

## Influence of Bible/Christianity on English

The Bible, as well as Christianity has played a very significant role to enrich the English language. The study of the Bible was considered essential to the development of the happy style in English. "The Bible ought to be read."—this has been the version of a good many scholars and writers.

We get a number of scriptural phrases and allusions which are frequently used in modern English e.g. "Tell it not in Gath", "City of Refuge", "The Eleventh Hour", "To Hope Against Hope", "Olive Branches", "The Lesser Lights" etc. Such phrases have assumed almost the characters of idioms. There are some cases in which words are formed from the corruption of two Biblical words, such as "helpmate" which was mistaken as a compound of "help" and "meet". The "slag rib", too, is a similar corrupted form.

The scriptural expressions "Holy of Holies" which is a typical expression of Hebrew manner of the use of superlatives has given rise to a great many similar phrases in modern English, such as "In my Heart of Hearts", "The Place of Places", "Horror of Horrors", "The Pearl of Pearls", "A Prince of Princes", "A Study of Studies" and so on.

Some scriptural proper nouns have also become the part of ordinary language as common nouns. Thus the Biblical word "Jehu" is used to denote a driver. Similarly there are 'Jezebel'(an ugly woman) and 'Daniel'(a wise judge). Similar commonly used Biblical expressions are 'Cain'-a murderer coming from Adenis' son; 'Job'-a person of great patience; "David and Jonathan" any pair of devoted friends.

Some archaic words which were becoming obsolete at the time have been preserved by their occurrence in the familiar passage of the scripture. Such words are 'Damsel'-for young woman, 'raiment' for dress and 'firmament' for sky.

Some phrases are used in modern English with the full knowledge of the writers or hearers that they allude to some Biblical facts or incidents. Such phrases are "The Worship Mammon"-Mammon being the god of greed in the Bible; "Leviathan Ship"-a huge ship, Leviathan being a huge sea monster as mentioned in the Bible; "The Shibboleth of a party"- Shibboleth being a test word to distinguish a party.

It is due to the influence the Bible that some verbs 'th' began to be used to a great extent by the poets of the 19<sup>th</sup> century; the 'th' form began to appear not only in the Biblical quotations but often with the sole purpose imparting a more solemn tone to the style.

Again the old past tenses 'gat' (not got"), "clave" (not 'clove'), 'brake' (not 'broke') have been revived in modern times in the poems of Tennyson, Morris, Swinburne etc.

The current use of 'thou', 'thee' and 'thy' in poetry and religious writings is also due to the Authorised Versions consistently using these words for the second person singular pronouns. (474)

## **Indian loan words in English**

English has enriched her vocabulary by borrowing a multitude of words from many Indian and other languages. Words like '**Cashmere**', '**Guru**', '**Jungle**', '**Gymkhana**', '**Pajamas**', '**Bungalow**', '**Yoga**', '**Cheetah**', '**gherao**', '**lathicharge**', '**dharna**', '**gur**', '**bidi**', '**pankhawala**', '**rajah**' and '**Loot**' are quite obvious in their origins, being the exact same words in the local languages(Hindi, Sanskrit, Urdu, Bengali) as well.

**Cummerbund** is taken from the Hindi '*kamar*', for 'waist', and '*band*' for 'band'. Similarly, '**Bandana**' is borrowed from '*bandhna*', to tie.

'**Coolie**' is taken from the Hindi word '*kuli*', which is from Gujarati slave-tribe *Koli*, whose name is rooted in the Tamil '*kooli*' or 'payment for work'.

'**Juggernaut**' is derived from the name of Hindu deity *Jagannath*. Because the stampede of many people during the Jagannath Yatra led the Britons of the time to contrive the word 'juggernaut' to refer to examples of unstoppable, crushing forces.

'**Coir**' came from the Malayalam word '*kayaru*', which in turn was borrowed from '*Kayir*', Tamil. The drink **Punch**, originated from '*pancha*' (Sanskrit), meaning 'five', because of the five ingredients used in it.

'Opal' is from Sanskrit 'Upalah'. Another stone, *Marakata*, travelled all the way to the Greek language, and then Latin under the guise of *smaragdus*, and became the English **Emerald**.

