

MORPHOLOGICAL CHANGE OF VERB AND NOUN IN OLD, MIDDLE, AND MODERN ENGLISH

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ABSTRACT

This library research aims to (1) identify effects of various colonialism on the change of morphological aspects of English Language and (2) explore the morphological change of verb and noun. Those two aims will give the readers a perspective of how language changes through the time.

This is a library research which is conducted by collecting and processing data of various lexicons from a book entitled 'A History of English Language'. The data processing is entirely based on some rules in a book entitled 'Sejarah Bahasa Inggris' written by Tarjana (1991).

From the data processing, it is revealed that various colonizers 'demand' a language change, especially morphological aspect, in order a language understanding between colonizers and the colony will grow. Besides, morphological change will give us a clear description about natural characteristics that a language will always experience a change to accommodate the need of communicating effectively and efficiently.

Keywords: morphological change, English Language, colonialism

1. Introduction

Language is a living thing. It always changes a long with the basic needs of people to communicate their idea. These two statements lead us to what Baugh and Cable (1951:2) stated about language that all languages are subjects to the constant growth and decay which characterize all forms of life. We can make a comparison between a language and a flower in term of life circle. Life of a flower starts from a seed. It needs water, sunlight, and food. As we know, a language also needs a good environment to grow. It means the language needs speakers who use it to communicate ideas. Based on this fact, the research paper which I am going to write is a library research which will be divided into three main parts. They are the reason of the change of a language, the identification of effects of various colonialism on the change of morphological aspect of English language, and the exploration of morphological change of verb and noun in Old, Middle and Modern English Language.

2. Discussion

2.1 Why do languages change?

People and language are two unseparated things. A reason for saying so is that people need language to share and transfer ideas. On the other hand, language needs people to maintain its existence through daily and specific conversation. If a language is not used anymore, because of globalization or other reasons, that language will be extinct and shifted by another language. It is not argued that people will not be able to cooperate with each other without communicating, no matter how simple or how complicated the language is. Language experiences change in its phonological, morphological, semantic, and syntactic aspects. There are a lot of reasons that can explain comprehensively why those aspects sometimes change significantly. Jackendoff (2002:179) stated that language serves the sociocultural ends and its task is thus to keep itself in an enduring state, to keep functioning, adopting itself to new environments. From this statement, we can infer that Jackendoff wants to give a clear argument that all languages in this world always change in accordance with the development of human life. The more vast the development of human life, the more vast and broad the language's development will be.

It is clearly understandable that when a language ceases to change, then it is called a dead language. Baugh and Cable (1951:2) stated that the change of a living language can be most seen in the vocabulary. Old words die out, new words added, and existing words change their meaning. It is easily understood that some English vocabulary has been lost, and the development of new words fulfill the needs to communicate new ideas. One of the examples of the dead languages is Classical Latin. Many experts categorize it as a dead language because it has not changed for about 2000 years.

Language change is a normal phenomenon. Tarjana (1991:2) stated that language change happens because of the existence of people development. This statement has an understanding that people always have a tendency to make their lives better and more civilized. This tendency brings effects on the language change, in its morphological aspects. English, for example, has experienced the language change for centuries. According to Tarjana (1991:23), English changes step by step. It was started from the Roman Colonialism which was led by Julius Caesar in 55 B.C. Contrary to the word of 'colonialism', Roman's colonial domination was not considered as that way because of the Roman tendency to protect and share knowledge to the Britons. Literature, art, science in Britain were influenced by Roman's intellectuality. Besides, the Britons were impressed by this kind of 'colonialism'.

According to this fact. Some experts on English history divide the language's development into three periods. The first period was started from 600-1000 AD which is known as the period of Old English. Next, 1100-1500 AD is considered as Middle English. The last, 1500 AD- now is categorized as Modern English.

2.2 The effect of various colonialism on English Language

English Language is a language which has been used by English people since thousands years ago, in which it has experienced many changes based on the rulers of this land. England has been inhabited by man for thousands of years, 250.000 according to a moderate estimate (Baugh and Cable, 1951:42). It can be inferred that during the long period, many rulers or tribes had influenced the original culture and language to establish communication between them and the native people. A question that can be raised is that how did they speak? What kind of language did they use? To answer these two questions we should trace back into the availability of the data which can show us what language they used at that time. Unfortunately, the first writing was started 3000 years ago which means that we know nothing about the language before that time (Cahyono, 1995:19).

