were common forms for <u>burnt</u>, and <u>burst</u>, while <u>wesh</u> and <u>washen</u> were prevalent as the past tense and past participle of <u>wash</u> until the close of the sixteenth century. Since in all these cases the forms current today were also in use, it is apparent that in Shakespeare's day there was much more flexibility in the inflections of the verb.

Other than words and inflections, there are many conventional features in language – matters of idiom and usage − which often defy logical explanations. Like other features of language they too are subject to change. Shakespeare in these expressions omits the article where we customarily put it: <u>creeping like snail</u>, <u>with a big heart as thou</u>, <u>within this mile and half</u>, <u>thy</u> <u>beauty's form in the table of my heart</u>. Modern idiom requires an article in all these cases.

Paradoxically where we say <u>at length</u>, <u>at last</u> today, Shakespeare says <u>at the length</u>, <u>at the last</u>. Again for a long time English permitted double negatives. Thus Shakespeare says <u>Nor this is not my nose neither</u>, <u>I know not, nor I greatly care not</u>. Such expressions were used to intensify negation and they were discarded through a false application of mathematical logic to language. The use of prepositions too had undergone a radical change. Shakespeare is supposed to have used the preposition <u>of</u> in place of <u>from</u>, <u>on</u>, <u>about</u>, <u>upon</u>, <u>during</u> and <u>by</u>. For example, <u>one that was brought up of</u> (from) <u>a puppy</u>; <u>he came of</u> (on) <u>an errand</u>; <u>The pity of</u> (about) <u>him</u>; <u>not be seen to wink of</u> (during) <u>all the day</u>; <u>it was well done of</u> (by) <u>you</u>; <u>I wonder of</u> (at) <u>their being here</u>; <u>I am provided of</u> (with) <u>a torch-bearer</u>; <u>I have no mind of</u> (for) <u>feasting forth tonight</u> etc. No picture of Elizabethan English would be complete without giving a measure of recognition to its idiom or usage.

On the whole during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries a conscious interest in the English language and an attention to its problems was widely manifested. In the fifteenth century we see attempts by individual writers to embellish their style with 'aureate' terms. There was also a desire to improve the language on limited lines. In the sixteenth century a considerable body of literature – books, pamphlets and prefaces – came out to defend the language against those who compared it unfavourably with Latin. Fired by patriotic zeal, writers and scholars recognized the position of English as the national tongue and urged its fitness for learned and literary use. They also saw the need to cultivate a standard variety of English. Though the Great Vowel Shift, printing press, spread of education and other factors brought the language closer to what it is today, it was not fully entitled to be called a standard speech at this time. There was also a lot of plasticity in the language. Adjectives could be used as adverbs, or nouns as verbs, nouns as verbs, - in fact any part of speech as almost any other part. For instance, Shakespeare wrote <u>strange'd with an oath</u>. A considerable variety of use existed characterized by alternate forms in the grammar, experiments with new words, variations in pronunciation and spelling. Some freedom of choice and selection was permitted among speakers of education and social position. The relation between the literary language and good colloquial English was so close that this freedom also appeared in written language.

1.11.7 Summary

In this lesson you have had a brief glance at the contribution of Shakespeare in terms of coinages, borrowings, grammatical features, archaisms, provincialisms and most important of all, the way he uses language to distinguish a character. He also paid conscious attention to the language as we saw in the way he caricatured the fashionable persons who sported affected styles and inkhorn terms. In the section on sound changes we considered the slight changes in consonants and vowels like $\bar{a}$ and $\bar{e}$ which became identical as in <u>deed</u>. The short <u>æ</u> became <u>a</u> and <u>y</u> was unrounded to <u>i:</u>. In contrast to these changes in sounds, the changes in long vowels were considerable. Some of the long vowels were raised and others became diphthongs. These are discussed under the Great Vowel Shift. The Great Vowel Shift brings the sounds almost close to those what we have today. In the grammatical forms too we see considerable differences with the seventeenth century in which many points of grammatical dispute were settled by deliberate attempts. In the section on grammatical features we discussed in detail the development of finer distinctions in nouns, adjectives, pronouns, verbs as well as idioms. However in the use of

grammatical constructions, the Renaissance English was not at all rigid and was much more plastic than it was in later ages. Speaking about the vibrancy of Renaissance English, A.C.Baugh remarks:

> This was in keeping with the spirit of his age. It was in language, as in many other respects, an age with the characteristics of youth – vigor, a willingness to venture and a disposition to attempt the untried. The spirit that animated Hawkins, and Drake and Raleigh was not foreign to the language of their time (p.303).

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1.11.8 Glossary

Atone	:	to make amends
Communicate	:	exchange information
Peevish	:	querulous in temperment, fretful
Aureate	:	marked by a gradiloquent style
Peaky	:	emaciated, weak and sickly
Synogogue	:	a Jewish congregation; the house of worship of a Jewish congregation
Nazarite	:	one who lives in Nazareth, a city in Israel
Replication	:	precise reproduction or an act or process of this
Insinuation	:	to imply in a subtle or devious way
Emulate	:	to strive to equal or excel
Catastrophe	:	a great disaster or misfortune
Allurement	:	attracting somebody, especially because of a desirable quality
Discountenance	:	embarrass, disconcert, to look with disfavour on
Prodigious	:	exciting wonder
Ambuscade	:	ambush
Renegado	:	a deserter from one faith, cause, principle or party for another
Nominative case	:	a grammatical case marking the subject of a verb
Dative case	:	a grammatical case marking the indirect object of a verb
Accusative case	:	a grammatical case marking the direct object of a verb or the object of a preposition

1.11.9 Sample Questions

1. Write an essay on the contribution of Shakespeare to the English language.

2. Bring out the impact of the Great Vowel Shift.

3. Discuss the role of any poet you like most in the making of the English language.

4. Give an account of the Great Vowel shift.

5. Describe how the sound changes have taken place from Middle English to Modern English.

6. Write short notes on the following:

a) Provincialisms in Shakespeare

b) The possessive of <u>it</u>

c) The personal pronoun

d) Changes in the noun

e) Forms of verb

f) The speech of Shylock

g) Plasticity of Renaissance English

1.11.10   Suggested Reading

A.C.Baugh.   -   *A History of the English Language*. New Delhi: Allied Publishers, 1968.

F.T.Wood.   -   *An Outline History of the English Language.* Delhi: Macmillan, 1941.

H.C.Wyld.   -   *A Short History of English*. London: John Murray, 1914.

Henry Bradley. -   *The Making of English*, Revised by Simeon Potter. Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1968.

Vinoda.   -   *A Short History of the English Language*. Warangal: Nachson Books.

Dr. C.L.L. Jayaprada

Lesson - 12

THE APPEAL TO AUTHORITY

Structure

1.12.1 Objectives
1.12.2 Introduction
1.12.3 The Problem of Standardization
1.12.4 Refinement and Fixing the Language
1.12.5 Dr.Johnson's Dictionary
1.12.6 Prescriptive Grammars
1.12.7 Foreign Borrowings
1.12.8   Summary
1.12.9 Glossary
1.12.10 Sample Questions
1.12.11 Suggested Reading

1.12.1 Objectives

After going through this lesson, you will be able to understand
- how the Eighteenth Century saw the need to regulate the ever growing language
- the efforts to correct, refine and fix English
- the positive features and limitations of Johnson's dictionary
- the considerations for a grammar and how it evolved finally
- enlargement of vocabulary due to the British colonisation

1.12.2 Introduction

The first half of the eighteenth century is called the Augustan Age in the histories of literature in England. The first five decades witnessed the principal tendencies of the Augustan Age taking shape whereas in the second half of the century, these are clearly visible. Thus the factors in the hundred and fifty years between 1650 and 1800 A.D. that affected the language are treated in a single chapter by A.C. Baugh under the title *The Appeal to Authority*. The very factors that shaped the course of the literature affected the course of the English language too. The dominant feature of this age is a strong sense of order and the value given to regulation. A desire for system and regularity in this age replaced the spirit of independence and individualism we saw in the Renaissance period.   In the words of A.C.Baugh, the dominant characteristic of the period is

> This [a desire for regularity and system] involves conformity to a standard that the consensus of opinion recognizes as good. It sets up correctness as an ideal and attempts to formulate rules or principles by which correctness may be defined and achieved. The most important consideration in the foundation of this standard is

reason. The spirit of scientific rationalism in philosophy was reflected in many other domains of thought. A great satisfaction was felt in things that could be logically explained and justified. Where it was possible, reason was often supported by the force of authoritative example, particularly classical example (p.307).

For the eighteenth century writers and scholars the flexibility in vocabulary and grammar of the earlier age seemed like laxity and disorder. They wanted to set up a permanent standard in language and give it a stability. The intellectual efforts of the period were mainly focused in the direction of standardizing, refining and fixing the English language. In the previous age the major issues were whether English is worthy enough to be used for writings in which Latin had been traditionally used, whether the large additions made to vocabulary were justified and whether a more adequate system of spelling could be introduced. Now for the first time, attention was turned to grammar. English grammar was largely uncodified and unsystematized in comparison to ancient languages which had been reduced to rule.   In those languages one knew what was right and what was wrong. In English everything was so uncertain that in matters of grammatical usage there was no common usage even among educated men. To decide about the correctness of a particular point scholars turned to Latin often arriving at entirely false conclusions. In the words of A.C.Baugh

> The respect for authoritative example, especially for classical example, takes the form of appeals to the analogy of Latin, while a different manifestation of the respect for authority is at the bottom of the belief in the power of individuals to legislate in matters of language, and accounts for the repeated demand for an English Academy (p.308).

An idea that English was being daily corrupted was expressed frequently by men and they believed once the reforms were effected and corrections made, it should be fixed forever and protected from change. Though the eighteenth century desire to give the English language a polished, rational and permanent form was praiseworthy, its methods often proved faulty.

1.12.3 The Problem of Standardization

To use the term standard English is to invite controversy today since we now know any living language is a moving, shifting and flexible thing.   Any imposition of standards from above can only be arbitrary and can prove inimical to its growth. But in the eighteenth century due to its belief in the authority of individuals to decide upon matters of language, serious attempts were made to direct the course of English. They fall under three main heads:

i.   to reduce the language to rule and set up a standard of correct usage

ii. to refine it – that is, to remove supposed defects and introduce certain improvements

iii to fix it permanently in the desired form

In the seventeenth century England became acutely conscious of the absence of a standard and that there were no fixed rules in language by which a man could express himself confidently. The

popular desire for a standard is expressed by Dryden thus: "I am desirous, if it were possible, that we may all write with the same certainty of words, and purity of phrase, to which the Italians first arrived and after them the French; at least that we might advance so far as our tongue is capable of such a standard" (p.309).

In the eighteenth century the need for standardization and regulation was summed up in the word ascertainment. To ascertain did not mean so much to learn by inquiry as to settle a matter, to render it certain and free from doubt. Dr.Johnson defined ascertainment as "a settled rule; an established standard". In the same sense Swift used the term in its verb form in his "Proposal for Correcting, Improving and Ascertaining the English Tongue". The need was felt for a dictionary which should record the proper use of words, and a grammar which should settle authoritatively the correct usage in matters of construction.

1.12.4 Refining and Fixing the Language

The eighteenth century saw that uncertainty and lack of a standard, to which everyone could conform, resulted in many corruptions of language. The writers concerned about language saw, with a nostalgic backward glance, in an earlier age a golden age. For instance, Dryden saw it in Chaucer's age. Dr.Johnson agreed with him whereas the later writers such as Priestly and Webster saw it in the Restoration and the period of Swift himself. In the course of the eighteenth century there have been many attempts to purify the language and rid it of supposed imperfections. Of such attempts the one by Swift was significant.

Jonathan Swift was in a way conservative on matters of language. Swift found fault with some of the innovations growing in the previous two decades. These are:

a) the tendency to clip and shorten pollysyllabic words such as mobile to mob, incognito to incog.

b) the tendency to contract verbs like drudġd, disturb'd, rebuk'd, fledg'd since English is already overstocked with monosyllables.

c) tendency to use vogue words which invaded even the pulpit such as sham, banter, mob, bubble, bully, cutting, shuffling and palming.

Swift published these objections to the new tendencies in language first in a letter to The Tatler in 1710 and in 1712 in his Proposal for Correcting, Improving and Ascertaining the English Tongue.

Many of Swift's objections arose out of fear of change and his talk about refining and fixing the language was echoed by others for the next fifty years. Pope, Sheridan and others expressed the fear that poets of one period shall not be understood at a later period if the language keeps continually changing. It is curious that such intellectuals and writers failed to learn from history and thought it would be possible to stop the processes of growth and decay that characterize a living language. Men also laboured under the illusion that classical languages had been unchanging.

One of the ways to correct and fix English language the scholars thought of was the establishment of an English Academy which could decide on matters of language and usage. They took inspiration from the Italian and French Academies which undertook the work of compiling a dictionary, a grammar, a rhetoric and a treatise on the art of poetry. The proposal for setting up of academies had been there in England since the early seventeenth century. The proposal for a society with learned members such as George Chapman, Michael Drayton and Ben Jonson made in 1616 died with James I. Around the 1650's the idea of an academy received support from several influential persons including Dryden. The Royal Society soon afterwards established a committee of scholars such as Dryden, Evelyn, Waller for improving the English language. The committee made some specific proposals which are the following: the compilation of a grammar; some reform of the spelling, particularly the leaving out of superfluous letters; lexicons of all the pure English words; and borrowed words; and finally translations of the best of Greek and Latin literature to serve as models of elegance in style. But nothing came out of these proposals perhaps since they were too ambitious. The committee held only three or four meetings and the Royal Society was not really interested in linguistic matters. The moving spirit behind this gesture of the Royal Society was John Dryden. The movement also had the support of well-known men like Dr.Johnson. In 1697 Defoe in his <u>Essay upon Projects</u> strongly advocated the idea of an academy for England consisting of learned men. He hoped that "The voice of this society should be sufficient authority for the usage of words and sufficient also to expose the innovations of other men's fancies" (p.320).

By the turn of the next century the ground had been prepared and the time was ready for a concrete plan for an academy. Swift made the proposal in a letter addressed to the Earl of Oxford, Lord Treasurer of England. It was published under the title <u>A Proposal for Correcting, Improving, and Ascertaining the English Tongue</u>. He pointed out that abuses and absurdities are multiplied everyday in language. A society of learned persons on the model of the French Academy is needed to regulate gross improprieties in language. They will decide on the words to be thrown out of English, to be corrected and those to be restored from the antiquity. He hoped it would allow the growth of English but not its decay and somehow fix and refine language permanently. Swift's proposal found approval in several quarters and only a few months earlier Addision echoed many of Swift's strictures on language. The only dissenting voice was that of John Oldmixon who reacted strongly to Swift's proposal. Much of this politically motivated work is a personal attack on Swift and he quoted examples of vulgar English from the <u>Tale of a Tub</u>. Finally he ridiculed the idea that anything can be done to prevent languages from changing. Oldmixon's attack was not on the idea of an academy for he approves of the design. Yet nothing came of Swift's <u>Proposal</u> probably due to dissensions among great men at court and the death of the Queen.

The idea of establishing an academy died and a growing skepticism towards the academy replaced the early enthusiasm. There were also doubts expressed about the value of the results obtained by the French Academy. Some commented that far from making the language better, they had spoiled it. The Academy certainly could not stop French from changing. Oldmixon in his attack on Swift's proposal remarked that the attempt to fix a language beyond one's own time was like an attempt to find out the Grand Elixir. Dr.Johnson who initially supported the idea of

having an English academy to legislate on matters of language soon saw the futility of it. In the prepace to his Dictionary (1755) he remarked:

> Those who have been persuaded to think well of my design, require that it should fix our language, and put a stop to those alterations which time and chance have hitherto been suffered to make in it without opposition. With this consequence I will confess that I flattered myself for a while; but now begin to fear that I have indulged expectation which neither reason nor experience can justify…we laugh at the elixir that promises to prolong life to a thousand years; and with equal justice may the lexicographer be derided, who being able to produce no example of a nation that has preserved their words and phrases from mutability, shall imagine that his dictionary can embalm his language, and secure it from corruption and decay, that it is in his power to change sublunary nature or clear the world at once from folly, vanity and affectation.

> With this hope, however, academies have been instituted, to guard the avenues of their languages, to retain fugitives, and repulse intruders; but their vigilance and activity have hitherto been vain; sounds are too volatile and subtile for legal restraints; to enchain syllables, and to lash the wind, are equally the undertakings of pride, unwilling to measure its desires by its strength. The French language has visibly changed under the inspection of the academy…and no Italian will maintain, that the diction of any modern writer is not perceptibly different from that of Boccace, Michiavel, or Caro (pp. 324-325).

Objections were also raised on other grounds, that, is the English spirit of liberty is opposed to any imposition of restraints on the use of language. Johnson also opposed Swift's proposal to establish an academy "the decrees of which every man would have been willing, and many would have been proud to disobey" (p.325). By then it dawned on everybody that the establishment of an academy with regulatory powers on language was not practicable on two grounds, namely, the ever changing nature of language and the English spirit of freedom. Johnson's view had a decided influence and after the publication of his <u>Dictionary</u> advocacy of an academy becomes less frequent. Sheridan repeats Johnson's views and says in all controversies it is better to wait for the decisions of time. Once Swift's proposal for an academy failed, people saw what could not be imposed by authoritative edict might still win adoption through reason and persuasion. Attempts were made by individuals to arouse the interest of the public in language and to publish weekly or monthly pamphlets on grammar and other linguistic topics. The belief that a standard could be brought about by force changed to the attitude that it could be achieved only by general consent. Two great needs were still felt and were often lamented, i.e., for a dictionary and a grammar. The first one was supplied by <u>Johnson's Dictionary</u> in 1755 and the second need was fulfilled by the early grammarians in the next half-century.

1.12.5 Dr. Johnson's Dictionary

There were a few dictionaries in the form of glossaries and dictionaries of hard words earlier but it is in the eighteenth century that dictionaries in the proper sense of the word appeared.

The most significant of these is Dr.Johnson's Dictionary. C.L.Wrenn's words illustrate what it has done to language:

> But the greatest landmark in the development of lexicography was Dr. Samuel Johnson's Dictionary of the English Language, completed in 1755. For this employed much more fully and effectively the method of illustrating by quotations which Bailey [his dictionary came out in 1730] had only occasionally used. Moreover its definitions, despite some humorous or individual vagaries, were the first to be really clear, scholarly and effective. At once it became the standard work, for long the arbiter of English usage and the standard for English spelling. All good dictionaries have benefited by its pioneering steps; and it set the model for the next hundred years and also first set up the habit which has now become well-nigh universal, of treating a dictionary as a final and uncontestable authority (p.100).

The dictionary, brought out in two folio volumes, was indeed a remarkable achievement when we consider that it was the work of one man labouring almost without assistance for a short period of seven years. A.C.Baugh says it is also painfully inadequate when judged by modern standards. It is marred in places by prejudice and caprice and sometimes its etymologies are ridiculous though its definitions are generally sound. He included occasionally words that could not have belonged to English at all. But virtues outweigh its weaknesses. He contributed immensely towards standardizing English by reducing a rather chaotic spelling system to something like order and virtually fixed English spelling. By distinguishing between reputable and low words he differentiated between what was good English and what was not. By calling Johnson "the man who had conferred stability on the language of his country," Boswell was apparently expressing the opinion of his age. Another great need felt by the Age was for a grammar.

1.12.6 Prescriptive Grammars

Treatises on English grammar appeared in the sixteenth century also but they were mainly written either to teach English to foreigners or to provide a basis for the study of Latin grammar. But not until the eighteenth century was English grammar viewed as a subject deserving of study in itself. Most compilers of English grammar were thoroughly trained in Latin grammar and tried to keep as many of the traditional concepts as could be fitted to a more analytic language. There was an outburst of interest in English grammar in the 1760s. There were many books by earlier grammarians and also by rhetoricians interested in matters of usage during the late eighteenth century. All these attempted to ascertain English language. The grammarians in general aimed to do three things

1) to codify the principles of the language and reduce it to a rule.

2) to settle disputed points and decide cases of divided usage and

3) to point out common errors and thus correct and improve language.

Grammarians felt that it was necessary to demonstrate that English was not so irregular and capricious in nature that it could not be reduced to rule and used accurately. In fact it was the

practice which was bad and not the English grammar itself. As Robert Lowth said in the preface to his grammar, grammar was generally neglected by people because of the very simplicity and facility of English. In this period grammarians acted as the lawgivers and pronounced judgement. Hating uncertainty, these grammarians pronounced only one form correct whenever two alternate forms of expression were found. Once a question had been decided, all instances of contrary usage were unequivocally condemned. Grammarians undertook upon themselves the treatment of errors pedagogically and perhaps took delight in detecting supposed flaws in the writers. A.C.Baugh says "To prescribe and to proscribe seem to have been co-ordinate aims of the grammarians" (p.335). Some of the prescriptions made in this period are still heard today.