The **chits** that the dishonest students use in examination halls have its origins in 'Chitthi', a letter (Hindi).

'Rice' is from India where mainly rice is eaten: in Tamil, it is *arisi*. 'Mango' is from 'maangai' in Tamil.

'Sugar' is from Middle Latin 'sugarum', from Arabic 'sukkar' and Persian 'shakar', ultimately from Sanskrit 'sharkara'. Another word for 'sugar' in Sanskrit is 'khanda'. This one travelled to Persia, and then to France as "Sucre Candi", and then to England in the form of 'Candy'.

When Indian royals wanted a massage, they would ask their servants to 'champu' (Hindi, verb, for oiling and massaging) their scalp. The British made it 'Shampoo'.

Several animals have been given adapted names too.

'Mongoose' is from the Marathi word for the same, 'mangus'. 'Serpent' is from the Sanskrit 'sarpam'. Apparently fashionable Victorian purses were made of crocodile skin. The Hindi word for croc is 'magar' / 'mugger'. Street robbers were thus called 'Muggers'. In Tamilnadu, people were afraid of large snakes that could swallow a whole elephant. They called this snake, "aanai kondan"(Tamil)- literally meaning *elephant killer*. So, the English people as well as others simply Anglicized the reptile to 'Anaconda'.

## **FRENCH INFLUENCE ON ENGLISH**

In 1066 England was conquered by the Norman French, under the leadership of William, the Conqueror. But the influx of French words did not begin just after the Norman Conquest. Rather it began slowly and continued for a long time till the Middle English period. In the eleventh and the twelfth centuries when French was the unchallenged language of the elite class of the society, the number of French loan words was poorer than the loans in the thirteenth century.

**RANK, LAW:** A number of terms for titles of ranks were borrowed from French, for example (in modern spellings) 'baron', 'count', 'duke', 'lord', 'marquees', 'peer', 'sovereign' etc. However, the English retained their own words too, as 'king', 'queen', 'lord', 'lady', 'knight' etc. Simultaneously they borrowed from French the words like 'government', 'crown', 'state', 'parliament', 'chancellor', 'council', 'minister', 'authority'. Since England was ruled by the French, the law courts were long conducted in French and naturally the English borrowed some French words relating to law court: 'justice', 'judge', 'verdict', 'sentence', 'attorney', 'crime', 'accuse', 'punish', 'prison' etc.

**RELIGION:** The ecclesiastical matters were controlled by the upper classes and so, a large number of words relating to church came from French. For example, we find 'religion', 'service', 'trinity', 'saviour', 'virgin', 'angel', 'saint', 'relic', 'abbey', 'cloister', 'friar', 'clergy', 'parish', 'baptism' etc.

**MILITARY TERMS:** The military terms like 'armour', 'battle', 'castle', 'tower', 'war' etc. were borrowed from French.

**ART, FASHION:** Some words belonging to the field of fashion came to English from French: 'dress', 'coat', 'costume', 'petticoat', 'frock', 'art', 'beauty', 'colour', 'paint', 'music', 'poem' etc.

**MEDICAL TERMS:** Some medical terms were also borrowed, for example, 'anatomy', 'jaundice', 'joint', 'ointment', 'balm' etc.

John Wallis made a famous remark which Sir Walter Scott popularized in his novel *Ivanhoe* that the living animals (ox, cow, calf, sheep, swine, boar, deer) had their English names but when they were killed and the meat was served on the dining table they got French names

(beef, veal, mutton, pork, bacon, brawn, venison). This fact is explicable from the fact that the French masters did not take care of the animals but they ate the meat prepared and served by the English servants.

**NOUNS, ADJECTIVES, HYBRIDS:** There are nouns like 'crocodile', 'river', 'flower', 'season', 'calendar', 'city' etc.; adjectives like 'active', 'blank', 'cruel', 'frank', 'jolly', 'poor', 'simple', 'tender' etc.; verbs like 'advance', 'cry', 'flatter', 'marry', 'propose', 'remember', 'save', 'spoil', 'wait', etc. One of the main causes of the influx of the French loans was to make English more hospitable to foreign words.