2.2.1 Norman conquest

A written evidence is a primary source to reveal facts about the past. According to some sources, a language which is identified as the first language to be spoken in England is the language of Celt which is known as Celtic Language. The Celt is the first inhabitant who experienced the Roman's colonialism, starting from 55 B.C until 410 A.D (Tarjana, 1991:23). Although the purpose of Julius Caesar was to colonize England, the Roman soldiers were not considered as colonizers because the culture they influenced created a better civilization in this land. The Roman soldiers helped to build road, bridge, academy, and library. In this case, Latin Language as the language of Roman, infiltrated into the native people's language such as *strata*, *castra*, *vallum* in which in present-day English become *street*, *Chester*, and *wall* (Tarjana, 1991:23). A great number of Latin inscriptions have been found, and those inscriptions become our window to see what actually happened in the past.

Romanization in England was included the influence of Latin Language in the daily language use of Celtic. This process was also supported by the infiltration of Catholic religion at that time which enriched the vocabulary in church such as:

Latin	Old English
Monasterium	Mynster
Monachus	Munus
Presbyter	Priest
moneta	mynet

(Tarjana, 1991:23)

Latin Language was Roman's Language and Old English was known as the Anglo-Saxon Language. It means that Latin Language influenced Anglo-Saxon, and it lasted for centuries with the existence of 'church vocabulary' until present time.

2.2.2 Germanic conquest

The Celt was so much influenced and protected by Roman's 'colonialism' that made this tribe could not maintain their land from the Germanic's infiltration in 449 A.D (Baugh and Cable, 1950:46). The Germanic tribe consisted of Angles, Saxon, and Jutes from North Germany and called their language as Anglo-Saxon Language (Hogg, 1992:14). This language later was called as Old English. Although the Roman had gone and Germanic tribes ruled the land, the preceeded languages still exist until now.

2.3 Noun and verb in Old English

English Language experts devide English into three steps of development, they are Old English, Middle English, and Modern English. The first thing that should be noticed is that Old English had no relationship with the previous language of native people. Another name of this language is Anglo-Saxon Language which can be described as a language of Angles, Saxon, and Jutes who came from North Germanic. Old English was started from 600-1100 A.D in which a long this period, the land of English people was under the rule of Anglo-Saxon (Tarjana, 1991:26). Anglo-Saxon influenced the language of the people of this land into such kind of the language of Modern German.

When trying to figure out what Old English looked like, we may find that the grammatical system of this period of English Language had much similarities with Modern German. We should not have wondered since the ruler of this land came from North Germanic. Besides, English Language of 600-1100 A.D was influenced by Classical Latin in which this kind of language was Roman's language who ruled England since 55 B.C. According to some sources taken from books of historical English Language, Nominative, Accusative, Genitive, Dative became the inflected grammatical cases (http://colfa.utsa.edu/drinka/pie/lang_oe.htm). Those cases can be described as follows:

- *Nominative* shows that a noun functions as subject.
- *Accusative* shows that a noun functions as object.
- *Genitive* shows that a noun functions as possessive pronoun.
- *Dative* shows that a noun functions as indirect object.

Another complicatedness of grammatical variabel in Old English is the existance of grammatical gender which was devided into three categories, they were masculine, feminine, and neutral. There was no such a way to determine and define what a particular noun belong to. It means that a learner of English Language should memorize the aspect of the grammatical gender system. We can take some examples here such as ‘wif’ (woman, wife) was described as neutral, ‘man’ was masculine, and ‘stan’ (stone) was neutral. The examples of cases of Old English below are taken from O’Grady (1990:259):

Singular	Masculine <i>hund</i> ‘dog’	Neuter <i>deor</i> ‘animal’	Feminine <i>gief</i> ‘gift’
Nominative	hund	deor	gief-u
Accusative	hund	deor	gief-e
Genitive	hund-es	deor-es	gief-e
Dative	hund-e	deor-e	gief-e
Plural			
Nominative	hund-es	deor	gief-a
Accusative	hund-as	deor	gief-a
Genitive	hund-a	deor-a	gief-a
Dative	hund-um	deor-um	gief-a