- distinction between lie (lay, lain) and lay (laid, laid)

- condemnation of had rather, had better.

- use of whose as the possessive of which.

- preference for different from (rather than different than or to)

- condemnation of between you and I, it is me , who is it for

There were also expressions condemned in the eighteenth century but subsequently approved in the standard speech.

- differentiation of between and among

- use of the comparative rather than superlative when only two things are involved (the larger, not largest, of two)

- incomparables such as perfect, chief, sound should not be compared (more perfect etc)

- the defence of from hence and the condemnation of this here and that here

Here are some prescriptions which now form part of all our grammars.

- the case of the pronoun after than and as is to be determined by the construction to be supplied or understood; eg., "He is older than she" but "He likes you better than me" .

- the case before gerund should be objective but not possessive; eg. I don't like him doing that

  rather than his doing that.

- double negatives were condemned.

- distinction between will and shall in sentences expressing simple futurity.

The grammarians seemed to have been making absolute what was a common but not universal tendency in written language in the case of will and shall distinction. It is true in other issues of grammar too.

The criteria by which disputed questions were settled were <u>reason</u>, <u>etymology</u> and the <u>example of Latin and Greek</u>. <u>Reason</u> was commonly understood as consistency, or as it was called, <u>analogy</u>. Analogy appeals to an instinct for regularity. If the rules are consistent with each other they will be easy to use. Where one expression could be paralleled by another in the language, it was commonly preferred.

- preference for <u>backwards</u>, <u>forwards</u> over <u>backward</u>, <u>forward.</u>

- by analogy <u>afterwards</u>, <u>homewards</u> were preferred to <u>afterward</u>, <u>homeward</u>.

- in adverbs <u>thereabout</u>, <u>thereabouts</u> the former alone is analogical since no such word as <u>abouts</u> is found in English. Hence <u>hereabouts</u>, and <u>whereabouts</u> are also frowned upon.

- to make the first of these pairs an adjective and the second a particle in <u>forward; forwards</u>, <u>backward</u>, <u>backwards</u> consistently.

On consideration of <u>etymology</u>, when the roots appear to be English, that particular expression should be preferred. Thus Lowth preferred <u>averse from</u> to <u>averse to</u>. Campbell preferred <u>beholden</u> to <u>obliged</u> or <u>indebted to</u>. He objected to <u>unloose</u> since it did not signify <u>tie</u> on the analogy of <u>untie</u> and <u>loose</u> which are synonyms.

The third criterion of citing the <u>example of Greek and Latin</u> grammars to settle disputes of grammar was only occasionally used. Though most ideas of universal grammar were derived from Latin and Greek in the eighteenth century, a definite feeling grew that there were more disadvantages than advantages in trying to fit English into the pattern of Latin grammar. Towards the end of the eighteenth century the modern doctrine that the most important criterion of language is usage is beginning to be heard. One could see it in the writings of Priestly and Campbell, the former being faithful to his principle everywhere and the latter spelling out the doctrine with clarity but violating it. But the modern day grammar called <u>descriptive grammar</u> is much more tolerant and liberal, and it makes the common practice its role arbiter. On the whole, eighteenth century grammarians were attempting to fix the language and to give definiteness and order to the system which was uncodified before. Much of the uncertainty in language that troubled Dryden and Swift was removed with the codification of usage and settlement of disputed points.   When we think of weaknesses of the age, except in one or two cases mentioned above, they failed to recognize that usage was the sole arbiter in linguistic matters. Ignorant of the processes of linguistic change, which at times could be capricious and unreasonable, they tried to solve most problems by logic. They also thought solutions could be imposed upon the world by authority.

When we look at the significant developments in English grammar what strikes us as the most important addition is the gradual establishment of the progressive form of the verb. In comparison to other modern languages, English is more varied and flexible in some of its verbal expressions. It has <u>do forms </u>in negative and interrogative sentences as well as in emphatic sentences (for example, <u>I do agree with you</u>).   The use of forms <u>to be</u> and the present participle called the progressive form (eg. <u>She is singing</u>) has been widely extended in English in the modern period.

In Old English progressive sentences are found only occasionally and in the Middle English period their use increases. The chief factor in their growth is the use of the participle as a noun governed by the preposition <u>on</u> (eg. <u>he burst out on laughing</u>). It progressively weakened to <u>he burst out a-laughing</u> and to <u>he burst out laughing</u>. In the same way <u>he was on laughing</u> became <u>he was a-laughing</u> and finally <u>he was laughing</u>. Today such forms are freely used in all tenses (<u>is laughing</u>, <u>was laughing</u>, <u>will be laughing</u> etc.).

By the end of the eighteenth century, such forms have been extended to the passive. Old English had no progressive passive. The construction <u>the man is on laughing</u> was also capable of passive significance in some contexts. Thus <u>the house is on building</u> implies that the house is in the process of construction. The form is heard in such colloquial expressions as <u>the dinner is cooking</u> and <u>the tea is drawing</u>. When the preposition was completely lost (on building>a-building>building) the form became <u>the house is building</u>. Such expressions can have either active or passive significance and so they have obvious limitations. Thus <u>the wagon is making</u> is a passive sentence whereas the <u>wagon is making a noise</u> is an active one. Whenever the subject of a sentence is animate the verb is almost certain to be in the active voice (eg. "the man is building a house"). With some verbs the construction was impossible in a passive sense. Thus the idea <u>he is always being called</u> could not be expressed by <u>he is always calling</u>. In the last decade of the eighteenth century the first traces of our modern expression <u>the house is being built</u> can be found. Though it has been used even by Shakespeare, it was resisted by some and attacked by many. But it was supported by Coleridge, Lamb and Cardinal Newman. Although the origin of this sentence structure occurred in the later part of the eighteenth century initially, its establishment in the language and general acceptance took place in the nineteenth century. The history of the new progressive form shows that English is a living and growing thing and that even its grammar could be inventive if the occasion really demands it.

1.12.7 Foreign Borrowings

Another important development in the eighteenth century in English language was large-scale borrowing of words from new foreign sources. The British colonised North America, India, Australia and some African countries during this period. In some of these countries the English had to compete with other European powers such as Spain, French and Portuguese to establish their supremacy in the lands. As a result we find many new native words creeping into English either through other languages or directly. Due to the borrowings from several parts of the world which was the result of multitude of contacts English language has had with other tongues, the English language developed its uniquely cosmopolitan character. This topic will be dealt with in detail in the next lesson.

1.12.8 Summary

In this lesson you have seen how the fascination of the eighteenth century men of letters for authority had affected the course of evolution of English. The scholars found the English language unsystematic and disorderly and tried to consciously improve it. They sometimes attempted to fix the language by checking its wild growth and at other times by encouraging public attention on matters of dispute and by suggesting measures for its correction. Their attempts to have an English Academy on the model of France and Italy failed but the dictionaries,

the most significant of them being Dr.Johnson's, and grammar books did come out of their efforts. All these helped to fix the language within the possible limits. Through the efforts of many grammarians who tried to solve problems of English grammar by analogy, logic or by comparison with Latin, English grammar has been systematized to a great extent during this period. The expansion of the British Empire into new territories resulted in the vast growth of vocabulary through adaptations from a variety of other tongues. It, of course, lent a cosmopolitan character to the English language. All the above factors made the English of the eighteenth century modern and brought it more or less close to English as we know today.

1.12.9 Glossary

Analogy : inference that if two or more things agree in some respects they will probably agree in others.

Bandana : a large coloured figured hand-kerchief

paramatta   a light dress fabric

Boer : South African of Dutch or Huguenot descent

Caribou : a large deer with palmate antlers especially of the New world

cooey : within calling distance

elixir : a substance held capable of prolonging life indefinitely; also a cure-all.

Embalm : to treat (a corpse) so as to protect from decay

etymology : the history of a linguistic form (as a word) shown by training its development and relationships

juggernaut : A massive inexorable force or object that crushes everything in its path.

mutability : prone to change, fickle, liable to mutation,

papoose : a young child of North American Indian parents

prescriptive : related to laying down as a guide or a rule of action

proscriptive : related to condemning or forbidding something as harmful

raccoon   a gray North American mammal with a black mask.

sublunary : under the influence of the moon

tomahawk : A light axe used as missile and as a hand weapon by North American Indians

1.12.10 Sample Questions

1. How is the temper of the eighteenth century reflected in its attitude towards language?

2. Discuss the importance of Dr.Johnson's dictionary in the history of English language.

3. Evaluate the efforts of the eighteenth century Grammarians and Rhetoricians.

4. Comment on the efforts of the eighteenth century scholars to define and standardize English.

5. Give an account of reforms during 1650-1800.

6. How did the efforts to establish an English Academy on the model of the French academy fail?

7. Write short notes on the following:

a) Swift's proposal   b) Foreign borrowings
c) Adaptations from America   d) Australian words in English
e) Borrowed words from India   f) African words in English
g) Prescriptive grammar   h) Establishment of Passive Progressive

1.12.11 Suggested Reading

A.C.Baugh.   -   *A History of the English Language*. New Delhi: Allied Publishers, 1968.

C.L.Wrenn.   -   *The English Language.* Delhi: Vikas, 1949.

F.T.Wood.   -   *An Outline History of the English Language.* Delhi: Macmillan, 1941.

H.C.Wyld.   -   *A Short History of English*. London: John Murray, 1914.

Henry Bradley.   -   *The Making of English*, Revised by Simeon Potter. Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1968.

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Lesson – 13

The 19th Century – Changing Conditions and Their Impact on Language

Structure

1.13.1. Objectives:

To make the students understand

* the development of the English language through the 19th century.

* the growth of science and its impact on the language.

* the changes in grammar and vocabulary.

* the impact of the British empire on the language.

* the development of American English.

1.13.2. Introduction

The events of the nineteenth century affecting the English speaking countries were of great political and social importance. As far as the effect of these events on the language is concerned, they were not of a revolutionary character. The success of the British on the sea in the course of the Napoleonic Wars left England in a position of undisputed naval supremacy. England also began to exercise control over most of the world's commerce by the beginning of the nineteenth century.

The great reform measures – the reorganization of parliament, the revision of the penal code and the poor laws, the restrictions placed on child labour, and the other industrial reforms – were important factors in establishing English society on a more democratic basis. They lessened the gap between the upper and the lower classes and greatly increased the opportunities for the mass of the

population to share in the economic and cultural advantages that became available in the course of the century.

The establishment of the first cheap newspaper in 1816, introduction of cheap postage in 1840, and the improved means of travel and communication brought about by the railroad, the steamboat, and the telegraph had the effect of uniting more closely the different parts of England and of spreading the influence of the standard speech. At the same time, some of the larger colonies of England like India were fighting for independence. These colonies along with the United States, which was going through a phase of rapid intellectual development, came to believe that their use of the language is as much the standard as that of the mother country.

We can find these events and developments reflected in the vocabulary of the 19th century English. But more influential than these were the great and rapid changes in the fields of science and technology. Rapid progress was made in every field of intellectual activity during the nineteenth century. Being a period of great enterprise and activity, the 19th century witnessed a corresponding increase in the vocabulary of English. The great developments in industry, the increased public interest in sports and amusements, and the many improvements in the mode of living … have all contributed to the growth of vocabulary during this period. The nineteenth century offers an excellent opportunity to observe the relation between a civilization and the language which is an expression of it.

The changing conditions of the nineteenth century have not brought about any significant grammatical changes in the language, but have resulted in the expansion of the English vocabulary.

Words are the symbols of man's range of thinking at any given time. They designate the things he knows and keep pace with the advance of his knowledge. The date when a new word enters the language is in general the date when the object, experience, observation, or whatever it is that calls it forth has entered his consciousness. The Oxford Dictionary furnishes us with dated quotations showing when the different meanings of every word have arisen and when new words have first appeared in the language. With the help of such a dictionary, we could almost write the history of civilization merely from linguistic evidence. For example, in the early part of the 19th century, we find words like 'horsepower' or 'lithograph' used for the first time. This indicates that some form of mechanical power which needs to be measured in familiar terms or a new process of engraving has been devised. The appearance in the language of words like 'railway', 'locomotive' about 1835 tells us that steam railways were then coming in. In 1839 the words 'photograph' and 'photography' first appear and a beginning is made towards a considerable vocabulary of special words such as 'camera', film', enlargement', 'emulsion', 'focus', 'shutter' etc. 'Concrete' in the sense of a mixture of crushed stone and cement dates from 1834, but 'reinforced concrete' is used only in the twentieth century. The word ' cable' occurs only a few years before the laying of the first Atlantic cable in 1857-58.

'Refrigerator' is first found in English in an American quotation of 1841. In the last quarter of the nineteenth century an interesting story of progress is told by new words or new meanings such as 'type writer', 'telephone', 'apartment', 'house', 'twist', 'drill', 'drop-forging', 'blueprint', 'motor cycle', 'feminist', 'marathon', 'fundamentalist'.

In the ensuing sections let us examine the changing conditions of the 19th century and their impact on English vocabulary.

1.13.3. Developments in Science:

The most striking feature of the 19th century is the rapid progress made in all fields of science. In every field of pure and applied science, a need for thousands of new terms was felt. Many of the technical words coined were known only to the specialist, but in course of time, some of them have become familiar even to the common man.

In the field of medicine we speak today familiarly of 'anaemia', appendicitis', 'bronchitis', 'diphtheria', and numerous other diseases and ailments. 'Homeopathy', osteopathy', 'bacteriology', 'immunology', 'clinics', 'antitoxin', 'anaesthetic', 'vaccine' etc. are all familiar terms to us today. We are also familiar with the names of drugs like 'aspirin', 'iodine', 'insulin', 'morphine', and 'penicillin' Numerous other words related to medicine such as 'adenoids', endocrine glands', 'hormones', 'stethoscope', 'metabolism', 'proteins', 'carbohydrates', enzymes', 'allergy' etc. have come into use during the nineteenth century.

In the field of electricity words like 'dynamo', 'commutator', 'alternating current' have been in the language since 1870. Physics is yet another subject which has made us familiar with terms like ' calorie', 'electron', 'ionization', 'ultraviolet rays', 'quantum theory' etc. Chemistry has contributed so many common words that it is difficult to make a selection – 'alkali', 'benzine', 'cyanide', 'nitroglycerine', 'radium', 'biochemical', 'petrochemical' etc. Originally scientific words and expressions such as 'ozone', 'natural selection', 'stratosphere' have become familiar through the popularity of certain books or the scientific reports in magazines and news papers.

1.13.4. Automobile, Moving Picture, Radio:

Technological advancements resulting in the invention of the radio and the moving picture have brought a number of new words into general use. The words ' Cinema' and 'moving picture' date from 1899. 'Screen', 'reel', 'newsreel', 'film', 'scenario', 'projector', 'close-up', 'fade-out', 'feature film' etc. are words associated with the same source. The spread of popular interest in the radio and the film has resulted in the expansion of vocabulary related to them. The word 'radio' in

the sense of a receiving set dates from about 1925. Numerous words associated with the radio have come into popular use in the first half of the 20th century.

From the popularity of the automobile and the numerous activities associated with it a number of new words have come into common use. Many old words are used in a special sense. For example, the word 'park' was originally a military term (to park cannon). But in the last part of the nineteenth century and later, the verb 'to park' scarcely suggests anything other than leaving a vehicle in a parking space or along the side of a road. The word 'automobile' and the more common word 'motarcar' are new, but words like 'coach', coupe', 'runabout' are terms adapted from earlier types of vehicles. Thus associated with the automobile are words like 'carburetor', 'spark plug', 'choke', 'clutch', 'gear', 'piston rings', 'steering wheel', 'self-starter', 'shock absorber', 'radiator' etc.

1.13.5. The Expansion of the British Empire and its Effects on the Language:

The expansion of the British Empire is not the result of a consciously planned and aggressively executed programme, but the product of circumstances and often of chance. The English settlements at Jamestown and Plymouth were the beginning of a process of colonization in North America. England also got a foothold in India in the eighteenth century itself. The beginnings of the English occupation of Australia also occurred in the eighteenth century.

Captain Cook, an enterprising British seaman, sailed around the islands of New Zealand and then reached Australia. In both places he planted the British flag. A few years later the English discovered a use to which this territory could be put. They found the prisons at home overcrowded and in 1787 it was decided to send several shiploads of convicts to Australia. Soon after, the discovery that sheep-raising could be profitably carried out in Australia led to considerable immigration, which later became a stampede when gold was discovered in the island in 1851. The opening up of Africa was largely the work of the nineteenth century, although it had its start at the close of the eighteenth century itself. In 1795 England seized the Dutch settlement at Cape Town. From this small beginning sprang the control of England over a large part of South Africa.

The most obvious effects of English expansion are to be seen in the vocabulary. New territories mean new experiences, new activities, new products, all of which are in time reflected in the language. Trade routes have always been important avenues for the transmission of ideas and words.

In America contact with the Indians resulted in a number of characteristic words such as 'caribou', 'hominy', 'moose', 'raccoon', 'skunk, 'terrapin', 'totem', 'wigwam' etc. From other parts of America, especially where the Spanish and the Portuguese were settled, we have derived many

more words, chiefly through Spanish. Thus we have in English Mexican words such as 'chili', 'chocolate' and 'tomato'; from Cuba and the West Indies come words like 'barbecue', 'cannibal', 'canoe', 'hammock', 'hurricane', 'maize', 'potato' and tobacco'. From Brazil and other South American regions we have 'jaguar', 'poncho', tapioca' etc.

English contact with the East has been equally productive of new words. From India come words like 'bandana', 'bangle', Brahman', 'bungalow', 'calico', 'cashmere', 'cheroot', 'curry', 'coolie', 'cot', 'dinghy', 'jungle', 'juggernaut', 'jute', 'loot', 'mandarin', 'nirvana', 'pariah', 'polo', 'punch', 'pundit', 'rajah', 'rupee', 'sepoy', 'thug', 'toddy', 'tom-tom' and ' verandah'. Many words of Indian origin entered the English language during the nineteenth century. It would be apt here to consider what F.T. Wood says about Indian words entering English during the nineteenth century:

> It is to the nineteenth century that the greatest number of Indian words belong, for it was then that India became increasingly important to England, and Englishmen went there in ever increasing numbers either as soldiers, as civil servants or as traders.

A number of words form Africa, either directly from the natives or from Dutch and Portugese traders, entered the English Language. 'Banana', 'Boer', 'boorish', 'gorilla', 'chimpanzee', 'guinea', 'palaver' and ' Zebra ' are some examples of this kind. 'Boomerang' and 'Kangaroo' are two interesting examples of Australian native words that have passed into universal use.

Thus, the most important reason for the cosmopolitan character of the English vocabulary today is seen to be the multitude of contacts the English language has had with other tongues in widely scattered parts of the world, especially during the nineteenth century.

Thus the changes in the vocabulary of English during the nineteenth century are of great significance both in terms of their number and also of their cosmopolitan character. As A.C. Baugh remarks, "we must recognize that in the nineteenth century a new force affecting language arose, and that is … its tendency constantly to renew the vocabulary and its ability to bring about the adoption of new words."

1.13.6. Grammatical Tendencies:

When compared to the changes in the vocabulary, changes in grammar during the nineteenth century are far too few. Many factors gave stability to English grammar: the printing press, popular education, improvements in travel and communication, social consciousness have been particularly effective. Very few changes can be observed in grammatical forms and conventions. The substitution of 'you were' for 'you was' in the singular occurs about 1820. Some tendency towards loss of inflection is to be noticed in informal speech. The colloquial 'he don't' represents an attempt to

eliminate the ending of the third person singular and reduce this verb in the negative to a uniform 'do' in the present tense. Likewise the widespread practice of disregarding the objective case form 'whom' in the interrogative (who do you want?) illustrates the same impulse. Though many purists object to such use of 'who', it has a long and respectable history. Shakespeare often used it.

A new grammatical convention sprang up during this period. The 'get' passive (he got hurt) is largely a nineteenth century development. This expression came into being as 'he is hurt' is too static, 'he became hurt' too formal. This construction, though noted in 1652 itself was unusual before the nineteenth century.

One other important grammatical tendency is the use of verb-adverb combinations. A significant characteristic of the modern vocabulary is the extensive use of expressions like 'set out', 'gather up', 'put off' and ' bring in'. These expressions are made up of a common verb, often of one syllable and an adverb. It we notice examples of this kind, we will find that many of them are substitutes for single verbs such as 'postpone', 'continue' etc. Many of these expressions are colloquial and clearly betray their popular origin. Many others are considered slang or inelegant.

Opposition is sometimes expressed toward the extensive use of these verb-adverb combinations. But the objection does not seem well founded. The verb-adverb combination conveys a force or a shade of meaning that could not be otherwise expressed and there can be no question that the flexibility of the language has been enormously increased. The twenty verbs back, blow, break, bring, call come, fall, get, give, go, hold, lay, let, make, put, run, set, take, turn and work have entered into 155 combinations with over 600 distinct meanings or uses.