Due to the French influence the literary works that have come down to us underwent gradual change. Layamon's *Brut* written very early in the thirteenth century, contains only 150 words of French origin. But in *Ancrene Riwe* we find about 500 French words. (465)

### Scandinavian Influence on English Language

England was first invaded by the Scandinavians in 787 and the English gradually borrowed a large number of Scandinavian words, and enriched their own language, thereby.

**PLACE NAMES:** A large number of place-names were borrowed from Scandinavian language. For example, we find more than six hundred places with names ending in 'by' e.g. 'Grimsby', 'Whitby', 'Derby', 'Rugby', 'Thorby', etc.; in the Danish language 'by' means 'farm' or 'town'. Likewise we find names ending in 'thorp' (village) e.g. 'Althrop', 'Bishopsthorpe', 'Gawthorpe' etc. Similarly 'Applewaite', 'Braithwaite', 'Cowperthwaite', 'Langthwaite', 'Satterwaite' have Scandinavian suffix 'thwaite' meaning 'an isolated piece of land'. In the Scandinavian language the term 'toft' means 'a piece of ground', and we find 'Britoft', 'Eastoft', 'Langtoft', 'Lowestoft', 'Nortoft' etc.

**SEA ROVING:** The Scandinavians attacked England several times. As a result some words relating to sea-roving were borrowed from Scandinavian language. Such words are 'barda' (beaked ship), 'cnearr' (small war ship), 'scepg' (vessel), 'lip' (fleet), 'scepgman' (pirate,) 'drengr' (warrior), 'batswegen' (boatman), 'hofding' (chief, ringleader), 'orrest' (battle), 'ran' (robbery) etc. These terms were mainly associated with attacks or piracy.

**LAW & ADMINISTRATION:** The settlement of the Danes in England and their participation in administration resulted in the influx of some Scandinavian words relating to law and administration. The list of such words includes 'law', 'out-law', 'mal' (action at law), 'husting' (assembly) etc.

**NOUNS & VERBS:** Another result of the intimate fusion of the two races was the borrowing of a large number of Scandinavian nouns and verbs. Among the nouns we find 'band', 'bank', 'birth', 'calf' (of leg), 'crook', 'dirt', 'down' (feather), 'egg', 'fellow', 'gait', 'gap', 'kneel', 'kid', 'leg', 'link', 'loan', 'skin', 'skirt', 'sky', 'trust', 'want', 'window' etc. The Scandinavian verbs which enriched the English vocabulary are to 'bait', 'bask', 'call', 'cast', 'crave', 'crawl', 'die', 'get', 'give', 'glitter', 'kindle', 'lift', 'raise', 'ransack', 'scare', 'take', 'thrive', 'thrust' and so on and so forth.

**SYNTAX:** The intimate fusion of the two languages must have influenced syntactical relations. In the M.E. period the uses of relative clauses without relative pronouns are found in both the languages. Again the rules for omission and retention of the conjunction 'that' are nearly identical. Similarly the M.E. and the modern English uses of 'will', 'shall' and 'should' are partly due to the Danish usage as in the case of the interpolated 'have' as in "You could have done this".

The character of the Scandinavian influence was democratic. The words borrowed from the Scandinavian language do not emphasize the superiority of the Scandinavian culture as the French influence does. On the other hand they provide concrete evidence of so intimate fusion of these two cultures that Jespersen very aptly comments, "An Englishman cannot 'thrive' or be 'ill' or 'die' without Scandinavian words. They are to them as 'bread' and 'butter' to their daily fares". (463)

## INFLUENCE OF CHRISTIANITY ON ENGLISH

There is perhaps no other language which had received so much impetus from Christianity, as English had.

**NEW WORDS:** With the new religion naturally there came some new ideas and the words like 'apostles' (apostols in O.E.), 'disciple' (discipul), 'Pope' (papa), 'archbishop' (ercebishop), 'priest' (preost), 'monk' (munuc), 'nun' (nunna), 'provost' (prafost), 'shrine' (scrine) etc.

**NATIVE AFFIXES PLUS FOREIGN WORDS:** Another interesting aspect of the influence of Christianity is that the English people sometimes formed new words by adding native affixes to the foreign words e.g. words ending in 'had' (modern 'hood'): 'clerichad', 'sacerhad', 'bishophad' etc., and compound words related to Christianity. For example 'god' being the principal word we find 'godcund' (divine), 'godgiel'd' (idol), 'godgrimm' (divine gem), 'godsibb' (sponsor), 'godsun' (godson) etc.

