Technology and Language Progression

Dr. Kalpana S. Singh, Assistant Professor of English, Department of Humanities, Dayananda Sagar College of Engineering, Bangalore, Karnataka, India.

Abstract: English language is always adapting, but these changes have come about more hastily as technology has developed in recent years. Rapidly growing influence of technology has altered the way in which we live and think. The cultural, social, and economic life of man has drastically changed. The transform was not limited to the technical things but also the very production and reception of literature. As human beings we develop our own ways to express new things, as well as adapting to different forms of communications. As the digital era has changed the way we communicate, it has also affected the way we use language. We delve deeper in to the ways digital devices have been changing our lives to see how this has affected the English language. In recent years, more and more of our communications are carried out via mobile devices, internet, and social media. These communication channels have introduced some new challenges to users, which have brought about changes in the use of language.

Keywords: English, language, technology, change.

INTRODUCTION

The Beowulf-poet, Chaucer and Milton, if they could meet somehow on 23rd of April, on the event of World English language day, birthday anniversary of William Shakespeare, they would not be able to communicate with one another very well because of the great changes in the language over the centuries. English teachers, of course, will have understanding of all these people, and can justify it.

Can English language evolve so drastically that it becomes almost unrecognizable? Even the great Father of literature cannot correspond with his successors. Always this question ponders me and finally leads to this review. This paper discusses how cultural and technological shifts have shaped the English language over time. Literature has been remained as a witness of various changes since centuries. Many things got

changed in the course of time. Literature has also changed its means of production and reception. But it is having the same cult which had before wider the impact of technology.

Expedition of English language through the Ages

The history of the language can be dated as far back as the 5th Century AD when three Germanic tribes, Angles, Saxons and Jutes came to England and displaced the Celtic language that was spoken. The invasion of the Vikings, as well as the influence of Latin, caused the language to evolve further, and contributed an ample amount of the vocabulary used today. This continued evolution has led to English being the second most used language in the world.

If we were to read English from the 9th century, we would have a hard time recognizing just about anything. Many letters wouldn't look familiar, and it would seem like bizarre to us. Even if we were able to read the letters, the order and meaning of the words would make not much sense.

What about literature from a few centuries later, when Geoffrey Chaucer wrote lines such as "Whan that Aprill with his shoures soote…" (Canterbury Tales) Here you can start to make out some words, but many are still inexplicable. To us, it would appear that Chaucer didn't have a spell-checker handy. And the famous William Shakespeare, writing in the 16th and 17th centuries can be understood a bit clearer still. However, parts may still sound formal and strange:

"That thou hast her it is not all my grief; And yet it may be said I loved her dearly…" (Sonnet 42)

All of these examples have a relationship to the English language; from the Old English, we see as gibberish, to the Middle English of Chaucer, and on to Shakespeare's early Modern English. They have developed into today's variations used in speaking, writing and electronic communication. In English literature the different ages also have been marked by major changes in the English language itself. Old English, Middle English and Modern English broadly correspond to the Age of Memory, Age of Manuscripts and Age of Books.

The Old English Beowulf, a bardic song, is the most complete remaining example of the first age. Courtier Geoffrey Chaucer's Middle English story collection, The Canterbury Tales, is the most complete (and wonderful) example of the second. The Age of Books in England began at the dawn of the Renaissance, only about 100 years before Shakespeare (a transitional figure), and is represented by thoroughly bookish neo-classical writers like John Milton and John Dryden (17th century AD) and almost everybody since their time through the twentieth century. There's at least rough connection in history among the Age of Books, the British Empire, and the spread of the English language around the earth.

What causes languages to change as they do? Cultural influences such as invasions, migration and global trade affect this evolution. The world's languages have transformed one another throughout history. For instance, 1500 years ago, the beginnings of the English language can be traced to Germanic tribes entering

Britain. French and Latin had an impact in the centuries that followed. At times, different social classes spoke different languages or versions of languages.

