

# AN ORIGIN OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT AND ITS INFLUENCES: AN OUT LOOK

## Abstract

This paper is an endeavor to trace out the birth of English language its influences, theories, Indo European families, Norman impact, change of sounds in old English period, middle and modern English period. Its development in modern era, importance of pronunciation, phonetics importance, difference between British English and American English. It draws the attention of the English language learners in a fascinating way.

**Keywords:** Speech, Diphthongs, consonants and pronunciation.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

In the primitive era or early age communication is in spoken form, not written. Writing and printing came later to record thought and speech, and this was a significant step forward, written documents paved the way for our ancestors. Language is consistently changing. We find a great difference between old English of the Anglo-saxon period and modern English languages. These changes are due to many factors.

Speech is the main quality of man which distinguishes him from the other animal species, With the development of mind and personality, man developed speech. Scholars formulated many theories about the beginning of the faculty of speech in man. At present, six main theories existed. They are gesture theory, Bow-wow theory, pooh- pooh theory, musical theory and contract theory.

- 1. The Bow- Wow Theory:** This theory states that man first attempted to emulate some quality sound of the creature or the subject referred to by him. A dog is distinguished from other animals by its bark bow wow. Very soon he calls it a bow-wow. In a word snake , we can sense the hissing sound. Thus many words are imitated and objects are named after the sound they produce.
- 2. The Ding Dong Theory:** This theory asserts that the beginnings of speech is found in the sense of rhythm inborn in man and ring out of him correspondingly specific utterance, Zig- zag, jazz, dazzle etc. This theory depends upon man's tendency to imitate movement rather than sound as in the bow-wow theory. The rhythm of the purling stream and the swaying trees in the wind made early man imitate by rhythmical hum or chant or whistle, maintained time with the step in strolling or working period. This impulse is said to have given rise to the uncivilised wardance, the medieval songs and the sea chants.
- 3. The Pooh- Pooh Theory:** This theory draws all kinds of speech to emotional outbursts of pain, surprise, pleasure, wonder etc. At first, the word pooh-pooh hinted contempt or disgust. Gradually it required a definite meaning in the spoken language as in the expression to pooh- pooh a scheme. But the interjections are not the same for all nations.
- 4. The Gesture Theory:** The gesture theory states that the man used hands or sign language for the purpose of communication. It was a normal method and we even attempt to it some times today. Every hand gesture is associated with corresponding movement of lips or the jaws and man passed for sign language to spoken language.
- 5. The Musical Theory:** The musical theory find the birth of language in lyric or at any degree sees speech and music as emerging from something earlier that included both. This theory was brought into existence by the great Danish linguist to Jespersen. He contemplated that the bow-wow, pooh- pooh and yo-he-ho doctrines could all the explain the origin of parts of language, but no one could explain the whole of it.
- 6. The Contract Theory:** Finally, we may mention the contract theory, which has recently been advanced by G, Revesz, a former professor of Amsterdam. He uses language as arising through man's instinctive need for contract with his fellows.

The languages of the world can be categorised in families. They can be originated from a common ancestor in remote times. Several families of languages are recognized. Among them the Indo European family includes most of the languages of Europe and some of those of Asia. We can see a close resemblance between these languages if we compare such common words for father, mother, brother etc., personal pronouns and numerals.

## II. THE ORIGINAL INDO EUROPEAN FAMILY

Indo European family is classified into eight different groups. They are the Eastern, Armenian, Greek, Albanian, Italic, Balto- Slavonic, primitive Germanic and celtic. Among these, the primitive Germanic or Teutonic branch gave rise to three divisions namely, Gothic, Scandinavian and west Germanic, German , Dutch and English took their descent from west Germanic. That is why English has a very close resemblance to German in words, sounds and grammar.

At a time in the remote past, a great change took place in the consonantal sounds of the Germanic language words. It is called the First Consonant shift. A German scholar, Jacob Grim, investigated these changes and formulated a law then it is named as Grimm's Law. This law accounts for the changes in many Germanic words which differ from the corresponding words in the parent languages.

The initial consonants p, t, k in Latin, for instance, are noticed to have converted to f, th, h in the Germanic languages. For example, the Latin words pater, tres and cor, and the corresponding English words father, three, and heart are basically the same. These changes might have been the result of the different habits of pronunciation and the use of the vocal cords.

