

Title of the study “*Language and Epistles: Literary Evolution, Connectivity and Internet Grammar*”

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in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Award of the Degree of*

Bachelor of Arts in Media and Communication

By
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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the dissertation entitled “*Language and Epistles: Literary Evolution, Connectivity and Internet Grammar*”, submitted to Symbiosis Centre for Media and Communication, in fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the degree of Bachelor of Arts in Media and Communication, is a record of original and bonafide research work done by Ms Priyal Yadav, during the period 2018-21, under my supervision and guidance and that the dissertation has not previously formed the basis for the award of any Degree/ Diploma/ or any similar title and that the dissertation represents independent work on the part of the candidate. I further certify that the work is worth submitting for the award of the said degree.

Place: *Pune*

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DECLARATION

I, Priyal Yadav, hereby declare that the dissertation entitled “*Language and Epistles: Literary Evolution, Connectivity and Internet Grammar*” submitted to Symbiosis Centre for Media and Communications for Bachelor of Arts in Media and Communication, is a record of original research work done by me under the guidance and supervision of Dr Sunil Belladi. I further declare that the dissertation has not formed before the basis for the award of any Degree/ Diploma or any other similar title.

Place: Pune

Priyal Yadav

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Abstract

The research aims to examine, understand and infer the reasons for the rapid evolution of the English language and the impact of increased connectivity on its usage. It aims to analyse these changes and this evolution by taking into account various personal epistles that have been exchanged from the 19th Century to the present day. These epistles will be analysed qualitatively and in the form of case studies to add to the understanding of the rapid change in language.

The changes will also be analysed to see what factors have affected, implemented and caused the English language to transform. Factors that affect the change in language are not just natural evolution, they also include the effects of heightened connectivity, increasing global communication, increased international economic activity, education and higher diversity in social groups.

Thus, through a comparative study of personal epistles, the dissertation maps the shift in language from its once ornamental nature to its immediate and pictorial nature today. In doing so, it also takes into consideration the contributions of heightened interpersonal connectivity. The paper plots the beginnings of internet grammar and syntax and explains its contribution in making written language more unaffected and open.

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Chapter – 1 – Introduction

1.1. Introduction

Language is the essential aspect of communication, be it personal or mass. Its usage affects the impact of every statement made and is a representation of the society that uses it. It has grown to evolve alongside human society and to aid its progression. In mapping the evolution of language over the past two centuries: from the 19th Century to the present, it is possible to witness this change at its rawest, and to make inferences regarding the state of the world through it.

A language is a living, breathing organism. It is birthed, grows, and evolves over a considerable period, much like its creators. It can be traced back to the very beginning of human beings themselves, and as with humans, languages have lifespans of their own. Language is a reflection of the society that makes use of it. Its usage and structure depict the complexity and rigidity of societal structures and rules, written or unwritten, set to be followed. It has forever been a means of expression, communication, and construction and has progressed to portray progress.

Centuries of verbal and written usage have influenced language to metamorphose into its modern form. Factors like the increased diversity in social groups, increased trade, better access to education, and the rapidly increasing global communication have influenced this growth—the research analyses how these factors have contributed to altered language usage.

Through a comparative study of personal epistles, it is possible to understand practically how these factors have affected language change. Change is a central aspect of how languages evolve and grow, and how they have come to be. This is a fact to be celebrated rather than to be looked down upon, because it indicates the healthy transfer of information and the diversity

of humankind across cultures and through time. In becoming more unaffected and open, people move towards more efficient and effective communication.

1.2. Problem Statement

In the context of personal epistles exchanged from the 19th Century to the present day, examining and analysing the reasons for the rapid evolution of the English language and the impact of increased connectivity on its usage.