The use of the progressive passive could be traced to the end of the eighteenth century. As A.C. Baugh remarks "it belongs to the very end of the eighteenth century." Old English had no progressive passive. It is only in the last years of the eighteenth century that we find the first traces of the modern expression 'the house is being built'. The combination of 'being' with a past participle to form a participial phase had been in use for some time. Shakespeare says: "which, being kept close, might move more grief to hide" (Hamlet). This usage is believed to have suggested the new progressive passive phrase. One of the earliest instances of the construction could be fond in 1795 in Robert Southey who wrote:

A fellow, whose uppermost upper grinder is being torn out a mutton-fisted barber.

Even today the progressive passive is used only in the present and simple past tense (is or was being built). We hardly come across the progressive in perfect and future tenses as in it will be being built next year or the house has been being built for two years.

The history of the new progressive passive shows that English is a living and growing thing and its grammar is not fixed. Although the origin of the construction is traced to the latter part of the eighteenth century, its establishment in the language and ultimate acceptance came about in the nineteenth century.

1.13.7. Spelling Reform:

In the latter part of the nineteenth century renewed interest was shown in the problem of English spelling. The English have struggled with their spelling for nearly four hundred years. It was one of the chief problems which seemed to confront the language in the time of Shakespeare too. It continued to be an issue throughout the seventeenth and to some extent in the eighteenth century as well. The publication in 1837 of a system of shorthand by Isaac Pitman led to the proposal of several plans of phonetic spelling for general use. In these schemes Pitman was assisted by Henry Ellis, a much greater scholar. The Bible and numerous classics were printed in the new spelling and the movement aroused considerable public interest. By 1870 the English Philological Society had taken up the question and a number of discussions were held on the issue. America also became interested in the question, and in 1883 the American Philological Association recommended the adoption of a long list of new spellings approved jointly by it and the English society. Spelling Reform Associations were formed in both countries.

In 1898 the National Education Association formally adopted for use in its publications twelve simplified spellings – 'the', 'altho', 'thoro', 'thorofare', 'thru', 'thruout', 'program', 'catalogue', 'prolog', 'decalog', 'demagog', and 'pedagog'. Some of these have come into general use, but on the whole the public remained indifferent. The English-speaking world does not appear as yet to be stirred to the necessity for spelling reform. There has been consistent active opposition to the issue of spelling reform. Innate conservatism is responsible, to a large extent, for the opposition. It is also felt that the etymological value of the existing spelling is an asset not to be lightly given up. A brief discussion of this was made in Lesson 1.

It we observe the history of spelling reform, we will realize that a majority of people opposed radical changes in the existing spelling system of the language. Therefore, if English spelling were ever to be reformed, it must be reformed gradually and with little disruption to the existing system.

1.13.8. Changing Conditions in America and their impact on the Language:

While studying the history of the English language and its course through the nineteenth century, it becomes indispensable to understand the American contribution to the development of

Modern English. The linguistic issues and developments which had preoccupied British scholars in the first half of the eighteenth century were to hold the attention of American scholars in the second. With the publication of Noah Webster's <u>Dissertations on the English Language</u> (1789) a proposal was made for the institution of an 'American Standard'.

So many dictionaries flooded the markets in the first half of the nineteenth century that David Crystal described it as an age of dictionaries. The first half of the nineteenth century is unique in that never before were published so large a number of dictionaries on both sides of the Atlantic, i.e., both in England and the United States of America. Joseph Worcester provides a catalogue of English dictionaries at the beginning of his 1860 edition, and identifies 64 items published in England since <u>Johnson's Dictionary</u> (1755) and a further 30 items in America since the first Webster compilation (1806) – almost one a year. These were all general dictionaries. In addition there were over 200 specialized dictionaries and glossaries. These facts show how compilers were under pressure to keep up with the increase in knowledge and terminology that stemmed from the Industrial Revolution, progress in science and medicine, and fresh perspectives of language. The world was not to see such an explosion of dictionaries and reference works again until the 1980s. Around the turn of the 19th century in America there was fierce intellectual debate about the direction the new country was taking. Of particular concern was the slow emergence of American literature when compared to Britain and other European countries. From a literary point of view the post-revolutionary period was as Ralph Waldo Emerson later described, "singularly barren". According to George Tucker, writing in 1813, Britain's population of 18 million was producing up to a thousand new books every year, where as America's six million could manage only 20. And in 1823, it was pointed out that American presses were printing a flood of editions of British books and magazines.

The lack of works by recognized literary figures is one reason for the limited lexical growth. Thousands of new words were being coined all over America, but they were not reaching a wide public through large book sales. Times would change by the middle of the century as a host of writers like Washington Irving, Walt Whitman, Edgar Allan Poe and Emerson took to serious writing. Harriet Beecher Stowe's <u>Uncle Tom's Cabin</u> was the best selling novel of the 19th century and in this work we would find the results of the vast tide of lexical innovation which was already transforming the linguistic identity of the new nation.

The new American vocabulary of the 19th century came from a mixture of sources. Many older English words came to be used with new senses. The opening up of the West was one major factor in lexical expansion. The arrival of hosts of immigrants towards the end of the century was another. <u>Bronco, Cattletown, chaps, maverick, ranch, range, roundup, rustler, six shooter, stampede, tenderfoot</u> etc. are contributions of 19th century America to the vocabulary of the English language.

1.13.9 Summary:

The socio-political events and the scientific and technological discoveries of the nineteenth century affecting the English-speaking countries were of great linguistic importance. The great reform measures were important factors in spreading the influence of the standard speech. The socio-political developments of the period were will-reflected in the vocabulary of the 19th century English. The nineteenth century was marked by rapid progress in every sphere of intellectual activity including science and technology. We can see a corresponding increase in the vocabulary of English as well.

The expansion of the British Empire resulted in the expansion of the vocabulary. A number of foreign words entered the English language as a result of the colonial contact with countries like America, Australia, Africa, India etc. Besides rapidly expanding the English vocabulary the changing conditions of the 19th century have also brought about a few changes in the grammar of the language. We have examined these changes at length in 14.2.5. The Spelling Reform was yet another movement that picked up momentum during the nineteenth century though it did not yield any significant results.

The changing conditions in America have also contributed significantly to the development of modern English. The rapid growth of vocabulary resulted in an explosion of dictionaries on both sides of the Atlantic during the latter part of the nineteenth century. Thus the impact of the nineteenth century changing conditions is felt more in the realm of English vocabulary than in any other linguistic area.

1.13.10 Sample Questions:

1. Discuss the impact of scientific and technological developments of the 19th century on the English language.

2. How did the expansion of the British Empire result in the expansion of English vocabulary?

3. What is the contribution of the 19th century America to the development of modern English?

1.13.11 Suggested Reading:

1. A. C. Baugh. A History of the English Language.
2. David Crystal. Encyclopaedia of the English Language
3. F.T. Wood. An Outline History of the English Language.

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Dr. P. Hari Padma Rani

Lesson 14

Processes of Word - Formation and Semantic Change

Structure:
    1.14.1. Objectives
    1.14.2. Introduction
    1.14.3. Word-Formation or Word-Creation
    1.14.4. Change of Meaning
    1.14.5. Conclusion
    1.14.6. Sample Questions
    1.14.7. Suggested Reading

1.14.1. Objectives:

This lesson will enable the reader to understand

(i)   that language change is a natural process.

(ii)   the methods by which a language enriches its vocabulary.

(iii)   the major processes of word-formation in English.

(iv)   the types of change of meaning which took place in the English language.

1.14.2. Introduction

We discussed in Lesson 1 that the most important feature characterising a living and natural language is the process of change. The changes taking place in a language can be at different levels pronunciation, vocabulary, spelling or grammar. Some of the previous lessons discussed phonetic changes in the development of English. A steady alteration of the vowel sounds, and even a few consonant sounds, can be witnessed in the growth of the English language. In the case of vocabulary, old words die out, new words are added, and existing words change their meaning. The preceding lessons also gave us an understanding of how changes in grammar also took place in the growth of English from Old English to Modern English periods. In this lesson we will concentrate on the changes affecting English vocabulary discussing them under two main topics: (I) how English has enriched its vocabulary by the making of new words and (ii) how words have changed their meanings in the development of the language.

1.14.3. Word-Formation Or Word-Creation

A language needs new words to meet the ever-changing communication needs of the speakers of that language. The English language has enriched its vocabulary not only by the adoption of words from other languages, but also by the making of new words. There are several ways in which a new word can be made. Generally a new word is created with a signification attached to it. But on a few occasions a word may undergo a change in its form but without any change in its meaning. The following are some of the major processes of word-formation.

1) Imitation or Onomatopoeia

This is one of the oldest methods of word making. *Onomatopoeia* in Greek literally means *name-making*. A number of words in English, especially those which describe some kind of sound, are imitative in character: *bang, pop, buzz, chick, hiss, giggle,* etc. Words formed by this process are called *echo words* or *echoic words*. The name of the *cuckoo* is an attempt to represent its distinctive call, and the Latin *barbarus*, from which is derived the word *barbarian*, was a verbal imitation of the babbling of foreign tribes which was unintelligible to Romans. There seems to be an onomatopoeic or suggestive principle underlying many terms in daily use. The consonants /p/, /t/, /k/ give the impression of quick action : *pitch, torrent, kick, clutch,* etc. The combination /bl/ is frequently employed to suggest inflation or explosion, possibly from the inflation of the cheeks when it is being pronounced : *blow, bloated, bladder, blast, blare,* etc. /fl/ is found in words where there is a suggestion of hurry: *fly, flee, fling, flash,* etc. */w/* is representative of something subdued and quiet : *whisper, whimper, whine*, etc. A large number of words suggesting stability begin with the combination /st/ : *stop, stay, station, still, stand, stable, statute, steadfast,* etc. Many rustling sounds have /ʃ/ in the final position: *rush, swish*, etc.

There are also many reduplicating words like *bow-wow*, *ding-dong*, *flip-flop*, *ping-pong*, etc.

2) Conversion

A very prolific source of new words from old is the happy facility of Modern English for converting words from one grammatical function to another with no change in form. That is why this process is also called "functional shift."

It is possible to use the same word as noun, verb, adjective, and many other parts of speech. The most frequent interchange is possibly that between noun and verb. From the noun *park*, in the sense of an open-space where cars may be left, is coined the verb *to park*. And the noun *pocket* gives the verb *to pocket*. The nouns signifying the principal parts of the body can all be used as verbs. One may *head* a committee, *shoulder* or *elbow* one's way through a crowd, *hand* in one's papers, *finger* one's tie, *thumb* a ride, *back* one's car, *foot* a bill, and *eye* a person with suspicion. Some nonanatomical examples are to *contact*, to *chair* (a session), to *telephone*, and to *date*. Verbs may also

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be used as nouns. One may take a *walk*, a *run*, a *drive*, a *stand*, a *break*, a *turn*, or a *look*. Adjectives may also be used as verbs: *better, tame*, etc.

In many cases where the same word exists as both noun and verb, the stress falls on the first syllable in the former and on the second syllable in the latter : 'import (n), im'port (v); 'subject (n), sub'ject (v).

The word *panic,* which is now a noun, was at one time an adjective derived from the name of the god *Pan*.

3) Affixation or Derivation

This is a very ancient method of word-formation. The Anglo-Saxons made extensive use of it, taking a simple root-word and adding a suffix to express a related idea. Some examples are:

-dom: freedom, *kingdom*	*-ling*: *duckling*, *darling*
-ship: *fellowship*, *friendship*	*-ate*: *decorate*
-th: strength, *length*	*-ness*: *darkness, richness, bigness*
-less: *careless*, *moneyless*	*-ous*: *furious, glorious*
-y: *healthy*, *wealthy*, *sticky*	*-ment*: *basement, government*
-ish: *English*, *clownish*, *reddish*	*-ist and –ism: socialist, socialism*
	-ette: cigarette, kitchenette, novelette

The most frequently used of all at the present time is probably *–ee*: *employee, nominee, refugee, examinee, payee, addressee*, etc. Another very common suffix in Modern English is the verbal ending *-en : lengthen, fasten, shorten,* etc. Suffixes may be resuscitated and multiplied by analogy. Thus we have *fruiteria* from *cafeteria, cheeseburger* from *hamburger*. Actually, *hamburger* is from *Hamburg + er*, and it has no ham in it.

In the English of the last hundred years prefixes have been employed much more extensively than suffixes, and most of them come from Latin : *ambi-, ante-, pre-, post-, ex-, con-, inter-, super-,* etc. The extent to which words can be multiplied by the addition of a prefix to a basic root is almost unlimited. Thus from the simple Latin root *vert* (to turn), we have *convert*, *pervert*, *controvert, extrovert, introvert, invert, divert, revert, subvert,* etc.

4) Abbreviation

An abbreviation becomes recognized as a word when the full form is replaced by the abbreviated form in ordinary writing and speech.

(a) Clipping or Shortening: In this process, a word may be lopped at either end, and what remains over is the new word. For example, *zoo* has now taken the place of *zoological gardens*. Words formed in this way are called *clipped words*. The term *Nazi* has become a substitute for the

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combination National Socialist. *Bus* has superseded *omnibus* while *photo*, *bike* and *pram* have superseded *photograph, bicycle,* and *perambulator* respectively. *Mob* is a shortening of the Latin phrase *mobile vulgus* ("fickle crowd"). *Cab* is from the French *cabriolet, and taxi* (earlier, *taxi-cab*) from *taximeter cabriolet,* a public vehicle which carried a meter to record the tax or fare. *Ad* is *advertisement*. *Chap* is an abbreviation of *chapman* (a dealer). *Miss* comes from *mistress* and *hussy* from *housewife*. *Wig* was originally *periwig*. *Fan* is from *fanatic*.

(b) Words manufactured from Initials: In certain cases, initials have become more commonly used than the actual words for which they stand, and they are regarded as words in themselves. We usually say a person is a *BA* or an *MA* rather than a *Bachelor of Arts* or a *Master of Arts*.

In many cases, the initials have remained distinct and are still recognizable as such. In other words, the abbreviations are read as individual letters. For example, *BBC* (/ˌbiːbiːˈsiː/) is from *British Broadcasting Corporation*, *WHO* is from *World Health Organization*, and *MP* is from *Member of Parliament*. In some cases, where it has been possible, the initials have actually been combined to form a word. Such abbreviations are called *acronyms*. For example, *NATO* is pronounced /ˈneɪtəʊ/ and *AIDS* is pronounced /eɪdz/.

5) Back-Formation

There are many words in English which have a false appearance of containing some well-known derivative suffix. It has sometimes happened that a word of this kind has been popularly supposed to imply the existence of a primary word from which it has been derived in the usual way. The result of this supposition is the unconscious creation of a new word, which is made out of the old one by deleting what is thought to be its suffix or sometimes by the substitution of a different suffix. For example, the verb *to beg* has been in this way formed from *beggar,* and *to peddle* from *pedlar*, *Grovelling* was originally an adverb, meaning "face downwards." But *grovelling* was misunderstood as a present participle, and the verb *grovel* was formed from it.

A good illustration of the working of this process is seen in the origin of the verb *edit*. The Latin ⁻*editor*, "one who gives out", was after the invention of printing often employed to denote the person who gives to the world a book or other literary work of which he is not the author. Although *editor* is not a word of English formation, it has an ending which resembles that of English agent nouns, so that it has suggested the coinage of a verb *to edit*. Under the head of back-formation we may refer to those instances in which an ending common to a group of words has been treated as a separate word : *isms*.

A few more examples of back-formation are *to televise* from *television*, *to audit* from *auditor*, *gloom* from *gloomy*, *greed* from *greedy*, *to donate* from *donation*.

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6) Syncopation

In this process of word-formation, a vowel in a word is elided and the consonants on either side of it are brought together, with the result that a syllable is lost. Examples are *once* (from *ones*), *else* (from *elles*), and *hence* (from *henes*). Past participles like *worn, forlorn* are the result of syncopation, since all at one time had the termination *–en*.

7) Metanalysis

In this process, the consonant at the end of one word becomes attached to the vowel at the beginning of the next word or the consonant at the beginning of one word becomes attached to the vowel that the preceding word ends with. *A nickname* was, until the middle of the fifteenth century, *an ickname*. The first syllable *ick* is a variant of the old word *eke*, meaning "*also.*" An ick name was an "also name." But in the course of years, the final *n* of *an* became attached to the beginning of the next word, and so has evolved the modern term.

A newt was at one time *an ewt*. *An umpire* was originally *a numpire*, an anglicized form of the French word *non-pair* ("unequalled" or "supreme"). *An adder* was originally *a nadder*. *An apron* was originally *a naperon* and later *a napron*. *An orange* comes from *a norange*.

8) Blending

When part of one word is combined with part of another in order to form a new word which contains the ideas behind both the original terms, we have what is known as a *portmanteau word*. The first sounds of one word are usually blended with the last sounds of another. A number of words which are now part of our normal vocabulary originated in this way. *Tragi-comedy* is from the combination of *tragedy* and *comedy*. *Melodrama* comes from *melody* and *drama*. This was suggested by the early nineteenth century "blood and thunder" play, which usually had song and music plentifully interspersed in it. *Lunch* is said to have originated in the combination of *lump* and *hunch*. *Brunch* is a combination of *breakfast* and *lunch*. *Electrocute* comes from *electric* and *execute*. *Smog* comes from *smoke* and *fog*. *Squash* comes from *squeeze* and *crash*. *Motel is* from *motorist* and *hotel*.

9) Slang Terms

Many slang terms, with a lapse of time, came to be accepted into the literary vocabulary as good English: *bet, chap, fun, jilt, shabby, trip, kidnap,* etc.

10) Words Derived from Proper or Personal Names

Sometimes names are converted into words. In a number of cases, scientists' names have been employed as units of measurement, especially in electricity: *watt* was a Scottish name; *faraday*, an English name; *volt*, an Italian name; *ampere*, a French name.

Examples of the converting of a surname without any change into a common noun are *boycott, mackintosh, sandwich, shrapnel,* etc. *Sadism* and *sadist* are from Marquis de Sade, who combined sexual perversion with a lust for cruelty. Occasionally Christian names have become common nouns. For example, *guy* is from Guy Fawkes, and *bobby* ("policeman") is from Sir Robert Peel. Sometimes the name is used unchanged as a verb: *to boycott, to burke*.

Sometimes a proper name is fitted with the suffix *–ize*, for use as a verb. Eg: *pasteurize, mesmerize,* etc. *Malapropism, spoonerism, and Utopian* are also from proper nouns. *Teddy Bear* is so called after Theodore Roosevelt. An *atlas* is so called from the fact that at one time the figure of Atlas, bearing the world on his shoulders, was printed on the front of it. *Dunce* is derived from the name of the medieval philosopher Duns Scotus.

11) Conscious and Deliberate Coinage

As F.T.Wood observes, "When a new invention or discovery is made there not only arises the necessity of finding a name for it but it brings in its train a whole host of fresh ideas and fresh conceptions so that a need is soon felt for words to express them." As a result, the vocabulary is enlarged by the addition of coinages.

Greek and Latin have been of great help to the word coiner. From Greek we have *oxygen*, *ether, logic, biology, photograph, telephone, microscope, bicycle*, etc. From Latin we have *radiator, propeller, impromptu,* and *extempore*. In *automobile, Television,* etc. we have words which are half-Latin and half-Greek. Burke used *diplomacy* and *electioneering;* Coleridge used *pessimism;* and Shaw used *superman*.

12) Composition or Compounding

A *compound word* is a word formed by joining two or more words to express a meaning that could be expressed by a phrase of which the simple words form part. For example *sunrise* is "the rising of the sun." The principles of English word-compounding are to a great extent inherited from the primitive Indo-European language. In those kinds of compounds that most frequently occur, the last element expresses a general meaning which the prefixed element makes less general. Thus an *apple-tree* is a tree, but only a particular kind of tree. This, however, is not always the case.

A few examples of the different types of compound words are:

Noun + Noun: railroad, weekend	Verb + Noun: cry-baby, playboy
Noun + Adjective: airtight, ice-cold	Adjective + Verb: high-flown, shortcut
Adjective + Noun: big shot, sweetmeat	Adverb + Verb: bypass, overthrow
Adverb + Noun: afterthought, underdog	Noun + Adverb: hands-off, head-on
Verb + Adverb: dugout, tie-up	Adverb + Adjective: evergreen, overdue
Noun + Verb: hand-picked, sideswipe	

Sometimes three words form a compound: *nevertheless*, *hand-to-mouth, brother-in-law,* etc. Sometimes even complete clauses (sentences) combine into words: *Howdy do, Fare-thee-well,* etc.