All Middle English long vowels experienced considerable change when these entered into modern English, but the short vowels do not undergo unstable. So far as the long vowels concerned , Chaucer's pronunciation was different. For example, a was pronounced like the a in father, and e like the e in there and not as in meet. In the 15<sup>th</sup> century , a great change was underway in the case of long vowels. In course of time, they were articulated with a greater elevation of the tongue and closure of the mouth. Those that could be raised (a,e e o o) were raised, while those that could not be raised without becoming consonantal ( I, u) became Diphthongs.

The effects of this shift can be seen in Chaucer and Shakespeare's pronunciation

### Chaucer

fi:f  
me:d  
kl:n  
na:m  
ro:t  
du:n

### Shakespeare

faiv (five)  
mi:d (meed)  
kle:n (clean)  
ne:m (name)  
ru:t (root)  
daun (down)

In the Middle Ages the Norman scribes introduced great confusion when they tried to write English according to their French habits. For example, the letter U was used for the three distinct English sounds of Y, and long and short U. And the letters m, n and U were easily confused in the writing of that period. Even when the pronunciation of the long vowels and some of the short vowels changed during the period of the great vowel shift in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the spellings remained conventional. In some cases, unpronounced letters like b, in debt or doubt were in accordance with their Latin originals (debitum, dubitum). In Middle English they were pronounced, dotte and doute. In other cases the gh in delight, tight, etc., was introduced by analogy with words like light, night (O.E. liht, Niht) where it was pronounced actually.

Simeon Potter notes that “Forty four sounds” are heard in the King’s English as normally spoken, twelve vowels, nine Diphthongs, and twenty four consonants. But all the vowel and the diphthong sounds have to be represented only by six sounds in the words bead, bid, be, bad, bard, body, beard, good, bood, bud, bird. sound of a in about, bayed, bode, bide, bowed, buoyed, beard, baird, bored, cured.

The vowel sound in the English words believe, receive, leave, machine, be, see is represented by a different spelling in each. The letter a has different values in words like father, hate, hat etc.

A.C. Baugh observes that in English there are fourteen spellings for the sound “sh”. ‘shoe’, ‘sugar’, ‘issue’, ‘mansion’, ‘nation’, ‘suscipion’, ‘ocean’, ‘nauseous’, ‘conscious’, ‘chaperon’, ‘schist’, ‘fuchasia’, ‘pshaw’.

The O.E. vowels ‘y’ and ‘u’ were changed to ‘u’ and ‘ou’ in Middle English. For example, the O.E. words ‘synn’ (sin), ‘mycel’ (great), ‘hus’ (house), ‘bur’ (dwelling) were written ‘sunn’, ‘muchel’, ‘hous’, ‘bour’ in Middle English. The old English consonants ‘cw’, ‘c’, ‘f’, ‘sc’ were changed to qu, ch, v or u, sch, or ss, or sh. For example, the O.E. words ‘cwen’ (queen), secan (seek), ‘fyr’ (fire) ‘ofer’ (over) were written queen, sechen, vuir, ouer, and shall, should, shaewenn, etc. in Middle English period. There was loss of various consonants in some words, and addition of consonants in others, for example, alf (half), elmet (helmet), sord (sword), nus (nurse), thusty (thirsty), freenly (friendly), morgage (mortgage), thousan (thousand), pament (pavement), yearth (earth), yese (ease), heys (eyes) etc.

In the Globalized phenomenon, English role is a crucial one. English language learning is not a gargantuan task. It depends upon various factors such as pronunciation, listening, interaction among the members. The purpose of this paper is simple, number of students aspire to learn English as well as reading and writing. Written English and spoken English are distinctly varied ones. In day to day activities we write a lot, appear for examinations. Language starts from our birth onwards, hear sounds and respond, normal babies respond to mother’s words and emulate it. A ten year old baby is surrounded by language speakers. Shows great impact on him/ her.

Do we need good pronunciation? No one can not speak alike. We find differences between them and English pronunciation differs in numerous areas. In some parts of Africa, Asia, India English is used for the purpose of communication. British English, American English are key models of learning English.

There is a necessitated possibility to put the major classes of sounds in a nutshell and to formulate the stress free way to resolve the down side of articulation. Also, to extend and diagnose the differences between the native pronunciation and received pronunciation. The goal is to make use of the west Germanic English enunciation by adaptation along with the registers of the way the words pronounced.