The following Old English sentence contains all four case categories:

‘Se cniht geaf gief-e bæs hierd-es sun-e
 The youth-Nom gave gift-Acc the sheperd-Gen son-Dat

Verb in Old English is as complicated as the noun which has been discussed above. Different with Modern English, there are only two separated grammatical classes of verb. Those are present and preterite, which indicated the time of action. Another fact that should be noticed about the verb is the division of strong and weak verb which have similarity with

regular and irregular verb in Modern English (Baugh and Cable, 1950:59). The strong verbs (irregular verbs) like sing, sang, sung which represent the Basic Indo European type, are so called because they have the power of indicating change of tense by a modification of their root vowel (www.wikipedia.org). In the other hand, weak verbs (regular verbs) such as walk, walked, walked only need the extra syllable to indicate the change of tense. The last part indicating the complicatedness of verb is the categorization of strong verb which can be described as follows:

- **Class I**

The change of vocal sound indicates present time, preterite of the 1st and 3rd singular person, plural preterite and the degradations are i, a, i, i.

Form	1st and 3rd preterite	Plural preterite	Past participle
ridan 'ride'	rad	ridon	(ge) riden
writan 'write'	wrat	writon	(ge) writen
drifan 'drive'	draf	drifon	(ge) drifen

- **Class II**

This class has some gradations, such as eo, ea, u,o.

Form	1st and 3rd preterite	Plural preterite	Past participle
sprutan 'sprout'	spreat	spruton	sproten
leosan 'lost'	leas	luron	loran

- **Class III**

→ The vocal sound of the root is followed by m or n and the gradations are i,a,u,u.

→ The vocal sound of the root is followed by l and the gradations are e,ea,u,o.

→ The vocal sound of the root is followed by lc, or r, or h added with another consonant, and the gradations are eo,ea,u,o.

Form	1st and 3rd preterite	Plural preterite	Past participle
findan 'find'	fand	funden	funden
helpan 'help'	healp	hulpon	helpen
weorpen 'throw'	wearp	wurpon	worpen

- **Class IV**

The vocal sound of the root is followed either by l, m, or r and the gradations are e,æ,æ,o.

Form	1st and 3rd preterite	Plural preterite	Past participle
teran 'thorn'	tær	tæron	toren

- **Class V**

The fifth class is just consisted of a few verbs. The vocal sound of the root is followed by a single consonant except m, n, l, or r and the gradations are e, æ, æ, e.

Form	1st and 3rd preterite	Plural preterite	Past participle
metan 'meet'	mæt	mæton	moten

- **Class VI**

The gradations of this class are a,o,o,a.

Form	1st and 3rd preterite	Plural preterite	Past participle
Faran 'fare,go'	for	foron	faren

- **Class VII**

This class has various forms of present tense. However, the vocal sound can be easily identified because it is repeated in participle form.

Form	1st and 3rd preterite	Plural preterite	Past participle
feallan 'fell'	feol	dfeollon	feallen
cnawan 'know'	cneo	cneowon	cnawen
slaepan 'sleep'	slep	slepon	slæpen
flewan 'flow'	flean	fleowen	floweren

(Tarjana, 1991:47-49)

Different with the strong verbs, weak verbs are much simpler in constructing the forms. The important thing that should be remembered in learning weak verbs is that Old English forms the past tense by adding -ede, -ode, or -de attached to the present form, and the past participle by adding -ed, -od, or -d (Baugh and Cable, 1950:61). Those principles can be described as follows:

present	preterite	past participle
fremman 'to perform'	fremede	gefremed
lufian 'to love'	lufude	gelufod
libban 'to live'	lifde	gelifd

(Tarjana, 1991:50)

2.4 Noun and verb in Middle English

Every language in this world changes to be simpler and able to accommodate the need of people to communicate effectively and efficiently, and so does the English language. Another main factor which plays important rule in the change of English Language is the ruler of England. In 1066 A.D, William the Conqueror conquered England and threw the Anglo-Saxon tribes out of this land (Tarjana, 1991:59). In this period, English Language started the era of Middle English Language starting from 1100-1500 A.D. There is one fact that should be considered in defining what Middle English Language is. Before the coming of William of Normandy, two languages were used in this land of English people. The first language is Old English, and the second is French-Normandy Language (www.wikipedia_me.html). The Old English was used by ordinary people, and French-Normandy Language was used by high-class societies and royal family. This condition made French became the high language status. Gradually but sure, those two languages unified as one language which is known as Middle English.