1.3. Literature Review

Language Hybridisation in Mass Media: A Study of the Use of “Hinglish” in Indian Media Content by Bhavneet Bhatti, published in the AMU Journal of Language and Media Discourse in 2020 (Bhatti, 2020-21), tries to understand and map the Hybridisation of the English Language to incorporate English words in a Hindi matrix. The paper uses the depictions of “*Hinglish*” in news and advertising media to report the patterns in the use of “*Hinglish*” in media content. The paper also takes a look at the emergence of language hybrids and the role of language. The author states:

“A significant outcome of evolution of civilisation has been evolution of language and creation of language hybrids. Language in itself has a multidimensional role not only in the process of communication, but also giving a texture to the social fabric.” (Bhatti, 2020-21)

The paper assesses language under the cultural context. It explains how language is a living entity that has evolved “from being defined merely as ‘system of symbols’ to a deeper understanding of ‘a mirror of mind’ the concept of language has several layers.” The author

believes that language is an essential aspect of our understanding of our experiences. It explains the relationship between culture and language by depicting the various changes that the English language has undergone after it came in contact with Hindi. Next, the paper describes language hybrids as a branch of the cultural exchange process that deals with language and its evolution.

The author also notes how connectivity and accessibility through globalisation affect language changes and how media acts as a catalyst to creating language hybrids. Finally, the paper expresses the significance of cultural exchange on language and how the various lingual changes enhance communication by increasing the “ease of understanding” and “adding reach and retention to messages.”

Evolution of English in the Internet Age by Abdu M. Talib Al-Kadi and Rashad Ali Ahmed, published in the Indonesian Journal of Applied Linguistics in January 2020 (Al-Kadi & Ahmed, 2018), offers a perspective on how the English language has evolved and changed in the age of the Internet. The paper begins by noting how the arrival of the Internet and its widespread usage since the 1990s has caused an extensive change in the language: spelling, pronunciation, vocabularies, and even grammar have undergone some form of change. It notes that while this has been a cause for much controversy, language change is not bad.

The authors note how conversational English today does not pertain to the standard varieties. They note that the Internet has been phenomenal in how it has changed the language and interpersonal communications landscape, simply by providing easy and free access to information and allowing its exchange the planet (Al-Kadi & Ahmed, 2018). The Internet has been a driving force for changes in vocabulary, owing to the neologisms and acronyms that it has introduced to everyday vocabulary. The paper discusses the various historical perspectives on the English language. It then examines how cultural imperialism helped make English a global language, exposing it to language hybridisations and other similar changes.

Finally, the authors also offer explanations for the term “Electronic English” and study its emergence and popularity through a study conducted amongst university students. They aim to explain how effect of societal factors on the Internet has resulted in the creation of a universal language. Finally, the authors also discuss the effect of recent and quick developments due to the providence of the Internet applications: language has become more informal and conversational and has begun to lose its formality.

Factors affecting Language Change by Octavian Mantri, published in the SSRN Electronic Journal in March 2020, maps the various types of changes that languages can undergo through understanding and explaining the various factors that affect language change (Mantiri, 2010). The paper discusses all the various types of changes in detail and considers their complexities and broadness. It notes four types of changes that the English language can go through.

The author discusses each cause of language change – political, social, cultural, technological and moral – into extensive consideration by providing various examples for each as well. They make use of this understanding to explain each type of language change then. The paper also discusses whether language change in itself is a step towards progress or decay (Mantiri, 2010). The author states that every language is based on and developed while keeping the unique worldview of each culture, belief system and the language’s literature (whether or not it be written). It is the zenith of the insights and wisdom gained by people in the thousands of years of their existence.

The paper looks at how and why English is one of the world’s most rapidly changing languages. It discusses how users, both old and new, are central to how to language is shaped, maintained and how it changes over time through usage and other factors. Finally, it discusses how language change can be a good thing and how language evolution aids more straightforward communication between varied communities.

Did Language Evolve Through Language Change? On Language Change, Language Evolution and Grammaticalization Theory by José-Luis Mendívil-Giró, published in *Glossa: A Journal of Linguistics* in 2019, talks about the controversial relationship between change in language and the language evolution process. The paper also considers the various perspectives that linguists have had about the relationship shared by the change in language and the evolution of humans biologically. According to the author, these perspectives can be classified into two separate classes: biological and cultural.