**CHRISTIAN PHRASES AS IDIOMS:** Tennyson said that the Bible ought to be read not only for the sake of grand English but also because it is an education in itself. As a result of the reading of the Bible a good many Christian words and phrases began to be used as household expressions: 'City of refuge', 'the eleventh hour', 'to hope against hope', 'olive branches', 'the lesser lights' etc. which have now assumed the character of idioms.

**SUPERLATIVES:** The scriptural expressions 'Holy of holies' has given rise to a great many similar phrases in Modern English, such as 'heart of hearts', 'day of days', 'pearl of pearls', 'horror of horrors', 'a study of studies' and so on and so forth.

**CHRISTIAN PROPER NOUNS:** Some Christian proper nouns taken from the Bible have also become the part of ordinary language as common nouns. Thus we use 'Jehu' to denote a driver. Similarly we have 'Jezebel' (an ugly and unfaithful woman), 'Daniel' (a wise judge), 'Cain' (a murderer), 'Solomon' (one as wise and just as Solomon), 'David and Jonathan' (a pair of devoted friends).

**ARCHAIC WORDS:** The archaic words like "damzel" for young woman, 'Raiment' for dress, 'firmament' for sky etc. are due to the influence of Christianity; likewise some biblical verb forms with 'th' began to be used in great extent by the poets of the 19<sup>th</sup> century e.g. 'hath', 'loveth', 'hateth', 'cometh', 'goeth', 'calleth' etc. The current use of 'thou', 'thee' and 'thy' in poetry is also due to the influence of Christianity.

**FREQUENT ALLUSIONS TO CHRISTIANITY:** Frequent allusions to Bible are found in English e.g. "The worship of Mammon", "Leviathan ship" "The shibboleth of a party" etc.

**INFLUENCE ON SPOKEN ENGLISH:** Christianity have made people use the phrases and words like "By Mary", "By God", "My God", "Heaven forbid", "Slight" (God's light), "Zounds" (God's wounds) mixed with spoken English language.

To sum up we may say that the Angles, Saxons and the Jutes brought the skeleton of English, foreign loans and native vocabulary added flesh to that and the Christian words and phrases and above all the lucid poetic style animated and ornamented the language which now is a world language. (485 words)

## Shakespeare's Contribution to English Language

It is still a well-known fact that, except for a man like the Elizabethan translator Philemon Holland, Shakespeare had the largest vocabulary of any English writer. This is due not only to his daring and resourceful use of words, but in part to his ready acceptance of new words of every kind. It is true that he could make sport of the ink-horn terms of a pedant like Holofernes in Love's Labour's Lost, who effects words like 'intimation', 'insinuation', 'explication', 'replication', etc. and has a high scorn for anyone like the slow witted dull who, as another character remarks "hath not eat paper". Shakespeare had not read Wilson in vain but he was also not greatly impressed by Wilson's extreme views.

The greatness of Shakespeare's mind is not shown by the fact that he was acquainted with about 24,000 words but by the fact that he wrote about so great a variety of subjects and

touched upon so many human facts and relations that he needed this number of words in his writings. It is, however, interesting to note that such religious words as 'Bible', 'Holy Ghost', and 'Trinity' do not occur in all of his writings, while 'Jesus' and 'Christmas' are found only in some of his earliest plays. Of far greater importance, is Shakespeare's use of language to individualize the character in his plays. In this he shows a much finer and subtler art than some modern novelists who make the same person continually use the same stock phrase or phrases. Even where he resorts to other author he varies them more. Mistress Quickly and Dogberry do not misapply words from the classical language in the same way; the everyday speech of the artisans in A Midsummer Night's Dream is comic in a different manner from the diction they use in their play within the play.