A number of words which were once compound words are now no longer recognizable as compound words: *Daisy* was originally *day's eye, holiday* was *holy day, gospel* was originally *gōd-spel* ("good tidings"), *Christmas* was Christ's mass, and *husbonda* ("house dweller") has become *husband*.

1.14.4. CHANGE OF MEANING

The system and study of meaning is called *semantics*. The word *Semantics* is derived from the Greek word *sema* which means sign or signal. Change of meaning, or semantic change, often alters the etymological sense. What a word once meant is not necessarily what it now means. This is particularly true of words in common or popular use. Words are for the most part purely conventional symbols. They mean what those who are using them agree to make them mean. But change of meaning though usually unpredictable, is not utterly arbitrary. The following are the chief methods by which words have changed their meanings.

1) Generalization or Expansion or Widening of Meaning

A very frequent means by which a change of meaning occurs in a word is by the process called *generalization.* In this process, a term which at one time had a specialized and restricted meaning comes in course of time to have a wider application. A good example of generalization is the word *box*. This was the name of a tree called box tree. The wood was box wood. Box wood was used almost exclusively for making small caskets for keeping jewellery, which container became known, in its turn, as a *box*. For many years, a box was always made of this particular kind of wood and was of quite small dimensions. Today a box may be of any material and of any size. Now, we have the *box* at the theatre, *box-office hit*, etc. The words *journey* and *journal* are derived from the French *jour* (day). The root meaning of *journey* is a day's walk or ride; and of *journal* a daily record of events. But both have lost their restricted meaning. We may now speak of a journey of several weeks and of a monthly journal. Another pair of words are *companion* and *comrade. Companion* literally means "one who eats bread with another person," and *comrade* means "one who shares a room." But since those with whom we share bread or a room are likely to become our friends, the modern meaning of these words was evolved.

Picture originally meant a painting. But now it means any representation of any scene. *Religion* signified a scrupulous regard for omens. Christianity has broadened its meaning. *Injury* once meant injustice. If is now applied to any kind of harm or damage.

Wall meant a rampart. Now it refers to any similar structure whether of earth, stone or brick. It is also applied to the sides of a house even if they are made of wood. *Sail* literally means to travel in a vessel propelled by sails. Now it is applied to all kinds of navigation. An *assassin* was a member of a fanatical sect in the East who intoxicated themselves with *hashish* and committed murder for the glory of their divinity. *Scene* originally meant a tent; then the booth in front of which the actors played; then a permanent structure in the Greek theatre which formed the background of the stage or orchestra. Now it is used in the most general way for anything that lies open to the view. The term *tragedy* is no longer employed in its strictly dramatic sense, but has come to mean any occurrence which is considered a great calamity.

2) Specialization of Meaning

"When a word is equally applicable to a number of different objects which resemble each other in some respects or to a vague or general category of ideas, it may at any moment become specialized by being used to name one of those objects or to express one of those ideas" (F.T.Wood). And if this particular application gains currency in the language, a new and specialized meaning is the result. Thus the Latin *liquor* means simply liquid, but in English, it often designates ardent spirits. *Ballad* means any "dance song," but now it is frequently used for a particular kind of simple, narrative poem.

Fowl meant any bird. But the word *bird* also existed in Middle English and the result was that for a while the two terms were synonyms. But gradually, *bird* came to be the more general term while *fowl* took on a specialized meaning. Similarly *deer* originally meant a wild animal, not a particular type of animal. *Shroud* meant garment. Now we use it only in a specialized sense, in reference to death and burial.

Wedd was an Anglo-Saxon noun and meant a pledge or a promise. A *wedding* was a pledge-giving, but this again has become specialized so that now the pledge is exclusively a matrimonial one. *Meat* meant food. The old meaning survives in *sweetmeat*. *Ghost* once meant spirit in general, not specifically a disembodied spirit appearing to the normal eye. *Poet* literally means a maker. But the word was borrowed by the English language in the special sense. *Affection* meant feeling in Elizabethan period. *Auction* literally means the act of increasing in any way.

Goods literally means good things. *Myth* is merely the Greek word for story. *Mansion* meant residence. *Pocket* meant a little bag. *Adventure* is "that which comes" or "happens" to one. *Coast* meant side or border. *Chaos* in Greek means yawning. *Lesson* meant a reading. *To read* meant to guess a riddle and *to write* meant to scratch. *Disease* was formerly used for any kind of discomfort.

3) Regeneration or Elevation or Amelioration of Meaning

Elevation of meaning involves the rising of meaning in a scale of values. Thus a word which once denominated something bad (or at least neutral) but comes to refer to something good has undergone elevation of meaning. *Chancellor* was a kind of door-keeper in charge of the chancel. *Chamberlain* was a room-attendant, the servant in charge of the chambers. *Minister* meant servant. *Constable* meant stable-attendant. *Governor* meant pilot. *Marshal* meant a horse-servant. When the king was the master, menial service was dignified, and, as royalty grew more splendid and the life of palaces more ceremonious, the old plain terms became titles of honour. We know the difference in rank between the steward on a steam-boat and the Lord High Steward of England. The royal family of Stuarts got their name from being the hereditary stewards of the Scottish kings. Other names of offices or occupations have risen in rank with changing circumstances or under peculiar influences: engineer, ambassador, etc.

Pioneers were soldiers who cleared the way for an army by felling trees, building roads, and doing hard and disagreeable work. They were regarded as the lowest portion of the army. The settlers in a new country or on the borders of the wilderness are the pioneers of the great march of civilization. For a time, this pioneer was a metaphor, but it has lost its figurative character, and is employed to make new metaphors, as in "pioneers of scientific discovery."

More than once a nick-name has been accepted by those to whom it is applied, and has thus risen to the rank of an ordinary descriptive term: *Yankee, Whig,* etc.

4) Degeneration or Deterioration or Degradation of Meaning

Degeneration of meaning involves the falling of meaning in a scale of values. Thus a word which once denominated something good (or at least neutral) but comes to refer to something bad has undergone degeneration of meaning.

Degeneration is sometimes due to special causes. Generally, however, a word takes its first step in the downward path when it is used in slight, perhaps in jocose, disparagement. As time goes on, it may become a term of extreme contempt or reprobation. A good example is the word *villain.* *Villain* originally signified a farm-labourer. It is derived from the Latin *villa*, "farm-house," through *villanus*, "a slave attached to one's country-place". In English, it was at first merely a descriptive term for a particular station in life. Soon it became a term of contempt for one who did not belong to the gentry. Gradually many ideas associating with villain and villany, that is, all the qualities opposed to the comprehensive word "courtesy" were built up. Thus *villain* was applied to a low fellow in general, and *villany* was used for low conduct or low language, or low thoughts. From this, to the present meaning is a short step. In this process, *villain* and *villany* have quite lost their association with any

particular rank in life. A king as well as a peasant may be described as a *villain* if he is morally wicked.

Knave meant originally boy, then servant, from the habit of calling servants boys. Thus it came to be used as a general term of disparagement for a person of inferior station, and finally, it developed the sense of moral worthlessness. Several words for woman or girl have undergone degeneration in one way or another: *Wench* was once perfectly respectable; it meant nothing but daughter, orphan, or pupil. *Quean* meant woman. A related word has given us *queen*. *Hussy* is from housewife. *Fellow*, now either contemptuous or else used lightly for man in general, once meant partner. It was Anglo-Saxon *feolaga*, one who laid down his property (fee) along with yours. Thus came the meaning of companion, then idle companion, and thus we arrive at the slighting modern sense. The literal meaning has also survived, by virtue of certain combinations into which *fellow* had entered before it began to lose caste, such as *fellowship* and compound words like *fellow-Christian*.

Silly once meant blessed or good. *Unsophisticated* is literally unadulterated or unspoiled, but is almost always a term of contempt. *Cunning* and *crafty* were also commendatory adjectives at first. *Cunning* means knowing, hence skilful. *Crafty* meant skilful, especially in a handicraft. *To counterfeit* had at first no evil suggestion. It meant simply to imitate or copy. A counterfeit also meant a portrait, as in "fair Portia's counterfeit." To copy another man's hand and seal, or to imitate the coin of the realm, however, was *felony*, and the word soon acquired the sinister associations. *Lust* originally meant pleasure.

5) Euphemism

As F.T.Wood says, "Euphemism is the description given to that figure of speech by which one seeks to hide the real nature of something unpleasant or repugnant by giving it a less offensive value and there are certain words which have changed their meaning through being frequently used in this way."

To pass away or *to fall asleep* are very commonly used instead of the verb *to die*. According to its strict etymology *cemetery* means a sleeping place, and *undertaker* has assumed a specialized meaning by dropping the adjective *funeral*, which at one time always accompanied it. An *accident* meant merely a happening. A *casualty* meant "one whom something has befallen." *Fatal*, now-a-days implying deadly or death-giving, denotes literally something that is attributable to fate.

Lunatic and *lunacy* were first used because people believed that madness was due to the influence of the moon. *Ill,* as applied to sickness, means literally uncomfortable, but has come to have a much more serious sense. *Serious* itself is often euphemistic when applied to illness.

Sometimes a learned or scientific term is used as a euphemism and becomes popular. For example, we have *perspiration* for *sweat*, *indigestion* for *over-eating*, *intoxication* for *drunkenness*,

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and *mania* for *madness*. Euphemism sometimes consists in substituting for a positive word a denial of the opposite idea. Thus for *dirty*, we may say *untidy* or *unclean;* for *lying, untruthful;* for *foolish, unwise;* for *deceitful, insincere;* for *mad*, *insane,* and so on.

In most of these cases, the euphemistic word has become as severe as the more outspoken term.

6) Hyperbole or Exaggeration

Strong feeling demands strong words. If we feel more strongly than the occasion warrants, we use terms which are disproportionate to the facts of the case. If others do the like and employ the same words, the vocabulary of the language is affected. Our strong word becomes the sign of a less emphatic idea. It loses its vigour and relaxes its hold on its original meaning. For example, *astonish* is literally "to thunderstrike." But the word has gradually lost its force, and nowadays it is an emphatic synonym for "surprise" or "excite wonder."

Amaze has a similar history. In its earliest uses, it conveyed the idea of utter physical stupefaction, or loss of one's wits. *Surprise,* which meant literally "to capture," has become purely descriptive. *No* is an old word for "never." Originally *no* and *nay* were as strong as *never* is today. *Not* is merely a clipped pronunciation of *naught*, "nothing" and meant originally "not a bit." The adjective *gentle* is from the Latin *gens* and means "belonging to one of the great families or *gentes* of Rome."

7) Extension or Transference, Followed by Differentiation of Meaning

Some words undergo a change of meaning by a process which is almost a combination of generalization and specialization but which differs from them both. Through some kind of association or resemblance, a word is applied to an object or an idea other than that for which it originally stood, but it does not as a result lose its earlier basic meaning. For example, *wire* has two meanings: 1) a metallic filament, and 2) a telegram. The former was the original sense of it, the latter is merely a transferred meaning. The same process is exemplified in the expression *to give one a ring:* from the ringing of a bell to the ringing of a telephone.

Fast has two meanings: 1) quick moving, and 2) remaining firm. The second is the earlier meaning. The notion of firmness, which appears in the expression "to stand fast," was developed, by an easy transition, into that of strength and unwavering persistence in movement. Hence it became possible to speak of "running fast."

Brand originally meant a burning piece of wood taken from the fire, and later, by analogy and association, a piece of metal made red-hot in the fire. Such an iron was commonly used for marking wine casks to indicate the quality of the liquor. Gradually the mark burnt into the wood of the cask

also became known as "the brand," and when one spoke of a wine of good brand the reference was actually to the marking, though the quality which the marking represented was uppermost in the speaker's mind. Hence the word came to signify quality. The quality of commodities has a relation to their make or their place of origin, and thus *brand* acquired its present-day meaning.

The word *anthology,* used nowadays to designate a collection of poems, is literally the Greek term for a bunch of flowers.

8) Polarization or Colouring

Sometimes a word acquires an emotional significance for which, etymologically, there is no justification. In some cases this "colouring" affects it for a limited period only; in others, it persists, and, as a result, a modification in meaning occurs. For example, *propaganda*, a derivative of the verb *to propagate*, was first used to designate a committee of the Roman Catholic Church appointed for the purpose of organizing and directing mission work. Later it was extended to cover mission work or publicity on behalf of any cause, whether religious, political, sociological or philanthropic. It implied the dissemination of information to enlighten the public and win their support for the cause in question. There was no sinister suggestion about it. Its object was to create an informed public opinion, and it was in this sense that it was used upto 1914. The change in its meaning took place during the First World War. In order to stir up patriotic fervour and maintain hatred of the enemy, the belligerent governments circulated exaggerated atrocity stories and false or "doctored" news. The aim of propaganda was no longer to enlighten but to mislead and deceive the public so as to sway its sympathies in a desired direction or to a desired end. As a result the term acquired the present sense.

Literally an *anarchist* is a person who stands for a form of government directly the opposite of the totalitarian, i.e. one where the administration is decentralized as far as possible. Actually *anarchism* is an idealist conception of society and demands a high sense of moral responsibility in the individual. But to most people the term means nothing of this. The comparative absence of law under anarchism has been interpreted by the popular mind to mean lawlessness or defiance of all constituted authority, so that the term *anarchist* has come to signify a person who advocates terrorism and violence as a means to achieve political ends.

To harbour originally meant to give shelter. One could harbour a traveller or a pilgrim. Nowadays one *harbours* criminals, spies, etc., and old clothes harbour moths.

9) Loss of Distinctive Colouring

There are a few words which have undergone a change in this direction. It generally happens in the case of words with a religious or political significance, especially those which in the beginning were applied to minorities or to unpopular views. As controversy dies down, and as suspicion is cleared by the lapse of time, such words become depolarized and their distinctive colouring is lost.

The word *Christian* was originally a term of derision. *Policy*, *politics* and *politician* were words suggestive of dishonesty and trickery to Shakespeare and his contemporaries. *Brave* originally meant boastful. Now it is a synonym for *courageous*.

10) Association of Ideas

Sometimes a word undergoes a change of meaning through a gradual shifting of emphasis from the original meaning to some incidental or associated characteristic.

The word *vulgarity* comes from the Latin *vulgus* ("a crowd"), and its basic meaning is "such behaviour as would be expected from the crowd." The adjective *dilapidated* is an example of another type of change through association of ideas. Etymologically, it is derived from the Latin word *lapides* ("stones") and should only be applied to a stone building which is in a state of decay. Literally it means "unstoned." But since a building which was "unstoned" was obviously falling into ruins, the idea of ruin and general neglect superseded the earlier one, so that even a wooden structure could be described as dilapidated. Today we can speak of a dilapidated book and dilapidated clothes.

The real meaning of *traffic* is trade or commerce. It is still so employed when we speak of *the traffic in arms*, *the slave traffic,* etc. But its more common use is to denote vehicles passing through the streets of a town. Trade and commerce involve the carrying of goods, which in its turn necessitates the use of vehicles. The more traffic there is the busier the streets become and as a result the word developed a new meaning.

Crescent comes from the Latin present participle *crescens* ("growing"). A crescent moon was so called because it was a growing moon. But it happened that a growing moon looked like the arc of a circle, and gradually the adjective *crescent* came to be identified with this shape and the final stage in its history was reached when it ceased to be an adjective and became a noun.

The word *reek* is usually associated with a pungent or offensive smell. We speak of the reek of tobacco, etc. Its earliest meaning was that of "smoke." *Yard* meant stick. *Prophet* denoted one who spoke on behalf of another. A *prophet* in *The Old Testament* sense was a messenger or spokesman of God. Since he directed attention to possible future happenings, *prophecy* became connected with the ability to foresee and predict events before they actually occurred.

A *panel* was primarily a rectangular piece of cloth, parchment or paper, but when a list of teachers, examiners, etc. was compiled and their names written down upon such a sheet, this list also became known as a *panel*, because by an inevitable psychological process emphasis shifted from the actual paper to the names inscribed upon it.

11) Metaphorical Application

There are several words in English which are so familiar to us that many times we fail to realize that they are used in anything but a literal sense. Such words are of two categories: (1) those words where the literal use is still preserved so that the metaphorical application constitutes what is virtually a new meaning or a new word : *dull, sharp, bright,* etc., and (2) those words where the metaphorical sense has gained precedence over, or even overthrown, the literal one. For example, the original meaning of *sad* was "full." By Elizabethan times, it came to mean sober or serious. The change came about through a metaphorical application of the term, denoting "full of thought or seriousness," and finally by an extension of the metaphor it became "full of sorrow."

Silly originally meant happy, then it came to denote an idea something similar to that expressed in our present-day adjectives *simple* or *innocent*, since, simplicity and innocence were felt to be most conducive to happiness. The transition from "simple" or "innocent" to "stupid" did not take much time.

Broadcast is an example of a double metaphor. It is now used almost exclusively in connection with the dissemination of news, music, talks etc. by radio. But before it came to mean this, it was used to describe the spreading of information far and wide by word of mouth. Even this was a figurative use of the word. In its original and literal sense it denoted a method of sowing seed by taking a handful and scattering it as widely as possible over the ground.

Depend is literally "to hang from." *Spoil* meant "to strip" *Front* meant forehead. *To thrill* is literally "to pierce."

12) Prudery

A number of euphemistic expressions can be traced to a false sense of delicacy and refinement rather than a genuine desire to avoid giving pain or embarrassment. This is called "Prudery" : *paying-guest* for *boarder.*

A few more examples are: *Financer for money-lender; Expectorate* for *spit*; A *fallen-woman* to denote a *prostitute*; *Stomach* for *belly*; *Plumbers* call themselves *sanitary engineers.*

Lavatory ("a washing place") was until a few years ago a very polite term. *Lavatory* is felt by many people to be indelicate and *toilet* is used instead. But *toilet* is frequently replaced by *rest room*, *comfort station*, *powder room, bathroom*, etc.

13) Reversal of Meaning

A word may change its meaning to the point of actually reversing it.

Grocer now refers almost exclusively to a retail trader, but at one time, as its derivation suggests, it meant only a wholesaler, i.e. a person who dealt "en gross" ("in bulk"). Perhaps the change came about by what may be called a shifting of emphasis, if the wholesaler sold in bulk, the retailer bought in the same way.

Restive at one time meant still or at rest or something similar to it. A restive horse was an obstinate horse, which refused to go forward and stubbornly remained standing where it was. As such a horse was troublesome and unmanageable, gradually its being out of control superseded that of its remaining stationary, and as defiance of control usually shows itself in a more active manner, *restive* came to mean impatient or fretful.

14) Popular Misunderstanding

Misunderstandings have been responsible for a change of meaning in certain words. For example, *helpmate* is from "help meet": "And the Lord said, 'It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a help meet for him'" (*The Book of Genesis*). It is clear that *meet* here is an adjective, signifying "fitting" or "suitable." But since the *help* was also a companion to man, and since she became his wife or mate, the idea arose that a "help meet" was a mate who helped and thus the word *helpmate* came into existence.

Preposterous means intolerably absurd. But there is not the slightest etymological justification for reading such a meaning into it. The first half of the word is a combination of the two Latin prefixes *pre-* and *post-* ("before" and "after") and in the literal sense, as F.T.Wood says, a preposterous situation is one where, so to speak, the cart is put before the horse.

Premises is a term of logic. But in old legal documents it was also used to refer back to property etc. which had been fully described at an earlier stage. In a title deed, a detailed description of the property would be set out at the beginning, and then, whenever there was a need to refer to it again, instead of repeating all the facts, it would be called "the premises," i.e. "the things mentioned before." So people came to think a *premises* as meaning a house, a building, etc.

The word *emergency* denotes "something that comes to the surface," i.e. which emerges. But things which emerge, especially if they emerge suddenly and unexpectedly, are apt to create an awkward situation, and this fact, combined perhaps with a tendency to confuse the word with *urgency*, has resulted in the meaning which is generally accepted today.

The verb *to demean* meant originally "to conduct," but owing to a mistaken idea that it was connected with the adjective *mean,* the word acquired its modern meaning. *Pester* is from the French

empestrer meaning "to entangle," and it was in this sense that it was first used in English. The present meaning developed through an etymological blunder which made it a derivative of *pest*.

1.14.5. Conclusion

We had an interesting discussion about the changes taking place in English at the level of vocabulary. Throughout its history, English had been adding new words to its vocabulary or lexis either by depending on its own resources or borrowing from other languages with which it had come into contact. Some of the processes of word-formation discussed in this lesson are: Imitation, Conversion, Derivation, Abbreviation, Back-formation, Syncopation, Metanalysis, Blending, Slang terms, words derived from proper or personal names, Deliberate coinage and Compounding. Semantic change has also characterized English vocabulary in its development. The main methods by which words have changed their meanings are Generalization, Specialization, Regeneration, Degeneration, Euphemism, Exaggeration, Extension, Polarization, Loss of distinctive colouring, Association of Ideas, Metaphorical Application, Prudery, Reversal of meaning and Popular misunderstanding. This account proves that English, like all living languages, is dynamic showing a slow but steady change to meet new requirements and changing needs of communication.