Phonetics is the study of speech sounds. There are Forty four sounds in English. Speech organs lungs, teeth, larynx, nasal cavity, tongue, pharynx, vocal cords, lips help us to produce sound. The Larynx comprises two tiny bands of elastic tissue. The tongue is divided into four parts such as Tip, blade, front, back.

Phonetic sounds are divided into two types. They are vowels, consonants. Vowels are classified into pure vowels and diphthongs. There are 20 vowels and 24 consonants.

**7. Vowels:** Vowel sounds are produced by voiced air. In the process of learning vowels, listening and imitating affects the learners. We pronounce vowel sounds by rounding the lips and using back of the tongue.

- Vowels are sub categorized into short vowels , Long vowels.

- **Short Vowels :** / ɪ, u, ʌ, ɒ, ə, e, æ/

- **Long Vowels:** /i:, u:, a:, ɔ, ɔ:/

- Vowels are classified into Front vowels, Back vowels and Central vowels.

- **Front Vowels**

- /i:/ : when the pronunciation of this vowel takes place the tongue comes near hard palate. It is a front unrounded vowel. Examples : bee, bead and beat.

- / i:/ : During the pronunciation of this vowel , the back part of the tongue moves towards hard palate. Lips spread in a loose manner. Examples : it, bit and city.

- /e/ : When this vowel is pronounced, the tongue moves towards hard palate. It is a front unrounded vowel. Examples : bed, led, bet, let.

- / æ:/ : During the pronunciation of this vowel, the tongue moves towards hard palate. Lips become neutral. Examples: bad, mad, bat, mat.

- **Back Vowels**

- /a:/ : when we pronounce this vowel, tongue is opened in a full manner. Jaws are widened, lips become neutral. It is a long vowel. Examples : car, card and hard.

- / ɔ/ : During the pronunciation of this vowel, rear part of the tongue opens in full manner. It is a back rounded vowel. Examples :ox, box.

- / ɔ:/ : It happens in initially, medially and finally in these words ought, bought and law.

- When it is pronounced back of the tongue moves towards soft palate.

- /u/ : During the pronunciation of this vowel back of the tongue comes near to soft palate. It is a rounded vowel. Examples : put, could.

- /u:/ : when we pronounce this long vowel back of the tongue raises towards soft palate. Tongue becomes tense. Examples : ooze, boot and two.

➤ **Central Vowels**

- / ʌ/: During the pronunciation of this vowel, the centre of the tongue moves towards roof of the mouth. It happens in up, cup.
- / ə/: It is also central vowel. It occurs in earn, learn and err. The lips will spread.
- / ə/: During the pronouncing of this vowel tongue moves between hard palate and soft palate. It takes place in the words of about, forest and tailor.

➤ **Diphthongs**

- / eɪ/: It occurs in aim, pain, play. It is half close front unrounded vowel.
- / aɪ/: It occurs in ice, bite, buy. It is a neutral front unrounded vowel.
- / ɔɪ/: It is a back rounded vowel. It takes place in boy, coin, voice.
- / aʊ/: It occurs in out, bout, cow. It is a back open unrounded vowel.
- / əʊ/: It is a central back rounded vowel. It happens in over, boat, go.
- / ɪə/: It occurs in ear-ring, fierce, fear. It is a central front unrounded vowel.
- / ʊə/: It is a central back rounded vowel. It occurs in during, cure.
- / eə/: It occurs in aeroplane, careful, care. It is a central unrounded vowel.

**8. Consonants**

**Table 1: Derived from T. Bala Subramanian book**

Place - Manner	Bilabial	Labio dental	Dental	Alveolar	Post Alveolar	Palato Alveolar	Palatal	Velar	Glottal
Nasal	m			n				ŋ	
Plosive	p b			t d				k g	
Affricate						tʃ dʒ			
Fricative		f v	θ ð	s z		ʃ ʒ			h
Lateral				l					
Approximants	w						j	w	

- **Fricatives:** Nine consonants / f , v, θ ,ð, s, z, ʃ , ʒ, h/ make friction during the articulation. Lungs are going to be narrowed, it creates friction.
- **Plosives:** Six consonants / p,b, t,d, k, g/ when we articulate these sounds the breath is fully stopped in the mouth and sudden release of explosion takes place.

During the articulation of / tʃ dʒ/ sound is released like friction of /s,z/. There are three nasal consonants. When we pronounce /m,n, ŋ/ we lower soft palate and air moves out from the nasal cavity.

