

EVOLUTION OF ENGLISH: FROM LITERATURE TO MODERN COMMUNICATION

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Over the course of centuries, the English language has had a dynamic growth, evolving from its literary roots to become the universal language of contemporary communication (American Education International, 2023).

English's journey started in early medieval England when it emerged as a Germanic language. The epic poem "Beowulf" and certain of Geoffrey Chaucer's writings, such as "The Canterbury Tales," serve as markers of the language's early literary heritage. English was predominantly spoken throughout this time, and Old English literature was represented in its written form.

English saw a dramatic change during the Renaissance, marked by the resurgence of classical education and the introduction of Latin and Greek vocabulary. The plays of Elizabethan dramatists like Christopher Marlowe and William Shakespeare played a pivotal role in creating a more uniform form of the English language and expanding its vocabulary. Literature became a potent medium for the transmission of linguistic conventions and cultural expression.

English became standardized and widely used with the invention of the printing press in the fifteenth century. Translations of the Bible into English by writers like William Tyndale helped establish a standard form of the language understandable to a wider range of people. Print culture not only facilitated the dissemination of English literature but also laid the foundation for a more standardized and universally recognized language.

An important stage in the global spread of English was the British Empire's colonial expansion in the 17th and 18th centuries. Additional modifications and assimilation of influences from different areas resulted in the formation of unique dialects and variants in the language. English's standing as a global language was further strengthened by its use as a tool for administration, trade, and cultural exchange over large geographic areas.

English's development accelerated with the Industrial Revolution and technological advancements in the 19th and 20th centuries. The language evolved to meet the demands of scientific, industrial, and technical advancement, establishing itself as a universal language of communication in international trade, scholarship, and diplomacy.

The digital revolution in the 21st century has brought about a paradigm shift in the usage and dissemination of English. The internet, social media, and digital communication tools have turned English into a dynamic language that is constantly changing. In internet communication, acronyms, abbreviations, and colloquial terms have become ubiquitous, showcasing the adaptability of the language to modern forms of communication.

English has evolved from its literary beginnings to become a true lingua franca in the modern era. People with different language backgrounds can communicate with each other using it, promoting international trade, diplomacy, science, and popular culture. The transformation of English from a literary language to a flexible modern communication tool highlights its adaptability and tenacity in a world that is constantly evolving.

From its literary beginnings to contemporary communication, English has undergone an intriguing metamorphosis influenced by historical, cultural, and technological factors. From Chaucer's beautiful sonnets to the tweets of the modern era,

English has shown to be remarkably versatile, becoming a universal language that unites people on all continents.

References:

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