The two models, the paper claims, are based on two different conceptions of linguistic change. It also poses the question, “Could linguistic changes have created language as it is today? Or, in other words, did language evolve through the evolution (historical change) of languages?” (Mendívil-Giró, 2019). The paper also discusses the various theories of the process of Grammaticalization. Finally, it is addressed with respect to both the models discussed by the author, and the paper maps the differences in the understandings that each model’s depiction of Grammaticalization presents.

The paper next discusses where the locus of language change lies through the understanding of a global perspective on human language. Then, it explains how language change is a reanalysis of the internal operations of a computational system that generates the syntactic structure, which combines the various conceptual and functional elements to offer a semantic interpretation. Lastly, the author discusses the importance of sticking to uniformitarianism while mapping and talking about language evolution and language change.

The Influence of Technology on English Language and Literature by Irum Abbasi, published in *English Language Teaching*, delineates the impact technology has had on English writing and English literature (Abbasi, 2020). It talks about the emergence of a newer brand of English language through the evolution of communication via social media and the Internet. It

also deals with the creation of “Text-speak”. The paper states that the Internet generation is adept at using online resources to help improve their cognition, experiment with a newer mode of learning, and build a consciousness of various topics (Abbasi, 2020).

It discusses how the emergence of social media has revolutionised how social interactions are carried out. It has made way for quicker interactions through tags, likes, retweets and reposts. As a result, social media has given way to creating a “short-term dialect” known as “Text-Speak” in its quickness”. The author explains that the “net generation” has begun to change and adapt words from standard English, omit unnecessary lexicon from words, substitute homophones and reduced the focus and emphasis on correct punctuation and regular capitalisation. These modifications are changing how the English language is structured and written.

The paper states that Text speak can also be taken as an attempt to codify language by teenagers to protect the contents from scrutiny from unintended recipients. In openly speaking about Text speak as a dialect of Standard English, the paper offers a perspective on its existence and its consequences. Furthermore, the author acknowledges how socio-linguists have begun to recognise the significance of this dialect of language as a new genre. Lastly, the author also discusses how the emergence of Technology has affected English Literature. Technology has also introduced newer forms of fiction that can be and are divided into newer and different genres of fiction.

Exploring Language and Linguistics, edited by Natalie Braber, Louise Cummings and Liz Morrish, published by the Cambridge University Press in 2015, is a book that considers the fundamental topics of linguistics and considers what their application may look like when it is done in the real world (Culpeper & McIntyre, 2015). Chapter 10 of the book, by Jonathan Culpeper and Dan McIntyre, focuses on Historical Linguistics, which is the study of how

languages change over time. The chapter begins by introducing the topic and then describing how and why language change occurs over time.

The chapter discusses the differences between synchronic and diachronic linguistics. Synchronic refers to the act of studying language at one point in time, while diachronic studies language over time. The authors discuss the importance of bringing in both perspectives to study a complete account of what is happening with a language:

“The general point is that a full account of what is going on needs both a synchronic and a diachronic perspective. A synchronic snapshot of language at one point in time is often in fact a slice of diachronic change.” (Culpeper & McIntyre, 2015).

Following this, the chapter talks about the various explanations for change. First, the authors express that change is central to language and occurs at all levels, although it is not observable equally throughout. They then dive into detailed explanations regarding actuation and propagation concerning language. The chapter also discusses various linguistic changes like Phonological change, grammatical change, lexical change, and semantic change.

Through this new understanding of the various linguistic changes that a language can undergo, the chapter concludes that historical linguistics and other disciplines of language study crossover significantly. Language change can occur both naturally and can also be deliberately affected by governmental and non-governmental organisations. Thus, studying the functional changes in language is equally as crucial as the traditionally focused study on the formal changes in language.

Language Change: Progress or Decay? by Jean Aitchison, published by the Cambridge University Press in 2001, looks at how language change is a natural process rather than

something to be frowned upon. The book discusses why the concept of the purity and corruption of a language is such a widespread belief. In addition, it talks about how the 18th Century saw the height of the “purist” movement regarding the English Language. The author calls this line of thinking “illogical and impossible to pin down to any firm base.” (Aitchison, 2001). Language is not mathematics or logic – the strictness of language structures is arbitrary and cannot “purify” language.