1.14.6. Sample Questions:

1. Write an essay on the various processes of word-formation.
2. Write an explanatory note on the different types of semantic change.

1.14.7. Suggested Reading:

1. Albert C. Baugh   : A History of the English Language, Allied.
2. Frederic T. Wood   : An Outline History of the English Language, MaCmillan.
3. Henry Bradely   : The Making of English, MaCmillan.
4. Stuart Robertson   : The Development of Modern English, Prentice-Hall.
5. Thomas Pyles   : The Origins and Development of the English Language, Harcourt
                         Brace Jovanovich.

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Lesson - 15

AMERICAN ENGLISH

Structure

1.15.1. Objectives:

This lesson will enable you to understand

✸ The features of the American variety of English.

✸ The differences of vocabulary, spelling, idiom etc. distinguishing American English from the British variety.

✸ The contribution of America in the expansion and enrichment of the English language.

✸ The development of an American variety of English.

1.15.2. Introduction:

In the modern period, English has been hailed as a universal language, as a *lingua franca,* a language widely known the world over. But as a medium of world communication the English language has had a surprisingly short history. During Shakespeare's time, English was almost unknown outside the British Isles—and by no means universally spoken within the British Isles. The greatest single event which has given English the enormous number of users it has today, was the settlement of America by English speakers. Such an event has to be discussed in some detail, also because it has greatly enriched the English language.

1.15.3. Settlement of America:

The language taken by Captain John Smith to Virginia in 1607 was the English of Spenser, Marlowe and Shakespeare. The colonists from England settled along the Atlantic seaboard in the seventeenth century. In the settlement of this country three great periods of European immigration can be distinguished. The first extends from the settlement of Jamestown in 1607 to the end of colonial times, which is roughly 1787 when the Congress approved the Federal Constitution. At this ;time, the population numbered four million English-speaking people, most of whom still lived east of the Appalachian Mountains. The second period covers the expansion of the original thirteen colonies west of the Appalachians and the Alleghanies. This period closes with the outbreak of Civil War in 1860 and was marked by fresh immigrants in large numbers from Ireland and Germany. The potato famine of 1845 drove one and a half million Irishmen to seek homes in the New World and the European revolution of 1848 drove as many Germans to settle in Pennsylvania and the Middle West. The third period, from the end of the Civil War to the present day, was marked by an important change in the source of immigrants. They were the Scandinavians, Slavs and Italians. In the closing decades of the nineteenth century one million Scandinavians crossed the Atlantic Ocean and settled, for the most part, in Minnesota and in ;the Upper Mississippi valley. They were soon followed by millions of Czechs, Slovaks, Poles, Yugoslavs, and Italians. Their numbers were later increased with the flight of millions of displaced persons escaping from Nazi tyranny and persecutions that afflicted Europe in the earlier half of the twentieth century. The great North American Republic took shape with the attachment of French and Spanish populations, with the addition of native Amerindian tribesmen in the Middle West, and with the absorption of Chinese and Japanese who landed on the Pacific Coast. As a result, the cosmopolitan character of the United States became more and more pronounced. Further, Negroes from Africa have come to number over twelve millions.

From the linguistic point of view the most important and decisive period of immigration was the first. It was the early settlers who brought the English language to America, and established its form. Those that came later were largely assimilated in a generation or two.

The colonial settlement, the settlement of the thirteen colonies along the Atlantic seaboard, covered a long narrow strip of land extending from Maine to Georgia. This area is familiarly divided into three sections⁻New England, the Middle Atlantic states, and the South Atlantic states. Except for a few districts, the most prominent characteristic of the occupation of the United States is the constant mingling of settlers from one part with settlers from other parts. Not only were practically all sections of the British Isles represented in the original colonists, with some admixture of the French and the Germans, but as each new section was opened up it attracted colonists from various districts which had become over-crowded or uncongenial to them.

1.15.4. Uniformity of American English

As for as language is concerned, the conditions under which American population spread over the country have had one important consequence. It has been observed by many, especially travellers from abroad, that the English spoken in American shows a high degree of uniformity. Those who are familiar with the pronounced dialectal differences that mark the popular speech of different parts of English will know that there is nothing comparable to these differences in the United States. Dr. Witherspoon said in 1781 about the common people in America that 'being much more unsettled, and moving frequently from place to place, they are not so liable to local peculiarities either in accept or phraseology'. Isaac Candler, an English traveller wrote in 1823: "The United States having been peopled from different parts of England and Ireland, the peculiarities of the various districts have in a great measure ceased. As far as pronunciation is concerned, the mass of people speak better English, than the mass of people in England. … The common pronunciation approximates to that of the well educated class of London and its vicinity". Candler does not mean that equally good English is not spoken in England. What he says is that in America there was little local variation and in the matter of pronunciation there was a more general conformance to what he conceived to be an educated standard. When one considers the immense surface of the country, the general accuracy in pronunciation and in the use of words is quite astonishing. The mixture of the population so far described which has resulted in the merging of regional differences, continues even later particularly because of a certain mobility that characterizes the American people. As a result of the homogeneity of the English language in America, we have a standard that rests upon general use.

It is not an imposed standard or class dialect. Complete uniformity cannot be claimed for this standard. But the differences that characterize the pronunciation of New England, the South, and the Middle States and the West are not regarded as defections from the general standard but as permissible variations within it.

1.15.5. Archaic Features in American English:

A second quality attributed to American English is archaism, the preservation of old features of the language which have gone out of use in the standard speech of England. American pronunciation as compared with that of London is somewhat old-fashioned as it has qualities that were characteristic of English speech in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The preservation of the *r* in general American and the flat *a* in *fast, path* etc. (i.e. like *a* in *man*) are two features abandoned in southern England at the end of the eighteenth century. *Either* and *neither* are pronounced with the vowel of *teeth* in America, while in England these words have changed their pronunciation since the American colonies were established and are now pronounced with an initial diphthong */ai/*. The American use of *gotten* in place of *got* as the past participale of *get* sounds old-

fashioned to an Englishman as it was the usual form in England two centuries ago. Also Americans have kept a number of old words or old uses of words no longer usual in England. For example, they still use *mad* in the sense of angry as Shakespeare did; they have kept the general significance of *sick* without restricting it to nausea; they use the picturesque old word *fall* instead of *autumn*. However, most of these features can be found in the rural dialects of England. So in general, American English has preserved certain older features of the language which have disappeared from Standard English in England.

But American English has also introduced innovations which are very important. Because of new experiences and objects, the early English colonists got a number of words from the Indian languages in America, from the French, the Dutch and German colonists. This will be discussed in detail in a later section. Thus right from the earliest period onward, we find the beginning of such differentiation as has taken place between the American and the British vocabulary. But the literary language has seldom diverged perceptibly from that of the old country. Washington Irving, Edgar Allan Poe, and Nathaniel Hawthorne wrote faultless Standard English. Henry James (1843-1916), Logan Pearsall Smith (1865-1949) and T.S. Eliot (1888-1965) were born in the United States but they spent their mature lives in England. Edmund Wilson, Douglas Bush, Lionel Trilling, Cleanth Brooks, Robert Penn Warren, and other eminent American critics, write not unlike their British colleagues, James Sutherland, Basil Willey, Lionel Charles Knights, William Empson, and David Daiches.

However, there is no denying the fact that in the hundred and fifty years since the founding of Jamestown and Plymouth, the English language in America had developed certain differences. At the time of the American Revolution and in the years following it, Americans began to be conscious of their language, and in particular of the innovations in their speech. The consciousness of an American variety of English with characteristics of its own led to the consideration of a standard which should be recognized on the other side of the Atlantic. As John Witherspoon says, "Being entirely separated from Britain, we shall find some centre or standard of our own and not be subject to the inhabitants of that island, either in receiving new ways of speaking or rejecting the old".

The people settled in America were accustomed for generations to dependence upon the mother ocuntry, and imported most of their books and many of their ideas from Europe. It was a natural recognition of the superior civilization of the Old World and the greatness of English literature and learning. But with political independence achieved, many of the colonists began to show a sense of patriotism and a distaste for anything that seemed to continue the former dependence.

1.15.6. Noah Webster and an American Language

There was a public demand for an American civilization as distinctive from that of Europe, which was vigorously expressed by Noah Webster (1758-1843), especially in the matter of language. Webster turned from the practice of law to teaching for livelihood. The available English school

books were unsatisfactory and the war diminished the supply of such books as there were. Webster accordingly set about compiling three elementary books on English, a spelling book, a grammar and a reader, which were the first books of their kind to be published in America. *The American Spelling Book* and *An American Dictionary of the English Language* were a huge success and of enormous influence. These and his numerous other writings had one persistent purpose: to show that the English language in America was a distinctly American thing developing along its own lines, and deserving to be considered from an independent, American point of view.

He urged certain reforms of spelling, arguing that it would have the advantage of showing a difference between the English orthography and the American, and "that such an event is an object of vast political sequence". Since language is an expression of ideas, America cannot have an identity of ideas, just as it cannot retain an identity of language. Even physical objects are different in America. But according to Webster, "the principal differences between the people of this country and of all others, arise from different forms of government, different laws, institutions and customs … ;the institutions in this country which are new and peculiar, give rise to new terms, unknown to the people of England … No person in this country will be satisfied with the English definitions of the words *congress, senate* and *assembly, court* etc., for although these are words used in England, yet they are applied in this country to express ideas which they do not express in that country." Webster was a patriot who carried his sentiment from questions of political and social organization over into matters of language. By stressing American usage and American pronunciation, by adopting a number of distinctive spellings, and especially by introducing quotations from American authors alongside of those from English literature, he left a permanent mark on the language of America.

It is obvious that in spelling, vocabulary or lexis, in pronunciation, and in the syntax of colloquial speech and slang, divergences persist in American English. The distinctive features of American orthography are largely due to the efforts of Webster, though some of them became established after his time. He was very much aware of the inconsistencies of English spelling, and at first was determined to bring in drastic changes, but he was restrained by necessity. Today the third unabridged edition of Webster's *New International Dictionary* (1962) is the official spelling guide of the Government Printing Office and the accepted authority in American courts. It sanctions such spellings as *–or* for *–our* in *favor, honor, humor, labor, odor* and *valor* for British *favour, honour, humour, labour, odour* and *valour; -er* for *–re* in *caliber, center, fiber, meter* and *theater* for British *calibre, fibre, metre* and *theatre;* one consonant for two in *traveler, traveling traveled, jewelry* and *wagon* for British *traveller, travelled, jewellery,* and *waggon, -s-* for *-c-* in the nouns *defense, offense* and *practise* for British *defence, offence,* and *practice*; and various simplifications such as *ax, catalog, check, jail, mask, program,* and *story* for British *axe, catalogue, cheque, gaol, programme,* and *storey* (or floor of a building). The differences often pass unnoticed, partly because a number of English

spellings are still current in America and partly because some of the American innovations are now common in England, and in general because certain alternatives are permissible in both countries.

1.15.7. Vocabulary:

Earlier in the lesson we mentioned that Americans have retained some old words which have since disappeared from Standard English in England. But they also introduced numerous innovations in their vocabulary. When colonists settle in a new country they find many new objects and new experiences for which they have no words in their language. Accordingly in a colonial language changes of vocabulary take place almost from the moment the first settlers arrive. The English colonists seem to have found the physical features of the continent like its mountains and forests, so much larger and more impressive than any in England. The result is a whole series of new words like *bluff, divide, watershed, clearing* and *underbrush.* Then there were the many living and growing things which were peculiar to the New World. The names for some of these the colonists learned from the Indian, words like *moose, raccoon, skunk, opossum, chipmunk, porgy, terrapin;* others they formed by a descriptive process long familiar in the language; *mud hen, garter snake, bullfrog, potato bug, ground hog, reed bird.* Tree names such as the *hickory, live oak,* and the *locust* are new to colonial English, as are *sweet potato, egg plant, squash, persimmon, pecan.* Contact with the Indians brought into English a number of words having pariticular reference to the Indian way of life: *wigwam, tomahawk, canoe, toboggan, mackinaw, moccasin, wampum, squaw, papoose.* These are Indian words, but we have also English words formed at the same time and out of the same experience; *war path, paleface, medicine man, pipe of peace, big chief, war paint,* and the verb *to scalp.* Indian words for Indian foods were taken over in the case of *hominy, tapioca, succotash,* and *pone.* The latter is still the common word in the South for corn bread, the kind of bread the Indians made. The individual character of their political and administrative system required the introduction of words such as *congressional, presidential, gubernational* (in use as early as 1734 but still refused admission to certain editorial offices), *congressman, caucus, mass meeting Selectman, statehouse, land office.* Many other words illustrate things associated with the new mode of life—*back country, backwoodsman, squatter, prairie, log cabin, clapboard, corncrib, popcorn, hoe cake, cold snap, snow plow, bobsled, sleigh.*

As indicated above, the colonists got a number of the words they needed ready made from the languages of the Indians. They got some, too, from other languages. From the French colonists they learned *portage, chowder, cache, caribou, bureau, bayou, levee,* and others; from the Dutch *cruller, coleslaw, cookie, stoop, boss, scow;* from German *noodle, pretzel, smearcase, saurekraut.* More interesting, however, are the cases in which the colonist applied an old word to a slightly different thing, as when he gave the name of the English *robin* to a red-breasted thrush, applied the word *turkey* to a distinctive American bird, and transferred the word *corn* to an entirely new cereal. *Indian*

corn was known in England only from the accounts of travelers, and naming its various features seems to have been a task for the first Americans. *Maize,* the West Indian name which came into England through the Spanish, was never used by the American settler. Henry Hudson called it *Turkish wheat,* a designation found in French and Italian and among the Pennsylvania Germans. But the colonists used the common English word *corn*, which in England is used of any kind of grain, but especially of wheat. At first they prefixed the distinguishing epithet 'Indian', but this was soon dropped, and consequently *corn* means something quite different in England and in America today.

Today the American on going to England or the English traveller on arriving in America is likely to be impressed by differences in vocabulary, chiefly connected with travel and transport by railroad and automobile. The English word for *railroad* is *railway,* the *engineer* is a *driver,* the *conductor* a *guard.* The American *day coach or parlor car* is the English *carriage* or *compartment;* the *baggage car* is a *van,* and the *baggage* carried is always *luggage.* American *freight train, freight yard,* etc., become in England *goods train* and *goods yard.* Some of the more technical terms are likewise different. A *sleeper* in the United States is a sleeping car; in England it is called a *tie*. American *frog* is a *crossing plate,* a *cowcatcher* is a *plough,* a *switch* is a *point,* a *grade crossing* a *level crossing,* and so on. It is so with the automobile. The English speak of a *motor car, lorry* (truck), *windscreen* (windshield), *bonnet* (hood), *sparking plugs, dickey* or *dickey seat* (rumble seat), *petrol* (gasoline or gas). Such differences can be found in almost any part of the vocabulary: *cinema* (movie), *wireless* (radio), *boiler* (furnace), *parcel* (package), *post* (mail), *hoarding* (billboard), *contact rod* (trolley pole), *commercial traveller* (travelling salesman). We readily recognize the American character of *ice cream soda, apple pie, popcorn, free lunch, saloon* from their associations, and can understand why some of them would not be understood elsewhere. Some of these words have a deceptive familiarity. *Lumber* with Americans is timber, but in England is discarded furniture and the like. *Laundry* in America is not only the place where clothing and linen are washed but the articles washed as well. A *lobbyist* in England is a parliamentary reporter, not one who attempts to influence legislation, and a *pressman* is not in America a reporter but one who works in the pressroom where a newspaper is printed.

The American writer seeks to set forth his notions in the plainest and least pedantic manner possible; he also makes liberal use of the vocabulary of everyday, including its neologisms. Indeed, he seems a bit stiff and academic if he does not make some attempt to add to the stock of such neologisms. It is said that so many novelties are launched in that great Republic every year that it is quite impossible for the dictionaries to keep up with them; indeed, a large number come and go without the lexicographers even hearing of them. As H.L. Mencken wrote (in *The American Language),* "We Americans live in an age and society given over to enormous and perhaps even excessive wordmaking--the most riotous seen in the world since the break-up of Latin".

Such neologisms are clipped words like *ad* for *addict* or *advertisement, as* for *gasoline* or petrol, *lube* for *lubricating oil, co-ed* for *co-educational*, and *super* for *superfine* not to mention *super-duper;* back-formations like *to automate* from *automation, to enthuse* from *enthusiasm, to reminisce* from *reminiscent,* and *to televise* from *television;* blends or portmanteau-words like *cablegram* form *cable* and *telegram, radiotrician* from *radio* and *electrician, to snoopervise* from *snoop* and *supervise,to sportcast from sport* and *broadcast, smaze* from *smoke* and *haze* (smog from *smoke* and *fog* being its British counterpart), *motel* from *motorists' hotel,* and *Amerind* or *Amerindian* from *American* and *Indian*. Hundreds of expressions have also arisen from a revival and extension of grammatical conversion or functional shift. When you *park* your car you are using the noun *park* as a *verb* in a particular sense. Shakespeare used this same noun as a verb in the sense `to confine or enclose as in a park' in I *Henry the Sixth,* IV. ii. 45: `How are we park'd and bounded in a pale!' But *to park* in the sense `to place compactly in a park' was a new conversion or shift made by the British Army in 1812 at the time of the Napoleonic Wars. Nearly one century later, in 1910, this same verb was adopted by American motorists into their word stock. Since then *to park* has come to mean `to leave or keep in a suitable place until required'. *Streamline* was first recorded in 1973 in the highly technical language of hydrodynamics. Later, in 1907, it was applied in aerodynamics to the shape given to aircraft offering the least resistance to the atmosphere. Later still, in 1913, it was shifted into the verb *to streamline* meaning `to design or construct with a streamline form'. The past participle *streamlined* is now widely used as an appositive, attributive, or predicative adjective to mean `shaped to offer the least resistance to swift, smooth progress, operation, or presentation' and so 'stripped of every encumbrance, up-to-date, modernized'. Today Americans no longer hesitate *to loan* (as well as *to lend); to audition '*try out in an audition, especially for fitness to participate in opera, radio, or television'; *to remainder* (unsold or unsaleable books); *to service* (a car or plane); *to garage* 'place or keep in a garage'; *to blueprint* 'make a key pattern of action or underlying master plan'; to contact 'get into touch with'; *to highlight* 'bring out the brightest parts or main features'*; to steamroller* 'crush opposition, force a measure through by weight of numbers'; *to tape* 'record on a magnetic tape-machine'; and *to brainwash* 'clear the mind of established ideas by persistent suggestion and indoctrination'. A bargain is a *good buy,* an absolute necessity is a *must,* articles of food are *eats,* and technical skill is the *know-how.*

Americans talk of 'children and *grown-ups'* without pausing to think what an interesting linguistic form the word *grown-ups* is. It is the second or past participle of the intransitive durative verb *grow* (the past participle of which, because durative, has present signigication) + the adverb *up;* compounded, converted into a noun, and then given the plural inflexion *–s.* This precise form is not old. It first appears in a letter penned by Jane Austen in 1813, although *grown-up* had already been used as an attributive adjective in the seventeenth century. When we talk of giving someone a good *send-off* we are employing an expression first used in this sense by Mark Twain in 1872. Hitherto this

particular phrasal verb had referred to the sending off or starting of runners in a race. Many other nouns of this formation have since found favour in the United States. A place of concealment is a *hide-out,* a drop in social prestige is a *come-down,* a re-shuffle of staff is a *shake-up,* and a press release is a *hand-out.* Any organization is a *set-up,* a meeting of any kind is a *get-together,* and a quick escape is a *get-away.* Any action that brings things to an issue or forces a man to disclose his plans is a *show-down* as, at a game of cards, the players suddenly lay cards on the table. The American is at his best when inventing simple homely words like *apple butter, Sidewalk, lightning rod, spelling bee, crazy quilt, low-down,* and *know-nothing,* or when striking off a terse metaphor like *log-rolling, wire pulling, to have an ax to grind, to be on the fence.* He also manifests the gift of the imaginative, slightly humorous phrase, as for example, *to bark up the wrong tree, fly of the handle, go on the war path, bury the hatchet, come out at the little end of the horn, saw wood,* and many more. The Americans also have a liking for picturesque and vivid verb phrases, both old and new: *go the whole hog, go it blind, go far, go in for, go him one better, face the music, shell out, spread it on thick, get away with it,* and *paint the town red,* Journalists, gossip-columnists, makers of radio and TV or video scripts, pop-songsters, and advertising agents are busy coining new turns of phrase day by day. Some of these are literally ephemeral, beginning and ending in a day. They fail to 'catch on': they have their day and they are forgotten. Others live on and eventually, perhaps, they are tacitly adopted by the whole English-speaking world.