Among Shakespearean words are found 'uhorrid', 'barricade', 'vast' etc. are all new to English in the later half of the sixteenth century. Some of the words Shakespeare uses must have been very new indeed, since the earliest instance in which we find them at all in only a year two before he uses them (such as 'exist', 'initiate', 'jovial' etc.) and in a number of cases he is the earliest occurrence of the word in English (such as 'accommodation', 'assassination', 'misanthrope' etc.) He would, no doubt, have been classed among the liberals in his attitude towards foreign borrowing. Shakespeare's use of the new words illustrates an important point in connection with them. This is the fact that they are often used, in a sense different from ours, closer to their etymological meaning in Latin. Thus to 'communicate' now-a-days means to "exchange information", but in Shakespeare's day it generally preserved its original meaning—"to share or make common to many."

Jespersen expresses the view that Shylock in The Merchant of Venice is one of Shakespeare's most interesting creations from the point of view of language. Shakespeare has succeeded in creating for Shylock a language different from that of anybody else. Shylock has his Old Testament at his finger's end; he defends his own way of making money breed by a reference to Jacob's thrick in breeding parti-coloured lambs; he swears by Jacob's name and the Holy Sabbath and calls Lancelot "that foot of Hagar's off-spring". Often he is characterized by being made to use words or constructions a little different from the accepted use of Shakespeare's time. He dislikes the word 'interest' and prefers calling it 'advantage', or 'thrift', and instead of 'usury', he says 'usance'. He also uses the plural form money, which is very rare in Shakespeare. He prefers 'estimable' to 'valuable', 'equal' to 'exact' and is the only one of Shakespeare's characters to use the words 'concealing' and 'misbeliever' and the rare verb to 'bane'.

## **CLASSICAL / LATIN INFLUENCE ON ENGLISH LANGUAGE**

Although the classical / Latin elements had been pouring into English since the Old English period the great period of classical / Latin influence was the time of Renaissance. The Renaissance turned the best minds of Europe to the ancient civilization of Greece and Rome which were the store house of knowledge of all kinds—philosophical, ethical, literary and scientific. The influx of multiple varieties of knowledge demanded linguistic expression but the English language was not adequate enough to express them all. As a result hundreds of classical/ Latin words were borrowed. The influx of French in the Middle English period had predisposed the English speakers to borrow words from abroad. In the Renaissance this predisposition was given full scope and there was a deluge of Latin words or Greek words through Latin. The peak period was between 1550 and 1660. These were not of course the first Classical words borrowed by the English. The words like 'street', 'mint' and 'wine' were borrowed while the English were still on the continent, and the words like 'bishop' and 'minister' came during the Old English period. Quite a few Latin words were borrowed too during the Middle English period; they include religious terms like 'gloria' and 'requiem'; words from the law court like 'client', 'conviction' 'executor', and 'memorandum'; medical and scientific terms like 'dissolve', 'equator' 'recipe' and a number of abstract words like

'adoption', 'conflict', 'descent', 'imaginary', 'implication' etc. In early modern English the trickle of Classical/ Latin loan became a river and by 1660 it was deluge.

A.C. Baugh tells us that the words introduced at this time were often basic words – nouns, adjectives and verbs. Among the nouns we may note, as examples, 'atmosphere', 'denunciation', 'jurisprudence' and others. Among the adjectives we find 'appropriate', 'conspicuous', 'habitual', 'malignant' etc. But it is among the verbs that we notice the most important acquisition of Classical words like 'adapt', 'consolidate', 'excavate', 'meditate' and others. Most of the words borrowed were of course Latin but some of them were earlier acquired by Greek. A list of examples will include words like 'autograph', 'climax', 'parasite', 'system' etc. It should, however, be noted that in the Renaissance the renewed interest in the study of Greek led to the introduction of some Greek words at first hand, for example, 'anonymous', 'catastrophe', 'misanthrope', 'criterion' and 'tonic'.