The Renaissance had a role in the development of a radical change known as the **Great Vowel Shift**. This dramatic change to the pronunciation of vowels also coincided with the contact that the British had with other regions of the world during colonial expansion, between 1350 and the 1600s and 1700s. Over a transitional period of about 200 years, the Great Vowel Shift transformed the way English words sounded. For example, before the change, the word 'bite' would have sounded more like 'beet', 'good' more like 'load', 'child' as 'chilled'.

Over time, certain words have been borrowed from other languages like ballet, cafe', entrepreneur from French, the word 'tornada', from tronado, the Spanish word for thunderstorm. African, Arabic, American, Chinese, French. German, Indian, Japanese and Yiddish languages are just a few among many from which the English language has borrowed and adopted new words over time. Other examples of **loanwords** are gazelle, yam, banjo, chocolate, woodchuck, caravan, pecan, bagel, tomato, and chess.

The fact that language is always changing doesn't mean it's getting worse; it's just becoming different. In Old English, a small winged creature with feathers was known as 'brid'. Over time, the pronunciation changed to bird. Although it's not hard to imagine children in the 1400's being scolded for 'slurring' brid into bird, it's clear that bird won out. Nobody today would suggest that bird is an incorrect word or a sloppy pronunciation.

Another reason for change is that no two people have had exactly the same language experience. We all know a slightly different set of words and constructions, depending on our age, job, education level, region of the country, and so on. We pick up new words and phrases from all the different people we talk with, and these combine to make something new and unlike any other person's particular way of speaking. At the same time, various groups in society use language as a way of marking their group identity; showing who is and isn't a member of the group.

Many of the changes that occur in language begin with teens and young adults. As young people interact with others their own age, their language grows to include words, phrases, and constructions that are different from those of the older generation. Some have a short life span, but others stick around to affect the language as a whole.

Effect of technology

While the impact of invasions and the effect of other languages have had a significant influence on the language, it is without question that advancements in technology have played a vital role in the development of the language. Long before modern electronic communications, other technologies impacted the English

language. Imagine how the invention of the printing press around the 15th century allowed massive amounts of text to be shared among more people than ever. This new technology helped fuel much of the learning during and following the Renaissance. The invention of the printing press led to greater availability of books, and allowed the public to experience newspapers and the timeless works of Daniel Defoe and William Shakespeare. Radio contributed to the spread of the language during wartimes, while it could be strongly argued that the invention of television was a major factor in the increased use of English as a second language in the 1950s.

Language is always changing, evolving, and adapting to the needs of its users. If English hadn't changed since, say, 1950, we wouldn't have words to refer to modems, fax machines, or cable TV. As long as the needs of language users continue to change, so will the language. The change is so slow that from year to year we hardly notice it, except to grumble every so often about the 'poor English' being used by the younger generation.

From Greeks to geeks:

The technology of literary production should not be under-appreciated. The great changes in literature, as in other fields, have been driven by technology. Three major breakthroughs in technology have been the alphabet, mechanical print, and electronic text. These inventions clearly divide literary history into four major ages:

1. The Age of Memory: the spoken word from ancient times to the use of writing. Complex literature in the Age of Memory is restricted to trained bards using mnemonic and musical devices. Literature is used for entertainment and, more importantly, for team-building. The song of the legendary past dubbed by modern scholars as myth, mythic history, epic, or heroic song may have originated in this age, but short lyrics, songs and ballads must have been the most common literary forms.

2. The Age of Manuscripts: the handwritten word from the use of writing to the printing press. European mechanical printing begins about 1436 AD. Writing and reading gradually replace singing and listening, as text replaces song. Literacy is restricted to a small professional class, such as scribes or monks or scholars, who think of themselves as learned. Scribes may add new items to old manuscripts. Classical literature and medieval literature represent the Age of Manuscripts in European history.