Suffixes may be revived and multiplied by analogy. In conformity with *musician, mathematician, physician,* and *electrician,* the old *undertaker,* itself short for *funeral undertaker,* becomes euphemistically *mortician* whereas the *beautician* tends and adorns the hair and complexion of the living. The suffix *–ee* (from French – *é(e)* and Latin *–atus),* as in *employee,* denoting the person or patient affected by the verbal action corresponding to the agent in *–or,* is widely extended into forms like *addressee, draftee, selectee,* and *trainee..* Similarly *–ette,* a feminine agent suffix as in British *brunette,* is enlarged to include *farmerette, guidette, usherette, copette* 'police woman', *etc.* It serves as diminutive suffix in *kitchenette, dinette, bathinette,* and *superette* 'small super market'. The ancient Greek suffix *–ist,* as in *artist,* now gives *vacationist, Manicurist, cosmetist, receptionist, editorialist, behaviourist* (coined by John B. Watson in 1913), and *blurbist* (concoctor of blurbs or blurbs or slip-cover encomiums). The ancient Teutonic suffix *–ster,* as in *spinster* and *huckster,* now gives *gangster, jokester, prankster, ringster, roadster, mobster,* and *oldster* (after *youngster).* The ancient Latin suffix *–orium,* denoting a place as in *auditorium* and *crematorium,* is now extended to many other institutions like *restatorium, shavatorium, lubritorium* (where cars are greased), and even *pantatorium* (where pants are pressed).

1.15.8. Pronunciation:

The earliest changes in the English language in America, distinguishing it from the language of the mother country, were in the vocabulary. These have already been mentioned. From the time,

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however, when the early colonists came, divergence in pronunciation began gradually to develop. This has been due in part to changes that have occurred here, but has resulted still more form the fact that the pronunciation of England has undergone further change and that a variety of southern English has come to be recognized as the English received standard. At the present time, American pronunciation shows certain well-marked differences from English use.

Perhaps the most noticeable of these differences is in the vowel sound in such words as *fast, path, grass, dance, can't half.* At the end of the eighteenth century southern England began to change from what is called a flat *a* to a broad *a* in *father.* The change affected words in which the vowel occurred before *f, sk, sp, st, ss, th, and n* followed by certain consonants. In parts of New England the same change took place, but in most other parts of the country the old sound was preserved, and *fast, path*, etc., are pronounced with the vowel of *pan.* In some speakers there is a tendency to employ an intermediate vowel, halfway between the *a of pan* and *father,* but the *a* of *pan* and *father*, *but the* 'flat *a*' most be regarded as the typical American pronunciation.

Next to retention of the flat *a,* the most noticeable difference between English and American pronunciation is in the treatment of the *r.* In the Received Pronunciation of England this sound has disappeared except before vowels. It is not heard when it occurs before another consonant or at the end of word unless the next word begins with a vowel. In America eastern New England and most of the South follow the English practice, but in the Middle States and the West the *r* is pronounced in all positions. The American *r* is either a retention of older English pronunciation or the result of north of England influence in their speech. It has caused more comment than any other distinction in American pronunciation.

A distinction less apparent to the layman is the pronunciation of the *0* in such words as *not, lot, hot, top.* In England this is still an open *0* pronounced with the lips rounded, but in America except in parts of New England it has commonly lost its rounding and in most words has become a sound idential in quality with the *a* in *father,* only short.

There are other differences of less importance between English and American pronunciation, since they concern individual words or small groups of words. Thus in England *been* has the same sound as *bean,* but in America is like *bin. Leisure* often has in America what is popularly called a long vowel but in England usually rimes with *pleasure.* There, too, the last syllable of words like *fertile, sterile* rimes with *aisle.* Americans have kept the common eighteenth-century pronunciation with a short vowel or a mere vocalic *l.* The English pronunciation of *either* and *neither* is sometimes heard in America, as is *process* with a close *o.* But Americans do not suppress the final *t* in *trait* or pronounce an *f* in *lieutenant.* Their pronunciation of *figure* with [jɚ] would be considered pedantic in England, according to Fowler, who also defends the pronunciation *et* of *ate.* In this country *figger* and *et* would betray a lack of cultivation.

A more important difference is the greater clearness with which Americans pronounce unaccented syllables. Bernard Shaw said he once recognized an American because he accented the third syllable of *necessary,* and the tendency to keep a secondary stress on one of the unaccented syllables of long word is one of the consequences of their effort to pronounce all the syllables. In words like *dormitory, manastery, necessary,* and *secretary,* the American habitually places a secondary stress upon the penult or last syllable but one. Some words he stresses differently form Londoners. He stresses *debris, detail, ecgema, frontier,* and *harass* on the second syllable, not the first. Conversely, he stresses *address, corollary, inquiry, research, resource,* and *romance* on the first syllable, not the second. Other words, like *advertisement* and *financier,* are stressed on the third syllable in New York, not on the second syllable as in London. Conversely the suppression of syllables in England has ben accompanied by a difference at times in the position of the chief stress. The English commonly say *centen'ary* and *labor'atory,* and *adver'tisement* is never *advertise'ment.* There is, of course, more in speech than the quality of the sounds. There is also the matter of pitch and tempo. The Americans speak more slowly and with less variety of tone, but they are generally more distinct in the division of syllables. Many Americans have fallen into the habit of letting the velum drop in speech thus giving their sounds a certain 'nasal twang' which may vary considerably from region to region and from individual to individual..

The differences between English and American pronunciation are not such as should cause any alarm for the future, any fear that Englishmen and Americans may become unintelligible to each other. As already said, the difference in the pronunciation of the *o* in *lot, top,* etc., is one that often escapes the notice of the layman. The pronunciation of the *r* may continue to excite mutual recrimination, but the difference between the broad *a* and the flat *a* affects fewer than a hundred and fifty words in common use. Other differences are sporadic and on the whole negligible.

Now these observations are valid not only for the speech of New York City but also for the so-called General American dialect as a whole, which includes the Middle Atlantic States, namely New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and the whole of New York State west of the Hudson River as well as al the Middle and Western states. This General American dialect thus comprises two thirds of the whole population and four fifths of the land surface of the United States reaching from the Atlantic Ocean in the east to the Pacific Occan in the west. The other two dialects, New England and Southern, are important and significant, but hey are more limited geographically. The former is spoken in Maine, New Hampshire, vermont. Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, and the strip of New York State lying east of the Hudson River. The New England dialect is more like British English in many respects. For example, the rounded vowel is kept in *dock*, the long low back vowel is retained in *dance* and the *r* is completely lost in *dark.* At the same time this dialect is less homogeneous than General American. Even within its narrower confines it shows far more regional and social variations. The Southern dialect includes Maryland, Virginia, North and South Carolina, Georgia,

Florida, Kentucky, Tennessee, Albama, Mississippi, Arkansas, and Louisiana, as well as a great part of Missouri, Oklahoma, and Texas. In other words, it is spoken in all the states, except Delaware and West Virginia, lying south of Pennsylvania and the Ohio River and east of a line running from St. Louis to the middle waters of the Colorado Rivr and thence down that river to the mouth in the Gulf of Mexico.

In spite of countless smaller variations in pronunciation, vocabulary, and idiom, the three American dialects do not greatly differ. For three centuries American families have been constantly on the move and speech communities have seldom remained isolated for more than one generation. It would be no exaggeration to say that great differences in pronunciation are discernible in the north of England between Trent and Tweed than in the whole of North America.

1.15.9. Americanisms:

From the time that differences in the vocabulary and idiom of Americans began to be noticed they became the subject of comment and soon of controversy. In the beginning English comment was uniformly adverse, going by the utterances of Dr. Johnson, and to a large extent still is today. Often Americans were accused of corrupting the English language by introducing new and unfamiliar words, whereas they were in fact only continuing to em ploy terms familiar in the seventeenth century which had become obsolete in England. The Americans saw the injustice of the attitude and began to defend their use of English. With a growing sense of their importance among nations, they began to demand parity for their speech with the English of England. This controversy was carried through most of nineteenth century and can be still seen in the present century.

John Witherspoon was the first person to use the term *Americanism.* He was one of the early presidents of Princeton University. In 1781, he defined it as "an use of phrases of terms, or a construction of sentences, even among persons of rank and education, different from the use of the same terms or phrases, or the construction of similar sentences in Great Britain." He justified the word Americanism saying that he coined it for the purpose and that in its formation and signification, it is exactly similar to the word Scotticism. He did not look at these differences as being necessarily bad, but merely that they are of American and not of English growth. Such an independent attitude is also revealed by Jefferson when he said that in America where all is new, no innovation is feared which offers good. He further said "should the language of England continue stationary, we shall probably enlarge our employment of it, until its new character may separate it in name, as well as in power, from the mother tongue". However, with most, the spirit of conformity prevailed. Even so original a thinker as Franklin was ready to accept English usage as his own guide.

The first dictionary of Americanisms was published in 1816 by John Pickering under the title **A Vocabulary, or Collection of Words and Phrases which have been supposed to be peculiar to the United States of America.** Pickering wanted to purify the language of his countrymen by

pointing out all departures from English usage and to persuade them that only by strict accord with that usage can they hope to write pure English. This attitude angered Noah Webster and he retorted in a published Letter that "New words will be formed and used, if found necessary or convenient, without a license from Englishmen".

The English attitude towards Americanisms is still hostile. During the nineteenth century any impurity in the language, meaning anything which the individual purist objected to was described as an Americanism. Coleridge thought that the word *talented* was vile and barbarous, saying that such pieces of slang come from America (though *talented* in fact did not come from America). In 1890, the word *scientist* was denounced as "as ignoble Americanism" although it was coined in 1840 by an Englishman. This hostility was justified especially when directed towards American slang, as conveyed by American films which is eagerly absorbed by the lower classes. However, it often seems to have been assumed that all Americanisms are vulgarities and colloquialisms. In this context, William Archer's words need to be remembered: "New words are begotten by new conditions … America has enormously enriched the language".

Today many American words have made their way into English use, and their number is increasing everyday. Often these words were accepted after bitter opposition, a few examples of which are *advocate, placate* and *antagonize.* Other words associated with American things have been accepted fairly readily: *telephone, phonograph, typewriter, ticker, prairie* are some examples. Some of the American words like *caucus, log rolling, to stump, graft, lynch, blizzard, jazz, joy-ride, stunt, dope-fiend, sob-stuff* etc., have been completely accepted in England since they must have been seen to be effective. Through various interchange schemes British and American scholars and scientists often change places with one another for agreed period of time, and when they write, they do so for the whole of the English-speaking world. Other strong forces are now at work bringing the two main streams of English more closely together. Perhaps when future historians look abck, they may find that it was during the century and a quarter from 1800 to 1925 that British and American English showed the greatest divergence and that, after 1925, unifying factors – radio, television, films, plays, novels, and journals – all worked in one and the same direction to make that divergence narrower and narrower.

1.15.10. Summary:

Because of the expansion of the British Empire, English is now being spoken by millions of speakers the world over. But the increase in the number of speakers occurred primarily due to the British settlement of America in the seventeenth century. Thus the English taken to America by the early colonists was that spoken in seventeenth century England. Since English in England had changed since that time, the language in America would seem a bit archaic. Another noticeable feature of English spoken in America is its uniformity. It means that it shows fewer dialectal

variations than the English used in England, which fact is remarkable considering the vast space that America is. English in America has also absorbed many words from the early immigrant languages and the Indian language. At the same time, it naturally developed along its own lines, which were different from those along which British English developed. The differences between American and British English can be seen in pronunciation and vocabulary though not so great in grammar. This led many people in American to think of a standard of speech of their own, independent of the standard variety in English, especially since their Independence. But as far as written language is concerned the difference between the English and the American use of words is often so slight that it is difficult to tell on which side of the Atlantic it was written.

In spite of long hostility with which American innovations were looked at, large numbers of American words entered the English language. With regard to vocabulary, in the last two hundred years, the debt of English to the American vocabulary probably exceeded the debt of English to any other language.

1.15.11. Sample Questions:

1. Why is it said that American English has archaic features?
2. Discuss the innovations that Americans introduced in their vocabulary.
3. What is the contribution of Noah Webster to the American language?
4. What are the differences in vocabulary between American English and British English in the present day.
5. How does American pronunciation differ from British pronunciation?
6. Write a note on Americanisms with regard to the English language.

1.16.12. Suggested Reading:

1. Otto Jespersen, *Growth and Structure of the English Language.*
2. Simeon Potter, *Our Language.*
3. A.C. Baugh, *A History of the English Language.*
4. C.L. Wrenn, *The English Language.*

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Dr. K. Ratna Shiela Mani

Lesson – 16

Current English Usage – I

Objectives:

This lesson aims to

(i)   introduce the learner to certain, aspects of grammar, usage and idiom.

(ii)   Distinguish between pairs of words which look similar.

Usage and Grammar

"Use is the sole arbiter and norm of speech" (Horace).

"We learn by taking part in the actual situations in which English is used, by living the language as fully as we can and by attending and attending to what Webster called "that excellent school, the world". Randolph Quirk: The Use of English.

Is it a historical or an historical, a hotel or an hotel? If an hour, an honest and an honour are permitted, why not an historical and an hotel? Traditional usage which permits 'an' before these words, though old fashioned, is retained. But 'an' before historical and hotel has given way to 'a'. Whether 'a' or 'an' should be used depends on the initial 'h' being pronounced or being silent. Due to heavy rains, the match was cancelled. The match was cancelled due to heavy rains. According to grammar, 'due to' in the sense of 'because of' should not be used at the beginning or in the middle of a sentence. It should be preceded by the form of the verb 'be'. The cancellation of the match was due to heavy rains. The use of 'owing to' in either position - initial or middle - is permissible. The match was cancelled owing to heavy rains, or, owing to heavy rains, the match was cancelled. The current usage of 'due to' in initial or middle position has come to stay. It is employed by the BBC, besides being sanctioned by standard dictionaries. "The project had to be abandoned due to a lack of government funding". Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary. "He almost died due to lack of oxygen" Macmillan English Dictionary – P431.

Usage may be examined under different heads – grammatical, idiomatic and socially and politically correct forms. The notion of concord in grammar relates to subject verb agreement. There are three forms of concord. (1) Grammatical concord in which the agreement between the subject and the verb is maintained. (2) Notional concord in which the subject may be plural but is treated as singular and followed by the verb in the singular number. Fifty years have passed since I started teaching (grammatical concord). But, the sentence "fifty years is a long time" illustrates the principle

of notional concord. Similarly, "government <u>has</u> or <u>have</u> announced a new policy". <u>Media</u> and <u>data</u> are grammatically plural in form. But they can be followed by the singular form of the verb. Media <u>is covering</u> the event. The <u>data is</u> reliable.

> Has everyone received his or her copy? Grammar
> Has everyone received their copy? Usage
> <u>Bread and butter is</u> costly: Usage

Neither the teachers nor the headmaster has come. This sentence illustrates concord according to proximity. Whether the verb should be singular or plural is determined by the subject closest to the verb.

The tag question for 'I am' should grammatically be 'am I Not'? But the usage is 'aren't I'? "I am strong, aren't I"? In formal grammar two forms of the future tense- the simple future and the emphatic future - are distinguished. The correct auxiliaries 'shall and will' to be used to indicate these two functions are prescribed. But in usage, the distinction is not observed and 'shall' and 'will' are interchanged without reference to the function specified in grammar. Another superstition in the use of language relates to the use of preposition. The use of preposition at the end of a sentence is prohibited. "Do not use a preposition to end a sentence with". This is the rule, but the sentence itself breaks the rule. Usage breaks this injunction. "What are you waiting for", sounds better than "for what are you waiting"? Grammar warns us against the <u>split infinitive</u>. I request the chief guest <u>to kindly distribute</u> the prizes. Split infinitive is an error from the point of view of traditional grammar. But it is often unavoidable.

Social and political attitudes have influenced usage and given rise to new expressions. Gender specific expressions have given way to more inclusive terms - <u>human beings</u> instead of <u>mankind.</u> Similarly, gender-neutral terms like <u>chairperson</u>, <u>lay person</u>, <u>business executive</u>, etc, are being used. The suffix -ess to indicate gender (as found in books on formal grammar) has been dispensed with. Words like <u>author</u>, <u>manager</u>, <u>actor</u> can refer to either gender. Forms like <u>person of colour</u>, <u>Dalit</u>, <u>Native American</u> and <u>sex worker</u> are the politically or socially correct terms and have replaced earlier offensive terms. Similarly inoffensive expressions like <u>Down's Syndrome</u>, <u>slow learners</u>, <u>physically or mentally challenged</u>, <u>speech impediment</u> and <u>visual impairment</u> illustrate the influence of social attitudes to usage. And there is a large category of words called "confusables" - pairs of words which confuse on account of the same or similar sound or spelling. For example, <u>compliment</u>, <u>complement</u>, <u>stationary</u>, <u>stationery</u>, <u>principal</u>, <u>principle</u>.

The battle between the grammarians and the advocates of usage started as early as the 17th and 18th centuries. The aim of the grammarians was to "prescribe and proscribe" (A.C. Baugh). Setting themselves up as "law givers" and "grammatical moralists", they enunciated what Randolph Quirk calls "the transcendental notion of correctness" and "the doctrine of grammatical sin". "The

English language as it is spoken by the politest part of the nation and as it stands in the writing of our most approved writers offends against every part of grammar" (18th century grammarian Robert Louth). The opposite view was expressed by John Hughes who said "general acceptation is the only standard or speech". These two antithetical attitudes had a neutralising or balancing effect in the sense that English within the framework of its rules developed freedom and flexibility. Usage released the language from rigidity and linguistic straitjacket.

English in its growth as a global language has developed many varieties - national, regional, occupational, social, educational, etc. Each variety has its own form of grammar, vocabulary and idiom. One should mind one's business. This is British usage based on grammar. The American usage is one should mind his or her business. Different to, besides different from, is common in England. Different than, is American. I shall join you momentarily. In American English, momentarily means 'in a moment'. Language is ever in a state of flux. Old words and meanings yield place to new. There are levels of usage - formal, literary, informal, colloquial, slang, standard, non-standard, substandard, acceptable, and unacceptable. Usage makes sense in the linguistic community in which it is current. Bio data, walkable distance, order for a cup of tea, once in a way, discuss about, what all, pindrop silence, go and come, swallow money, eat outside, out of station, cousin brother/sister, co- brother-in-law and such expressions form part of Indian English. Whether they satisfy the definition of standard, acceptable 'usage' is open to question. Usage may supersede grammar. It may appear to go against the "letter of the law" but it conforms to the spirit of the language, forms part of its mainstream and gives language its peculiar flavour. A judicious balance between usage and grammar should be struck to make communication effective.

"Usage" means "that which has become customary" or "that which has become established by long standing use". Usage is the employment of words without reference to the rules of the language. It is independent of grammar. For instance, the answer to the question "who is there?", according to grammar is "It is I". But the answer "It is me" has been established by usage. Usage of words has come to stay and should be accepted. "There can be a wrong use of a word, but there cannot be a wrong usage of a word". F.T.Wood.

Usage and the article: The simple rule governing the use of the articles 'a' and 'an' is that 'a' is used before a word beginning with a consonant and 'an' is used before a vowel – e.g., a horn, a boy, a tree; an ant, an actor, an elephant, an umbrella. This rule is not always observed. For instance before unstressed or unsounded or unaspirated 'h', an and not a is used. e.g.: an hour, an honest or an honourable person; an heir; an honorary. These words, though they begin with the consonant, are preceded by an, because 'h' is silent. It is not pronounced. Similarly the article a is used before the words union, university, European, unique, uniform, though these words begin with vowels. The use of an historical and an hotel is old fashioned and has given way to a historical and a hotel.

Number and Usage: The concept of usage can be understood with reference to number. There is a category of noun called Collective nouns. Whether the singular or the plural form of the verb should be used with them has to be borne in mind.

1. Class Collectives: These nouns refer to different things which fall into one general class. E.g.: furniture, baggage, luggage, clothing, crockery, scenery, information, machinery, equipment, the bar, the bench (legal terms). These nouns are always used as singular (the sign of the plural 's' or 'es' should not be added to them). Furniture is costly (not furnitures are costly). In winter, we use warm clothing (not, clothings)

2. Distributive Collective: People, folk, kindred – These nouns are followed only by the plural verb.

3. Generalising Collectives: (They refer to professions or occupations) the police, the clergy. They are followed by a plural verb.

4. Group Collective: Words like committee, government, parliament, audience, board belong to this category. These nouns have regular plural forms – committees, governments. Whether the singular or plural verb should be used after these verbs will depend on the context and meaning.

The committee has recommended five candidates. (Here, the committee is treated as one unit and hence the singular form of the verb 'has' is used. If we say the committee are divided on the selection of candidates, it would refer to the members of the committee and hence the plural form are is used). Similarly, the Board comprises six members. The Board have reached an agreement with the employees.