Some of the words were taken over readily in their Latin forms with their Latin spelling like 'genius', 'species', 'specimen', 'temper', 'lens', 'antenna' and so on. Of course they were not always taken over with their original meanings. 'Lens', for example, in Latin stands for lentil (kind of beans) and in English is applied for a piece of optical glasses because a double convex lens is shaped like a lentil seed. Other words were, however, adopted and given an English form. For example Latin ending 'ants' is sometimes replaced by 'ate' as in 'desperate' and 'associate'. In other cases the Latin inflection is left out as in 'complex' and 'dividend' (Latin 'complexus' and 'dividendum'). This reshaping is often influenced by the forms of French words derived from Latin, for example, the Latin ending 'tas' sometimes becomes English 'ty', as in 'celerity' (Latin 'celeritas') by analogy with similar words borrowed via French. Classical/ Latin loans during the Renaissance tended to be learned words some of which have, however, lost favour and were dropped out of use. Examples are 'anacephalize', 'denunciate', 'adminiculation' and 'eximious'. Many of the Latin and Greek words were scientific terms like 'pollen', 'vacuum', 'equilibrium', 'momentum' etc.; some were mathematical terms like 'area', 'calculus', 'radius', 'series' and a number of legal terms like 'alias', 'affidavit' and 'caveat'. There were everyday words like 'album', 'miser', 'circus'. But in general they were the kinds of words that were introduced into a language through a medium of writing rather than in speech. They did not enter the English language without opposition and there were numerous attacks in the 16<sup>th</sup> century on the 'ink-horn terms' as they were called.

Thomas Wilson in his influential book The Art of Rhetoric (1653) launched a vigorous attack on the 'ink-horn terms'. No doubt, his attack was, to some extent, provoked by the absurdities of such pretentious pedagogues as Holofernes in Shakespeare's Love's Labours Lost and Crispinus in Ben Jonson's Poetaster. But attack could not stop the tide of the Classical/ Latin loans and the words held up to ridicule often owe that have since become fully accepted and now quite unexceptionable. For the ridiculous words used by Crispinus include nice specimens like 'lubrical', 'ablatrant' and 'furibund', but they also include 'retragate', 'reciprocal', 'defunct', 'spurious' and 'strenuous'. (766 words)

## LATIN INFLUENCE ON ENGLISH LANGUAGE

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### **CHARACTERISTICS OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE:**

One of the causes of the wide spread of English language is the certain characteristic features which have made it easily accessible. Jespersen has enumerated the salient features of English.

**MIXED VOCABULARY:** English has taken words and phrases from almost every standard language of the world. For example, we find many words borrowed from Latin, Greek, French and Indian languages. Although formerly it was purely a Teutonic language it has utilized the native vocabulary in order to express new ideas and frame new words.

**INFLECTIONAL SIMPLICITY:** In order to indicate its relationship with the other parts of the sentence, a word has to undergo the minimum change or no change at all in its shape. English has given up the elaborate Teutonic inflections of adjective. Now the adjectives have inflections only in the cases of comparative and superlative degrees. We do not see separate inflections for singular and plural verbs. The subjunctive mood is almost obsolete.

**FIXED WORD ORDER:** Usually in an English sentence the subject, the verb and the object have their regular positions. A slight change of the position may make the sentence nonsense. For example:

- i) The maidservant imitated the landlady.  
The landlady imitated the maidservant.

Usually the subject is followed by the verb and the verb is followed by the object. So the fixed word order has also made English interesting.

**NATURAL GENDER:** In Roman languages there are only two genders, masculine and feminine. So a neuter gender in English is either masculine or feminine in Roman languages. We do not know why in German 'mond' (moon) is masculine and 'sunne' (sun) is feminine. But in English the distribution is very clear. A. C. Baugh has pointed out that "All nouns naming living creatures are masculine or feminine according to the sex of the individual and all other nouns are neuter".

**MASCULINITY:** Jespersen characterizes English as positively masculine. He observes that it is the language of the grown up man and has very little of childish or feminine about it. He

establishes his thesis with the reference to the sound system, ending, monosyllabism and sobriety of expression.

**SOUND SYSTEM:** The sound system of English is very clear and precise. The English consonant sounds are very predominant as in 'wealth', 'tent', 'month', 'help' etc. The pronunciation requires energy on part of the speaker. Thus phonetically speaking, English has male energy but no brutal force.

**BREVITY & SOBRIETY:** Briefness, directness and conciseness characterize male style. English has either reduced ending to the shortest form or completely done away with it. The morphological shortenings are also of much frequent occurrences in English: 'bus' for 'omnibus', 'photo' for 'photograph', 'phone' for 'telephone', 'cycle' for 'bicycle' etc.

Thus English is a methodical, businesslike, rational, energetic and sober language. It follows the logical consistency and is opposed to strict rules of grammar and lexicon. This is why English has become the most widely accepted language of the world. (490 words)