Semi vowels /j, w/

**III.AMERICAN ENGLISH DIFFERS FROM BRITISH ENGLISH IN SPELLING, PRONUNCIATION AND VOCABULARY**

1. **Spelling:** The ‘u’ in words like honour , colour is omitted and written honor, color. Only one consonant is employed in the place of two consonants in words and written offense, defense etc. ‘re’ is replaced by ‘er’ in words and written center, theater etc.
2. **Pronunciation :** The well marked a difference of the American pronunciation from the

British usage may be described in the following manner:

The most noticeable difference is the American use of the flat a ( instead of the british usage of bread a ) in words like fast, path, grass, dance, can't, half , the a in these words is pronounced by the Americans like the a in cat.

In England, 'r' is not pronounced except before vowels. In the middle states and the west of America, 'r' is pronounced in all positions; whereas the remaining states follow the English practice.

In England, the 'o' in words like 'not', lot, hot, top, rod, fog is an open sound pronounced with the lips rounded, but in America, except in some parts of New England, it has lost its rounding and is pronounced like the 'a' in 'father'. Shortened words like 'dew', 'duke', new, steward are pronounced like 'do', 'dook' etc.

The word 'lieutenant' is not pronounced with an 'f' sound as they do in England, but is pronounced as 'lewtenant'. 'Schedule' is pronounced with an 'sk' sound. American 't' is often voiced so that words like 'beating', matter, metal ' are sounded like ' beading, madder, medal'.

In America, even the unaccented syllables are pronounced clearly. They do not say 'secret'ry' and 'necess'ry' as in England , but pronounce all the syllables. There is wide difference in the pitch and tempo of speech. The Americans speak more slowly and with less variety of tone, where as the Britishers speak with more variety in the intonation.

The most important and marked features of English as the native tongue are the features of stress, rhythm and intonation. These features are called the music of English. Word accent is an important feature of English. Accent is the articulation of a syllable with greater force, or more than one syllable, not all the syllables are equally prominent. There are some words prominent and some are not. The prominent are accented. When we speak , our focus will be on one of the words in a sentence. The prominent syllable in this word gets the primary accent, and the others receive secondary accents.

"Language laboratory enhances the listening skills. It is only by careful listening to the spoken words that one can understand its meaning and often different nuances of meaning it may have. Language laboratory helps to improvise the accented and non accented words, the intonation pattern, the rhythm of the text, creates a pleasant experience for the listener."2

Pronunciation is an essential aspect of speech. Mother tongue and regional accent influence pronunciation, that can at times lead to incomprehensibility of certain words. Regional accent cannot be avoided , clarity of speech is the foremost factor required. Enunciation is another main component of speech. Pace of speech should be moderate, pauses in speech play important role. Voice modulation can make speech more expressive, pitch of the voice should be modulated. It depends of the situation, combination of emotions , feelings.

"A good example of the independence of speech and writing in the representation of language comes from looking at homophones."3

Homophones are visible randomly in the vocabulary of languages. If we glance at

some examples see, sea; meet, meat; bear, bare; some, sum; sent, scent; cell, sell; son, sun; brake, break; die, dye; flour, flower; heal, heel; hour, our; idle, idol; accept, except; affect, effect; then, than . All these words spelling is different but pronunciation is the same.

According to Peter roach linguist accent is sensed as “ Accent may refer to prominence given to a syllable, usually by the use of pitch. It refers to a particular way of pronouncing.”<sup>4</sup>

Intonation is categorized into Falling tone, rising tone, falling-rising tone.

- **Falling Tone:** Falling tone is used in various contexts.
  - In ordinary statements. It's \six o' \clock.  
The \water's \cold.
  - In wh questions  
\why did you \do it?
  - In commands  
\come \here.
- **Rising Tone:** This tone is used in incomplete pronouncing words, yes/ no questions, wh questions, polite requests.  
  
/Please sit /down.
- **Falling – Rising:** The falling rising tone is used for special implications. The\ houses are\ nice.

Language learning is associated with a broad range of skills and consequently many benefits too. Command over language skills motivates one pronouncing with self confidence. It is possible to impart language for life skills by using quotes from numerous genres with the objective of facilitate the learner to enhance social, emotional and cognitive skills such as the ability to communicate effectively. English is a great need because it is a passport for better opportunities. Thus Language origin is a fascinating andinformative one.

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