3. The Age of Books: the printed word from the invention of the printing press until the internet. The low cost and ease of publishing permits an explosion of different kinds of literature, different kinds of authors, different stories, translations into different languages, specialization in every direction. Literacy becomes an essential skill in a text-based world. Commercial distribution favors popular literature; writers no longer depend for support on wealthy patrons but cater to the masses. Literature engages in social criticism, humor, humble subjects, fantasy and pure entertainment. Renaissance to modern literature represents the

Age of Books in the west.

4. The Age of the Internet: the web word from the invention of electronic text until…? We are fortunate to live at this "post-modern" time when such important changes are beginning to take place. The start of the Internet Age, we see the new web technology used first for book distribution in Amazon.com, electronic texts...etc. Meanwhile, the novelties of the new medium, like interactivity, are underutilized, and internet applications that seem wonderfully advanced to us surely will seem primitive in the years to come.

Transitions are gradual. When changes finally come, people tend to see the new technology in light of the old. Homer seems to illustrate this principle, since his work is in manuscript, but the words are composed in oral style. Late in the age of manuscripts, handwritten papers were bound together in book-like volumes. Early in the age of the printing press, mechanically published books had manuscript-like illustrations, and for many decades the font styles remained unnecessarily ornate, resembling handwriting. Similarly at the start of the Internet Age, we see the new web technology used first for book distribution.

No matter science and technology profoundly affected the production and reception of literature. Technology is a major player in this connection. There is a great fear taking the wider impact of technology on written literature. Rapidly growing influence of technology has altered the way in which we live and think. The cultural, social, and economic life of man has drastically changed. We are related directly to the use of technology and not with the theories and philosophies. The literature adopted technical changes to keep pace with pressing needs of the time. Since the invention of various techniques in writing that is, paper, ink, printing press, binding, circulation; literature got changed. Various writers either used technology or made it as their subject matter of their creation. Technology becomes the part of the environment within which literature works.

Technology and its devices have offered a unique platform for renowned authors as well to the common people. People are easily expressing themselves through means of electronic media like blog, twitter, and other social networking sites. In addition to getting and giving recommendations, social media has allowed writers and readers to connect more easily than they ever could before. Technology facilitated the correspondence between an author and a reader. This new way of communication is adding new dimensions to the literary fraternity. It is providing a healthy discussion about the reception and understanding literature in a better way among scholars, researchers and common readers.

Technology has opened new prospects to the field of translation. The development of translation was facing several impediments in the past. Non-availability of dictionaries, scarcity of reference books and limited resources were big hurdles in translation. As technology advanced, the process of translation got much easier. Availability of online dictionaries, thesauruses, reference books, and resources made translation as an interesting work.

Today, Acronyms have also become common to save both time and space in a text message. The majority of people understand the meaning of 'lol', 'FAQ', 'asap', 'kyc' 'rip' or 'omg' these days, but go back 30 years and they would be meaningless to most of us. Internet slang are coined and popularized by the internet users to save time on keystrokes.

Conclusion

Language changes for several reasons. First, it changes because the needs of its speakers change. New technologies, new products, and new experiences require new words to refer to them clearly and efficiently. The literature adopted technical changes to keep pace with pressing needs of the time. Chaucer to the Post-Modernist authors has shown technology in various forms in literature. These writers depicted technology as their subject matter and same was shown as a service of transformation to the humanity. The transformation technology has brought some positive and negative impacts on society in general and literature in particular. There is a big danger relying more and more on technology. This will cease the power of innate thinking and creativity of the young writers. Natural process of thinking may be at risk at the cost of technology. This will create many problems for later generations.

Regardless of this technological impediment, the imaginative literature will always remain an integral part of the society. Despite various changes, literature will serve its purpose as it has served in earlier times. Language will never stop changing; it will continue to respond to the needs of the people who use it. So the next time we hear a new phrase from young people that annoys our ears, we must remember that like everything else in nature, the English language is a work in progress. However, it is the big question in front of us, in which form literature will last is uncertain, the current book form was replaced by a digital, and the next manifestation is what..? Only future has the answer.

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