When we are discussing the morphological change of verb and noun from Old to Middle English, we will find that English was heading to the simplification. The numerous and various inflections found in Old English were decreased in order to be simpler. The four cases were also decreased, and there was only genitive left. The simplification was also applied in noun, but not in the quantity. Noun was still divided into three grammatical genders, masculine, feminine, and neuter. The simplification was made in considering what a particular noun belongs to. Old English nouns such as stone and wife are neuter which are categorized arbitrarily, but in Middle English, nouns are categorized based on the actual gender. In this period, stone is neuter and wife is feminine (Tarjana, 1991:71).

The essence of grammatical simplification is that a speaker can communicate either verbally or writtenly without confused of the existence of confusing grammatical rules. Verb, as the most important parts of speech, has been experienced simplification many times in order to be easier to learn and access to make an effective and efficient communication is

possible to conduct. As we have discussed above, there are seven classes of the strong verbs which should be obeyed by the speakers of Old English. It must be complicated since there are thousands of verbs which should be correctly attached to the proper grammatical rules. So, how to simplify it? Some researchers found that nearly a third of the strong verbs in Old English seemed to have died out early in the Middle English period (Baugh and Cable, 1950:162). We should remember that strong verbs is the irregular verbs which are difficult to guess the forms of present, preterite, and the past participle. Most of those strong or irregular verbs disappeared, and some others became weak verbs which are easily identified the change of the form. We can take the verb of 'help' to describe the illustration above. 'Help' had a past form of 'halp' (for singular) and 'holpen' (for plural) which was categorized as strong verb. Besides, 'help' also had weak form of 'helpene'. In the Middle English, the weak form would be used instead of the strong (Tarjana, 1991:80).

2.5 Noun and Verb in Modern English

The more civilized society is, the simpler language they use. This statement describes a real fact that a simpler language makes transfers of idea, knowledge, and culture are easily conducted among people. The simplification of the language of Modern English can be traced back into the history of the world. In 1455, Constantinople fell and most of scholars and experts fled into Europe with some books they could carry. In this period, Renaissance was started by the booming of many inventions which are useful for mankind, including printing machine. The printing machine created:

- new words

Before the printing machine was invented, all scholars wrote their ideas in own dialect which difficult to understand by readers which use other dialects. With the invention of printing machine, English Language was standardized.

- Stable pronunciation

Before the English standardization, people were hard to consider how to write and pronounce a word because of complicated grammatical rules.

(Tarjana, 1991:83)

We may say that some new factors such as printing machine, the rapid spread of scholars and experts, and the increasing of communication promoted a standard grammar and vocabulary usage at that time.

Simplify means omitting the complicated rules. Talking about the grammatical genders of noun, it also has been omitted. Many experts believe that genders of noun are just the

influence of Germanic Language and has no effect on English itself. Meaning that, people are still able to communicate effectively and efficiently without frustrated with the categorization of masculine, feminine, and neuter. Verbs also experienced the simplification in order to be able to be stated effectively and efficiently.

3. Conclusion

Human is changed from time to time, and so does language. Many people agree that language should be able to accomodate the users to share idea, thought, opinion with a good, proper, and simple language. As we have discussed how complicated the language of English when Anglo-Saxons ruled the land, we can conclude that every ruler would transfer the culture to the colonized inhabitants. Especially for the language, both sides tried to establish a good communication by blending the language of the ruler and the habitant's. This is what we call in Sociolinguistics as Lingua Franca. The fact is, the ruler of England was not Anglo-Saxons only. William the Conqueror should be considered as the one who made the form of English Language simpler. Verb and noun, as the most important elements to utter statement, were decreased their complicatedness to conduct a good communication between the high-class society and the lower one in the period of Middle English. The simplification was still happened until the time of Renaissance, on which the scholars gathered to share idea and opinion. This condition became more important when printing machine was found, as media to share 'a good English' to the world. When someone read a printed product, he would consider English Language in it as a standardized grammar and vocabulary. This condition is a starting point of Modern English as we can find today.

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