The audience are requested to be in their seats by 9 A.M (audience is singular, but the context calls for the use of the plural verb). Similarly, everyone is required to bring their copies of the book. The use of the plural pronoun their, (though the subject is everyone which is singular) illustrates how usage does not always conform to grammar.

Usage and Tag questions: Usage may be illustrated with reference to tag questions. (A tag question or tag is a question which follows a statement). If the statement is positive, the tag is negative. If it is negative, the tag is positive.

He is coming, isn't he?
They came, didn't they?
He is not coming, is he?
They did not come, did they?
In the case of am, the way of forming the tag is different.
I am slow: The tag is not amn't I? But aren't I?
I am clear, aren't I?
I am late, aren't I?

<u>Prepositional Usage</u>: According to grammar, a preposition should not be placed at the end of a sentence.

Where do you come <u>from</u>? Grammar requires the preposition to be placed at the beginning. From where do you come? The first sentence illustrates usage and is idiomatically correct and so it is preferred and accepted.

<u>By</u> which train did you come? (Grammar)
Which train did you come <u>by</u>? (Usage)
<u>To</u> whom do you want to speak? (Grammar)
Whom or who do you want to speak <u>to</u>? (Usage)

Usage with reference to the comparative degree

According to traditional grammar, the pronoun I, we, he, she (as the case may be), should be used after <u>than</u> while expressing the idea of comparison.

(E.g.) He is <u>taller</u> than <u>I</u> (am)
They are ric<u>her</u> than <u>we</u> (are)
Meera is <u>more intelligent</u> than <u>she</u> (is)
Raghu is <u>faster</u> than <u>he</u> (is)
Usage permits <u>me</u>, <u>us</u>, <u>her</u>, <u>him</u> in the respective sentences. He is taller than <u>me</u>
They are <u>richer</u> than <u>us</u>
Meera is <u>more intelligent</u> than <u>her</u>
Raghu is <u>faster</u> than <u>him</u>

Usage and Vocabulary

Usage can be illustrated with reference to vocabulary. There are words in English which form pairs. Each pair consists of words which are spelt alike, but pronounced differently, or which may be spelt differently, but pronounced alike, or the words in the pair may be followed by different prepositions. These words are similar and may cause confusion. A few illustrations of such confusing words are given below:

1. Adv<u>ic</u>e (noun)   Parents give advice to their children
                                 (Advice has no plural form. It is always used as singular)
   Adv<u>is</u>e (verb)   I adv<u>is</u>ed my friend to accept the transfer.

2. Compl<u>i</u>ment   The Principal complimented the students on their distinction
                                 in games and sports
   Compl<u>e</u>ment   The musician and the violinist complemented each other

3. deal <u>in</u>   My friend deals in (sells) cloth.
   deal <u>with</u>   The police deal with the law and order situation.

4. l<u>o</u>se (verb)   If we are not careful, we will lose our money
   lo<u>o</u>se (adjective)   I wear loose clothes
                                 (<u>loose</u> is the opposite of tight)

5. ad<u>o</u>pt	My friend has adopted his sister's son.
	The bank will adopt (follow) a new policy from next month.
ad<u>a</u>pt	This machine can be adapted to any voltage.
(adjust)	We should learn to adapt ourselves to any situation.
6. <u>few</u>	I have few books (few carries a negative meaning)
<u>a few</u> (a limited number)	I have a few (some) books.
7. <u>little</u>	I have little (no) food
<u>a little</u>	I have a little (a limited quality) food.

(<u>few</u> and <u>a few</u> are used with nouns which can be counted, <u>little</u> and <u>a little</u> with nouns which cannot

be counted)

8. <u>admit</u>	We have admitted our mother in the hospital.
	The servant admitted (confessed, owned) the mistake.
<u>admit of</u>	This passage <u>admits of</u> (gives room, or scope for) two or three interpretations.
	This situation admits of more than two or three explanations.
	(This situation can be explained in two or three ways).
9. <u>alternate</u>	I go to my village on alternate Sundays.
	(first Sunday, third Sunday, fifth Sunday)
<u>alternative</u>	There is no alternative (choice) to hard work.
10. <u>altogether</u>	We are altogether (in all) ten members in our family.
<u>all together</u>	We have lunch all together.
11. <u>always</u>	We should always (all the time) be regular and punctual
<u>all ways</u>	The officer tried all ways (all methods) to solve the problem.
12. <u>compare to</u>	Life is compared to a river. (<u>compare to</u> is used to suggest similarity)
<u>compare with</u>	The performance of team A was compared with that of team B. (<u>compare with</u> is used to bring out similarity and contrast)
13. <u>credible</u>	The evidence given by the witness was credible.
	(that which can be believed)
<u>credulous</u> (easily believing)	Children are credulous and so can be deceived or misled.
14. <u>momentary</u> (brief)	The pleasures of life are momentary
<u>momentous</u> (important)	One's birthday is a momentous occasion in one's life.
15. <u>economic</u>	The economic condition of India has improved.
<u>Economical</u>	We should be economical (careful) in the use of money/water/food

16.	exhausting	The journey was exhausting (tiresome)
	exhaustive	The lecturer gave an exhaustive account of the subject (dealing with all aspects)
17.	quiet	We can work without disturbance in a quiet place.(calm, peaceful)
	quite	I feel quite (completely) happy. (we feel quite happy and relaxed in a quiet place)
18.	piece	Give me a piece (small bit) of cake.
	Peace	Prayer brings peace of mind.
19.	reign	The British reigned over (ruled) India for nearly two hundred years.
	Rain	Crops fade without rain
20.	pray	Let us pray for the success of the Indian team.
	Prey	Innocent people fall a prey (victim) to deception
21	dissent	The two judges expressed dissent (disagreement)
	descent (coming down)	The descent from the mountain is easy
		dissent is the antonym of assent (approval)
		descent is the antonym of ascent (going up)
22.	disperse	The police used teargas to disperse the crowd.
	disburse	Salary is disbursed (paid) on the last working day of the month.
23.	adverse (unfavourable)	We have to face adverse circumstances in life.
	averse	My friend is averse to gambling (dislike)
24.	canvas	A painter uses canvas
	canvass	Candidates canvass support at the time of election.
25.	died	The children died of fever.
	dead	One hundred passengers were dead in the train accident.
26.	principal	1. The principal deals with cases of indiscipline. 2. The borrower has to pay heavy interest on the principal.
	principle	We should not deviate from principles.
27.	stationary	The car dashed against a stationary (not moving) lorry.
	stationery	Children buy stationery (notebooks, pencil, eraser) at the beginning of the school year.
28.	liberalise	Pension rules have been liberalised.
	Liberate	The city was liberated by the army.

(Candidates are advised to refer to Current English Usage by F.T.Wood for more illustrations).

Activity

Learn the difference in meaning between the words in each of the following sets of words.

1. meat, meet
2. later, latter
3. tire, tyre, tier
4. amicable, amiable
5. uninterested, disinterested
6. hard, hardly
7. cite, site, sight
8. scarce, scarcely
9. farmer, former
10. lead, lead
11. minute, minute
12. instant, instance
13. illustrious, illustrative
14. might, mite
15. violence, violation

Common errors
Correction of sentences

Look at the following list of incorrect and correct sentences and learn to avoid mistakes. This is only a sample list.

1. Incorrect — The board comprises of five members
   Correct — The board comprises five members

2. Incorrect — Students discuss about politics
   Correct — Students discuss politics

3. Incorrect — My watch is superior than his watch
   Correct — My watch is superior to his watch
   (Superior, inferior, prior, senior, junior – these words are followed by to)

4. Incorrect — Old people cannot be able to walk without support
   Correct — Old people cannot walk without support or old people will not be able to walk without support

5. Incorrect — The school is walkable distance from our house.
   Correct — The school is walking distance from our house.

6. Incorrect — I go to my school by walk
   Correct — I walk to my school or I go to my school on foot

7. Incorrect — If in case you are absent, you will lose pay
   If suppose you are absent, you will pay.
   Correct — If or in case or suppose you are late, you will lose pay (use only if or in case or suppose)

8. Incorrect — I have bought new furnitures.
   Correct — I have bought new furniture.

9. Incorrect   We have informed the theft to the police.
    Correct   We have <u>informed the police about</u> the theft.
                         (Inform <u>someone</u> <u>about</u> something)

10. Incorrect   A conference of Advocate-Generals will be held next week.
    Correct   A conference of Advocates-General will be held next week
                         Learn the plural forms of:

<u>Singular</u>		<u>Plural</u>
Inspector-General	-	Inspectors-General
Auditor-General	-	Auditors-General
Son-in-Law	-	Sons-in-Law
Brother-in-law	-	Brothers-in-law
Sister-in-law	-	Sisters-in-law
Father-in-law	-	Fathers-in-law
Mother-in-law	-	Mothers-in-law

11. Incorrect   I go to the temple <u>once in a way</u>
    Correct   I go to the temple <u>once in a while</u>.

12. Incorrect   I have been reading <u>since</u> two hours
    Correct   I have been reading <u>for</u> two hours or I have been reading <u>since</u> two 'o' clock.
                         (<u>For</u> refers to duration or length of time, <u>since</u> to a point of time.)

13. Incorrect   You are coming home, isn't it?
    Correct   You are coming home, aren't you?
                         (Tag question)

14. Incorrect   One of <u>the room</u> is vacant
    Correct   One of <u>the rooms</u> is vacant
                         (<u>one of</u> to be followed by the plural noun)

15. Incorrect   I prefer juice <u>than</u> tea
                         I prefer juice <u>to</u> tea.

16. Incorrect   The two brothers do not speak <u>to one another</u>
    Correct   The two brothers do not speak <u>to each other</u>.
                         (<u>Each other</u> is used with reference to two persons,<u> one another</u> with reference
                         to more the two)

17. Incorrect   Though he went late,<u> but</u> he caught the train
    Correct   Though he went late, he caught the train.

18. Incorrect   German is <u>an</u> European language
    Correct   German is <u>a</u> European Language

19. Incorrect   I have ordered <u>for</u> lunch from a hotel
    Correct   I have ordered lunch from a hotel

| 20. | Incorrect | This watch <u>costed</u> me one thousand rupees. |
| | Correct | This watch <u>cost</u> me one thousand rupees. |

| 21. | Incorrect | I found a hundred <u>rupees</u> note on the road. |
| | Correct | I found a hundred rupee note on the road |

22.	Incorrect	We live <u>in</u> upstairs / downstairs
		We have moved <u>to</u> upstairs / downstairs
	Correct	We live upstairs / downstairs
		We have moved upstairs / downstairs

| 23. | Incorrect | He is elder than I |
| | Correct | He is older than I |

| 24. | Incorrect | I told <u>to</u> my friend to meet me. |
| | Correct | I told my friend to meet me. |

| 25. | Incorrect | He did a mistake |
| | Correct | He made a mistake. |

| 26. | Incorrect | The teacher makes the children <u>to</u> speak in the class. |
| | Correct | The teacher makes the children speak in the class. |

Suggested Reading

1. F.T. Wood. <u>Current English Usage</u>.

2. Randolph Quirk. <u>The Use of English</u>.

Prof. S. Jagadisan

Lesson - 17

Current English Usage - II

In this lesson some more points of usage are given as well as difference of usage between pairs of similar-looking words.

ACADEMIC: ACADEMICALLY. Generally speaking, *academic* has to do with learning or scholarship, *academical* with an academy or place of learning: thus 'an academical institution', but 'academic distinction', 'an academic education', 'a point of purely academic interest'. We speak of *academic dress*, but *full academicals.*

ACCORD: ACCORDANCE. 'In accord with your instructions' or 'In accordance with your instructions'? It depends on the meaning to be expressed. When the sense is 'following out' or 'obeying' *accordance* is required ('In accordance with your instructions we have suspended work on the heating apparatus'); when it is that of 'agreement', then *accord* is used ('What he has done is not in accord with your instruction').

ACCUSTOMED: When *accustomed* is intended to express the notion that something is customary, or is generally done, it is followed by the infinitive ('She was accustomed to sleep for an hour after her lunch'); when it is followed by *to* plus the gerund, it means 'is/was used to, or inured to' ('I am not accustomed to walking long distances'). As a verb, *accustom* is followed by a gerund, not an infinitive: 'You must accustom yourself to getting up early', not 'you must accustom yourself to get up early'.

ADDICTED. The sentence 'He is addicted to drink' has perhaps given rise to the unidiomatic use of an infinitive after *addicted*. 'To drink' is here not an infinitive, but a noun preceded by a preposition. *Addicted* is always followed by *to* plus a noun or a gerund: *addicted to drugs, addicted to gambling*, but not *addicted to gamble.*

ADEQUATE. (i) *Adequate* is always followed by the preposition *to*, not *for*: 'adequate to one's needs', etc.
(ii) Since adequate means 'just sufficient', adequate enough is a solecism, and more adequate an absurdity. Logically, there is no objection to more than adequate ('The time you were allowed for the work should have been more than adequate'), but more than enough or more than sufficient is to be preferred.

ADHERENCE: ADHESION. *Adhesion* means 'sticking to' in the literal sense (the adhesion of a stamp to an envelope, or of flies to a fly-paper); *adherence* is 'sticking to' in the figurative sense, as adherence to a plan, to one's principles, etc.

ADMISSION: ADMITTANCE. When *admit* means ' confess', the noun is always admission (the admission of one's guilt, the admission that one was to blame); when it means 'allow in' *admission* is also the more usual word ('Admission one shilling', 'Admission by ticket only'). *Admittance* is more formal or official, and means 'leave or right to enter': e.g. 'No admittance except on business'.

ADVANCE (Noun): ADVANCEMENT. *Advance*= 'progress' or 'going forward' (or sometimes 'coming on'): the advance of an army, the advance of science, the advance of medical knowledge, the advance of old age. *Advancement* = 'promotion' or 'helping forward': to seek advancement, to work for the advancement of cause, the Royal society for the advancement of Science. We say that with the advance (not the *advancement*) of winter the days grow shorter.

AFFECT: EFFECT. The verb corresponding to the noun *effect* is *affect* (to produce an effect upon) ' The climate affected his health', 'The increased tariffs recently announced by the Australian government are bound to affect our exports to that country'. *Affect* also means ' to assume, as a form of affectation', as in the phrase ' to affect a superior air'.

  Effect, when used as a verb, means 'to bring about' or 'to achieve', e.g. to effect an escape, to effect a change. The plural noun *effects* may mean 'results' ('The full effects of the measures have yet to be felt') or it may mean 'personal property of belongings', as in the expression 'one's household effects'.

AFFINITY. There is an affinity *between* two things, or one has an affinity *with* (not *to*) the other. Fowler (*M.E.U.*) condemns 'an affinity *for',* but it is recognised in scientific language. One substance is said to have an affinity *for* another when it has a tendency to unite with it. Outside this rather specialised use, however, 'an affinity for' is incorrect.

ALLOW: ALLOW OF. *Allow* means ' permit', *allow of* means 'give scope for' or 'leave room for'. ('The regulations do not allow of any variation'. *Allow of* cannot take a personal subject; we cannot say 'He would not allow of my going'. (See also ADMIT.)

ALLUSION: ILLUSION. *Allusion* = a passing or a veiled reference: *illusion* = a deceptive appearance. The adjectives are *allusive and illusory.*

AMBIGUOUS: AMBIVALENT. An ambiguous term or statement is one where only one meaning was intended, but a second is possible (e.g. was the motorist driving on the *right* side of the road?). An ambivalent term is one which is intended to have a double meaning. Thus when Chaucer, in the

Prologue to the *Canterbury Tales,* says of the Friar that he knew 'all the worthy women of the town' we can take *worthy* at its face value, as meaning 'well-off' or 'highly respected', or we may take it as a euphemism for 'disreputable' or 'loose-living'.

AMEND: EMEND. *Amend =* alter (usually for the better); *emend* = correct an error. Nouns; *amendment, emendation.*

ATTENDANT: ATTENDER. 'For over thirty years he was a regular attendant at morning service' (it should have been *attender).* An *attendant* is one who attends on others: one who attends a service, a meeting, a lecture, etc., is an *attender.*

AVERSE. Followed by the preposition *to;* and not *from,* The only part of the verb that can follow *averse* is the gerund ('I am averse to gambling', not ' averse to gamble').

BALEFUL: BANEFUL. *Baleful -* evil, *baneful* = harmful, destructive.

BEGIN: COMMENCE. (i) Wherever possible, use *begin, Commence* is the formal word, used for the announcement of meetings, concerts, etc. Wyld (*Universal English Dictionary)* says that apart from such contexts 'the word has now fallen to vulgar use'.
(ii) *Begin* may be followed by either the gerund or the infinitive *(begin doing something* or *begin to do something*), the infinitive being more usual when we are concerned only with the inception of an activity, without any reference to its possible continuance ('It began to rain', 'He begins to look old'), the gerund when the inception is thought of as initiating a process that continued or is to continue ('Don't begin writing until I tell you', 'They have begun building the house'), *Commence* takes only the gerund.

BEREAVED: BEREFT. *Bereaved* by death: *Bereft* (i.e. deprived) of speech, one's senses, etc.

BESIDE: BESIDES. *Besides* is used only when the meaning is 'in addition'; for all other senses *beside* is the world: 'He sat beside the driver', She was beside herself with joy'.

BI-ANNUAL: BIENNIAL. *Bi-annual* = twice a year, *Biennial* = once every two years.

BONA FIDE: BONA FIDES. (i) *Bona fides* (=Latin, *good faith*) is singular: 'His bona fides is in doubt' (not *are).*
        (ii) *Bona fide* means 'in good faith'; that is to say, it is, strictly speaking, adverbial in sense, though in English it is more often used adjectivally: *bona-fide enquiries, a bona-fide applicant.* It should never be used as a noun; do not say ' I should question their *bona fide'. Here bona fides* is required.

BURNED: BURNT. (i) For the adjective always use *burnt (burnt paper, burnt sienna, a burnt offering).*

(ii) For the past tense and past participle either *burned* or *burnt* may be used, but the latter is more common in the transitive sense ('He burnt his fingers', 'The acid has burnt a hole in my jacket') and the former in the intransitive ('The fire burned for several days'). *Burned* is also preferred for the figurative use ('A desire for revenge burned within him').

COHERENCE: COHESION. *Coherence* = the 'hanging together' (literally 'sticking together') of verbal utterance, whether in speech or writing. *Cohesion* = the literal sticking together of two objects or substances, or the metaphorical sticking-together of friends, social groups, nations, etc.

COMPLACENT: COMPLAISANT. *Complacent* = self-satisfied; *Complaisant* = ready to oblige.

CONSEQUENT ON: SUBSEQUENT TO. Note the prepositions. *Subsequent to* merely means *after; consequent on* means ' following from, as a result or consequence'.

CONSIST OF: CONSIST IN. *Consist of* = 'be composed of or made up of' ('The drink consists mainly of water, with a little flavouring added'). *Consist in* = 'have as an essential element' ('Courage consists in overcoming one's fears').

CONTEMPTIBLE: CONTEMPTUOUS. *Contemptible* means 'deserving of contempt', *contemptuous* 'showing, or expressive of, contempt'. In August 1914 the Kaiser was alleged to have spoken of 'Britain's contemptible little army'. His remark was a contemptuous one.
The correct preposition to follow *contemptuous* is *of, not* about: 'The Kaiser was contemptuous of Britain's army'.

CORPORAL: CORPOREAL. *Corporal* = pertaining to the body (e.g. corporal punishment). *Corporeal* = bodily as opposed to spiritual: having bodily substance. ('A ghost has no corporeal existence.') The pronunciation rhymes with *memorial.*

COUNCIL: COUNSEL. *Council* = an assembly: also attributively, as 'a council house', 'a council estate', 'a council school'. Counsel (verb) = advise: (noun) = advice: also one who gives advice (usually a barrister), as *counsel for the defence, take the opinion of counsel.*

DATA. Really a plural, meaning 'facts given' (the singular *datum* is rarely used), and a plural verb is therefore to be preferred ('What are the data?'), but in certain contexts it is permissible to treat the word as a collective denoting a single body of facts rather than a number of individual points (c*f. agenda)* and to use a singular verb: 'Is that all the data we have?' 'The data is rather meagre.'

DEFINITE: DEFINITIVE. A *definite* proposal is one made in clear and unmistakable terms; a *definitive* proposal is a final one, that will not be modified, and therefore must be accepted or rejected as it stands.

DELUSION: ILLUSION. *Delusion:* a false belief which is accepted as true, and which therefore deceives, *Illusion:* something which appears to be other than it really is, though the false appearance is not necessarily accepted. A person who is convinced that he has seen a ghost is suffering from a *delusion*; if we suggest that the 'ghost' was really a perfectly natural phenomenon which , in the particular circumstances, gave the impression of a ghost, we are explaining it as an *illusion.*

There may be no basis whatever for a delusion (an insane woman, for instance, may be under the delusion that she is the Queen, Joan of Arc, or the widow of Captain Cook); for an illusion there must be some basis.

DEPRECATE: DEPRECIATE. A common mistake is to use *deprecate* when *depreciate* is required. *Deprecate* = express disapproval of or, more strictly, to pray against ('He deprecated the use of such extravagant language'). *Depreciate* = belittle, lessen ('Those who were jealous of his success always depreciated his achievements').

DESPITE. Followed by no preposition. *Despite of* is incorrect. The idiomatic expressions are 'in spite of repeated warnings' and 'despite repeated warnings'.

DISINTERESTED: UNINTERESTED. *Disinterested* = having no personal advantage to gain. *Uninterested* = unwilling to give attention to: bored. A judge should be disinterested in a case he is trying: he should not be uninterested.

DRAFT: DRAUGHT. *Draft*: a draft of money, of soldiers, etc.; make a rough draft; to draft a bill, a document, etc. *Draught:* a draught of water (or any other kind of drink); the draught of a ship; beer sold on draught; a draught of fishes; to exclude the draught (from a room, etc.); play draughts; a draught-horse; a draughtsman.

EATABLE: EDIBLE. Mushrooms are edible, toadstools are not; but even things which are edible may sometimes be uneatable because of their condition, e.g. mushrooms which have been burned in the cooking, meat which is tough, or bread which has become stale. *Eatable* refers to palatability, *edible* to what may, normally, be eaten.

ECONOMIC: ECONOMICAL. *Economical* has to do with saving (*the most economical method*); *economic* means 'pertaining to the science of economics: relating to trade, commerce, the production and distribution of wealth, etc.' (*economic problems, a period of economic expansion).*

EDUCATIONAL: EDUCATIVE. *Educational work* = work in connexion with education (it may be administrative, organising or actual teaching). *Educative work* = work which educates those who undertake it. An *educational* tour – one arranged for the purposes of educating. An *educative* tour = one that results in educating those who take part in it, though it may not have been arranged with that object in view. An *educational* (not *educative*) organisation, body, institution, system, etc. : *educational* (not *educative)* reforms: an *educative* (not *educational)* experience.

EFFECTIVE: EFFICACIOUS: EFFICIENT. *Effective* = capable of effecting (i.e. bringing about) a desired result, as an *effective method of preventing smuggling.* *Efficient* = giving satisfactory results, as an efficient hearing system. *Efficacious* is used only of remedies, medicines, medical and surgical treatment, etc. (efficacious in cases of fever).

EGOIST: EGOTIST. *Egoist* =a selfish person: one who puts his own interests first. *Egotist* = self-centred person: one who is continually speaking of himself, or trying to attract attention to himself.

ENQUIRE: INQUIRE. The verb is now usually spelt *enquire, Enquiry* = request for information (more often used in the plural, as 'All enquiries to be made at the office). *Inquiry* = investigation, as 'a court of inquiry', 'an inquiry into the causes of an accident'.

ENSURE: INSURE. We *ensure* (i.e. make certain of) the success of an undertaking, and take measures to *ensure* that instructions or regulations are carried out. .We *insure* our lives, property, etc., and *insure against* death, accident, fire, loss of income, etc.

FAMILIAR TO: FAMILIAR WITH. *Familiar to* = known to (by), as 'His face is familiar to me': *familiar with* = having a fairly good knowledge of, as 'I am familiar with the countryside'.

FARTHER: FURTHER. Always use *further* (i) when the sense is 'additional' *(further information, further evidence),* or 'in addition' 'Have you anything further to say?' ' Further, the committee are of the opinion that the time is inopportune'), and (ii) when it is a verb meaning ' advance', 'promote' ('to further one's own interests').

FEMALE: FEMININE. (i) As a synonym for *woman, female* is a vulgarism ('Females under the age of twenty-five are eligible for the post'). Say *women.*

   (ii) *Female* denotes the sex of the creature to which it is applied (*the female of the species, a female swan)* or some physical part of such a creature (*the female form, female organs,* etc.) which has sexual characteristics. *Feminine* means pertaining to, or such as one associates with, a woman: *feminine charms, a feminine style of writing.* (Charms and writing have no sex so female cannot be used.)

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(iii) Say that a person is 'of the female sex', not 'of the feminine gender'. Only words have gender. (See *Gender)*

FIANCÈ: FIANCÈE. (i) A woman's betrothed is her financé (masculine), a man's his financée (feminine). Both words have the same pronunciation (the second 'e' in *fiancée* is not pronounced.

(ii) The words are not equivalent in meaning to *sweetheart*. They should be used only if the persons are actually engaged to be married.

FLAUNT: FLOUT. *Flaunt* means 'to display ostentatiously' (e.g. 'wealthy people flaunting their riches'). *Flout* means to defy or violate laws, conventions etc.

FORBEAR: FOREBEAR. *Forbear* is a verb = hold back from doing something. *Forebear* is a noun = ancestor (usually in the plural: *one's forebears).*

FORBIDDING: FOREBODING. Sometimes confused: e.g. 'With its heavy iron gates, its walls surmounted by spiked railings, and a huge mastiff prowling in the courtyard, the house had a foreboding appearance'. *Forbidding* is the word required, i.e. an appearance which seemed to forbid or discourage any approach or entry. *Foreboding* = indicating or suggesting in advance: 'the heavy, black clouds, foreboding a storm', ' hard face, foreboding cruelty of character'.

FOREGO: FORGO. The former means ' to go before'. Only the participles are in common use *(the foregoing facts, a foregone conclusion). Forgo* means 'to do without something to which one is entitled', e.g. *forgo one's holiday*. Be careful over the spelling of the participles and the compound tenses: there is no *e* ('I am forgoing my holiday this year', 'He has forgone his holiday'). The past tense is *forwent,* but it is rarely used.

GOLD (Adjective): GOLDEN. *Gold* when the meaning is 'made of gold' (*a gold watch, a gold ring, gold coins). Golden* was formerly used in this sense also, but it is now archaic, through it is preserved in a few traditional phrases, like 'the goose that lays the golden eggs'.

In modern usage *golden* is restricted to (i) colour: *golden hair, the golden corn, the golden tints of autumn,* (ii) figurative use : *a golden opportunity, the golden age, golden opinions, a golden wedding.*

HARDLY. (i) An an adverb of degree, *hardly* takes *when,* not *than*: 'He had hardly recovered from influenza, *when* he developed measles' (not *than he developed measles).* The alternativees are *no sooner . . . than* — *hardly . . . when.*

(ii) We speak of *hard-earned money, hard-won rights,* etc., not *hardly-earned* and *hardly-won.*

HISTORIC: HISTORICAL. *Historical* = concerned with history (a historical novel, a historical society, a historical account) or having an actual existence in history ('Many people doubt whether

Robin Hood was a historical character'). *Historic* = having a long history attached to it ('Historic cities such as York and Chester', 'A fund for the preservation of historic buildings') or such as will go down in history (a historic document, a historic occasion, a historic trial).

HOARD: HORDE. A *hoard* is a secret store of pile: *a horde* is, strictly, a large migratory tribe of savages, but in everyday English the word is more often used (always in a derogatory sense) of large crowds or numbers of any kind of persons (hordes of inspectors, trippers, ramblers, football fans, etc.). It should not be used of non-personal things, as 'hordes of official forms' or 'hordes of begging letters'.

HOME: AT HOME. *Stay home, keep a person home* are not accepted idiom. We go home, come home, arrive home, get home, and take, send or bring someone (or something) home; but we stay *at* home, live at home, work at home, and keep a person, goods or money at home. *Home* is an adverb denoting destination, *at home* is an adverb phrase, in which the word *home* itself is a noun, and denotes locality. 'He is not at home' = he is not in the house. 'He is not yet home' = he has not yet arrived back from work, an outing, his holiday, etc.

ILLEGAL: ILLEGITIMATE: ILLICIT. *Illegal* = expressly forbidden by law. *Illegitimate* = not recognised by the law, or not having the sanction of law, as 'the illegitimate use of force'. *Illicit* does not, in itself, refer to law at all; it means 'not allowed'.

It may here be pointed out that *unlawful* overlaps to a large extent with *illegal,* but it applies over a wider field. *Illegal refers* only to the law of the land.

IMPERIAL: IMPERIOUS. In the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries the two words seem to have been almost interchangeable. Hamlet's 'imperious Caesar' refers to Caesar's position as Emperor, not to his character. Today *imperial* = pertaining to an empire or an emperor ('the imperial crown', 'imperial aspirations'): *imperious* = overbearing, domineering ('an imperious manner').

IMPERSONATE: PERSONATE. *Impersonate* = mimic, copy, pretend to be another person, usually for purposes of entertainment. *Personate* = claim to be another person with intent to deceive, for wrongful purposes. Under the laws governing parliamentary and municipal election in England and Wales, anyone *personating* another elector is liable to heavy penalties. *Impersonate* is sometimes mistakenly used where *personate* is needed.

IMPRACTICABLE: IMPRACTICAL. The two are sometimes confused – or rather the second is sometimes used for the first. A scheme, plan idea, etc. which cannot possibly be carried out is *impracticable* (e.g. 'At one time it was thought impracticable for man to fly'). *Impractical* means (a) not much given to practical things, as 'He is a very impractical sort of person' (though for this, in

British English at least, *unpractical* is more often used), (b) which could be done, but would require far too much time or trouble, as 'an impractical suggestion'.

IN : AT. We usually speak of a person living *in* a country and *in* a large town, but *at* a village or a small town. Much, however, depends on the circumstances. A visitor to a village will ask an inhabitant how long he has lived *in* the village, while conversely anyone who thinks of Birmingham and Manchester merely as places on the map, and not as large cities, may well say that a relative or friend of his lives *at* Birmingham or Manchester.

INFAMOUS: NOTORIOUS. *Notorious* means 'well known for something discreditable', and in this sense is the opposite of *famous* (a notorious pirate, a notorious liar, a district notorious for its fogs). *Infamous* means 'evil' or 'wicked', though not necessarily well known on that account. It merely expresses a moral judgement, and therefore is not really an antonym of *famous*: 'an infamous scoundrel', 'an infamous deed', 'a tyrant whose name has become infamous in history'. (Cf. The noun *infamy.).*

INFER: IMPLY. 'His words seemed to infer that he thought I knew the secret. 'What do you infer by that remark?' Both incorrect. The word required is *imply*. *Imply* means 'suggest, without actualy stating', *infer* mens 'read a meaning into, draw a conclusion'. What do you *imply* by that remark?' (what do you mean to suggest by it?) 'What are we to *infer* from that remark?' (what conclusion are we to draw from it?)

INGENIOUS: INGENUOUS. *Ingenious* = clever: *ingenuous* = natural, artless, free from deceit.

LAUDABLE: LAUDATORY. *Laudable* = deserving of praise (a laudable effort). *Laudatory* = bestowing praise (a very laudatory review of a book).

LAY: LIE. (i) *To lay* is transitive, i.e. it must have an object; *to lie* is intransitive, i.e. it has no object. We advise a person to *lie down* (not to *lay down),* but we *lay down* our duties, *lay down* the law, *lay* a book on the table, *lay a* carpet, linoleum, etc., and a person who dies in battle *lays down* his life for his country.

(ii) *To lie* has the present participle *laying,* the past participle *lain,* and the past tense *lay.* (He is lying on the couch. He has lain on the couch. He lay on the couch.)

To lay has the present participle *laying,* and the past participle and past tense *laid*. (They are laying a cable under the river bed. They laid a cable under the river bed. They have laid a cable, etc.) Note the spelling: there is no word spelt *layed.*

LIGHTENING: LIGHTNING. The spelling without the *e* is the noun (*a flash of lightning, a lightning conductor),* that with the *e* is the present participle and gerund of the verb *to lighten,* in whatever

sense it is used: 'The driver was lightening the load on his beast'. 'A scheme for lightening the burden of taxation.' 'It has been thundering and lightening for the last half-hour.'

For the figurative use, when the sense is 'quick', 'rapid', the spelling is *lightning,* since the figure is taken from the rapidity of the lightning flash: 'to run like lightning', a lightning decision', 'a lightning war'.

LUXURIANT: LUXURIOUS. *Luxuriant* = growing abundantly or in profusion, and is usually applied to vegetation, foliage or hair. *Luxurious* = Suggestive of costilines, extravagance, or over-indulgence: *luxurious furnishings, luxurious ways of living, a person with luxurious tastes.*

MOMENTARY: MOMENTOUS. *Momentary* = occurring in the space of a moment, as 'a momentary thought', 'a momentary suspicion'. *Momentous* = important on account of the consequences ('a momentous occasion', 'a momentous decision').

MYTHICAL: MYTHOLOGICAL. *Mythical* = untrue, having no real existence. *Mythological* = pertaining to mythology.

NAUGHT: NOUGHT. Use the spelling *nought* when the numerical cipher is meant, and *naught* for all other meanings.

OBSERVANCE: OBSERVATION. *Observation* of the landscape, the building, the camp, etc. (i.e. something one sees): *observance* of the rules, regulations, the sabbath, religious rites (i.e. paying due regard or attention to).

OCCUPANT: OCCUPIER. *Occupant(s)* of a railway carriage, a seat, a room, etc. (i.e; those who at the moment happen to occupy it). The *occupier* of a house or other premises (i.e. the person who lives or carries on business there).

PERMISSIBLE: PERMISSIVE. *Permissible* = permitted, not prohibited. "It is permissible to end a sentence with a preposition if it sounds more natural to do so.' *Permissive* = permitting, but not compelling. A permissive clause in an Act of Parliament is a clause which permits people or organisations to do certain things if they wish, but does not make it obligatory for them to do so.

PERSPICUOUS: PERSPICACIOUS. *Perspicuous* = clear, easily understood. Noun: *perspicuity.* *Perspicacious* = having the ability to see or understand clearly. Noun: *perspicacity.* A person is perspicacious; his manner of expressing himself in speech or writing is perspicuous.

PICK: CHOOSE. *Choose* suggests careful thought and deliberation, and the weighing of one thing against another; *pick* suggests merely selection, sometimes in a rather perfunctory manner. We pick a winner and pick a cricket team, but choose the material for a dress or a suit, choose a birthday or a

wedding present, choose a name for a child, choose a site for a camp, and choose one of several things that are offered us.

PITIABLE: PITIFUL. *Pitiable* suggests degradation or wretchedness (*a pitiable plight, a pitiable attempt*). *Pitiful* = expressing or evoking pity (*a pitiful cry, a pitiful story*).

PREFER. *Prefer is normally followed by* to, not *than*; 'I prefer coffee to tea', 'She preferred sewing to knitting', 'We prefer going by car to travelling by train'.

PRESCRIBE: PROSCRIBE. A doctor *prescribes* treatment or medicine, and an examining body *prescribes* certain books to be studied: a government *proscribes* (i.e. places outside the protection of the law) persons and practices it regards as undesirable.

PROPORTIONAL: PROPORTIONATE. *Proportional* is usually used attributively (*a proportional amount, proportional representation), proportionate* predicatively (a share of the profits proportionate to the money invested, a reward proportionate to the effort.

PURPOSELY: PURPOSEFULLY: PURPOSIVELY. *Purposely* = intentionally. *Purposefully* = in a determined manner, as if animated by a strong purpose ('They set about the task purposefully, and without delay'). *Purposively* = in such a manner as to achieve an end or purpose. ('Studies which are purposively directed.')

RELATION: RELATIONSHIP. Perhaps we may say that *relationship* expresses the general, abstract idea of one thing or one person being related to another, whereas *relation* suggests a more definite or specific connexion. We say 'He is a relation of mine' (i.e. a person who is related to me) and ask 'What relation is he to you?' (i.e. cousin, uncle, brother-inlaw?). But we cannot ask ' What is his relation to you?' Here we must use *relationship* (i.e. the way he is related.).

When we come to things or facts that are related, *relation* suggests a definite lline of connexion: e.g. 'Doctors think there is a relation between smoking and lung cancer'. 'That has no relation to the matter under discussion.' *Relationship,* on the other hand, expresses the general idea, or the state or fact, of one thing being related to another: e.g. 'Such words as *ratio* and *proportion* connote relationship'.

RELATION: RELATIVE: RELEVANT. For persons to whom one is related both relation and relative may be used. There is little to choose between them, and it is very largely a matter of personal preference, but the tendency is perhaps to keep *relation* for one to whom we are closely related, and I *relative* for those with whom the connexion is more distant. In official language *relative* is used to cover both (e.g. *dependent relatives).* Sometimes rhythm may be the deciding factor. We speak of *rich* (or *poor) relations,* but *elderly relatives.*

REVEREND: REVERENT: REVERED. *Reverend* = worthy of reverence; *reverent* = showing reverence. *Revered* = accorded great reverence: e.g. 'a much revered man'.

RIME: RHYME. The *rhyme* in poetry. A nursery *rhyme*. Coleridge called his well-known poem. *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner,* and when the full title is quoted the word must be so spelt, but otherwise use *rhyme* for a poem. The verb *to rhyme* is spelt in the same way.

RISE: ARISE. A person *rises* from his chair or his bed, *rises* at 7-30, *rises* in the world, *rises* to the occasion, etc. The sun, the temperature, the barometer and prices all *rise,* while an aeroplane *rises* into the *sky. Rise,* that is to say, is the word that is used when the meaning is 'getting, going or coming up'.

Arise = 'come into being'. A quarrel, an argument, a difficulty, a doubt, a question, a storm, an awakward situation *arises. 'A wind arose'* (suddenly blew up), but 'The wind rose to gale force' (increased in velocity or intensity).

RURAL: RUSTIC. *Rural* is the uncoloured term, and is contrasted with *urban: a rural life, a rural scene, rural areas, Rustic* suggests a certain quaintness, simplicity or crudity (*rustic characters, rustic speech).*

SALUBRIOUS: SALUTARY. Salubrious = conducive to physical health (*a salubrious spot, not a very salubrious atmosphere): salutary* = beneficial morally (*a salutary lesson, a salutary experience).*

SATIRE: SATYR. *Satire* is the literary form, *satyr* the mythological creature, half man and half goat.

SCEPTIC: SEPTIC. A *Sceptic (*pronounced *sk-*) is one who is inclined to disbelief: *septic* is an adjective meaning ' affected by sepsis, or poisoning of the blood'.

SENSUAL: SENSUOUS. *Sensual* = appealing to the senses, or to the bodily appetites (usually with a pejorative connotation):*sensual pleasures. Sensuous* = appealing to the senses of sight, taste, smell, etc. (generally used approvingly): '*the sensuous imagery of Keats's poetry.*

SUBCONSCIOUS: UNCONSCIOUS. *Unconscious* means 'unaware of one's surroundings, or of what is taking place'. *Subconscious* is used of impressions made upon our mind, of which we are not aware but which may nevertheless influence our motives or our conduct.

TEMPORAL: TEMPORARY. *Temporal* means 'having to do with time' (e.g. a temporal clause, another name for an adverb clause of time), and hence is often used as the opposite of *spiritual,* as in the expression, 'His (i.e. the king's) sceptre shows the force of temporal power' (Shakespeare, *The Merchant of Venice). Temporary* means 'lasting, or intended, for a short time only' (a temporary post, a temporary building, temporary measures).

TERMINAL: TERMINUS. Usually an air *terminal,* but a railway *terminus.* The plural of *terminus* is *termini,* but *terminuses* is permissible in conversational English.

THOUGH: ALTHOUGH. There is no difference of meaning. *Although* is felt to be stronger than *though* and is therefore more frequently used at the beginning of a sentence, and internally when emphasis is desired: 'He insisted on doing it, although I warned him not to'.

THRASH: THRESH. The two words are the same by origin, though usage has differentiated them. A person is *thrashed,* corn is *threshed.* It is better to speak of *threshing* out a problem than of *thrashing* it out, since it is a metaphorical application of the idea of threshing grain. On the other hand one football team *thrashes* its opponents (gives them a sound beating).

TITILLATE: TITIVATE. The two words are sometimes confused. *To titillate* means *'to tickle'* (figuratively), 'to excite a pleasant feeling or sensation': to titillate one's appetite. *To titivate* means 'to smarten up'. It is generally used half humorously, as in the expression 'to titivate oneself'.

TORTIOUS: TORTUOUS: TORTUROUS. *Tortious* = constituting a tort (i.e. a civil wrong). *Tortuous* = winding ('a tortuous route', 'a very tortuous chain of argument'). *Torturous* = inflicting torture.

TRIUMPHANT: TRIUMPHAL. The first of this pair is often used where the second should be employed: *Triumphant* means *victorious* ('the triumphant army', 'to emerge triumphant from a conflict', 'the Church Triumphant'). *Triumphal* means 'concerned with the celebration of a triumph or a victory', as 'a triumphal march, hymn, arch, procession', etc.

Suggested Reading

1.   F.T. Wood. Current English Usage.

2.   Randolph Quirk. The Use of English.

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