The book discusses how linguists tend to concentrate on clear-cut cases of language change rather than focusing on the “messy bits” because these are full of social fluctuations and are low on clarity. The origin and spread of language are an important aspect to consider while considering the change. While it was challenging to map spread and change earlier, now, due to newer research methods, understanding the manner of spreading is easy. The author notes that the spread of a language change can be divided into overlapping stages.

The book also makes notes of how language spreads into manners, “outwardly through a community, and inwardly through a language.” (Aitchison, 2001). Next, the book maps how syntactic change occurs in a language and how variation is central to syntactic change. Lastly, the author states that language change is dependent on a combination of factors such as social and internal psycholinguistic factors.

Changes in Grammar and Pronunciation of English Words from the lecture series The Story of Human Language by John McWhorter, published on The Great Courses Daily on July 25, 2020, highlights the changes in English grammar and pronunciation that have taken place over time (McWhorter, 2020). The article starts by talking about the “Different English of Jane Austen” and points out the various changes that have occurred since then.

The article also looks at changes in English grammar over the years and points out several instances of when the changes in grammar have occurred over time. It does so by comparing examples from grammar books published in the 19th Century to modern-day grammar rules to depict the various changes in grammar.

Lastly, the author also traces changes in the pronunciation of American English throughout history. They discuss how and when the change from a British English accent to an American one occurred. The paper also offers a historical perspective by bringing in an example from a dictionary published in the olden times to highlight the change in pronunciation over the past few years. Finally, the article discusses how research on the language's history is akin to police work and how an immense amount of change in everyday language can be mapped from as recently as the 19th Century (McWhorter, 2020).

How the Internet is Changing language as we know it (ikr lol) by Richard Godwin, published in The Guardian on October 11, 2019, discusses the various changes that language is undergoing with the coming of the Internet age. The article discusses how under the “studied carelessness is real linguistic innovation.” (Godwin, 2019). By mapping Internet grammar and syntax from examples of posts made on Tumblr, the article tries to understand the vast array of creative textual development and expression that is commonplace on the Internet.

The author states that the Internet's language is a genre of its own. It has its own goals, which can only be accomplished by understanding the nuances of the language that is visible on it. The article features interviews with new-age writers such as poet Crispin Best who uses text-speak in his poetry, and writers Darcie Wilder and Zadie Smith. Through these interviews and analyses, the author adds perspective to the Internet's impact on the changes in the English Language and Literature.

Lastly, the article also talks about the historical perspective of linguistic changes. It provides perspective to the various literature that use “Internet Speak” to map out the depth of the penetration of “Internet speak” and the development and spread of Internet grammar and syntax in writing.

Internet English and the Evolution of Grammar by Calley Pierce, published on the Department of Linguistics, University of Colorado’s blog on April 15, 2019, maps the existence and the evolution of Internet English as a developing language system with consequences on grammatical evolution as a result of its rapid development and complexity. The article is a guide to understanding the various grammatical and syntactical rules that the Internet has created for itself.

The article describes grammar as a finite system that can be used to convey infinite meanings and uses this definition to state that the Internet offers newer meanings for grammar to adapt itself to. The author asserts that the Internet’s language is curated to be “seen” rather than to be “heard” or “read” (Pierce, 2019). Even though it may be a language in a written format, it is closer to a spoken dialect.

In this, it offers a new syntax for itself. This syntax is nearly indecipherable without knowing that it exists and understanding why words need to be written in that manner. The author, here, gives the example of the depiction of prosody on the Internet. Thus, the Internet makes language linguistically creative and innovative. Studying its development is essential in understanding how the English language has evolved and how it will evolve.

From Old English to Modern English by Marisa Lohr, published on OpenLearn: Free Learning from the Open University on March 1, 2019, maps the change in the English language from its very beginning to the modern form that we use today (Lohr, 2019). It begins by

describing how the history of a language can be looked at in two ways: externally and internally. The external way refers to where the language is used, who used it and why it was used. The external factors also consider the various political and social factors that can cause language change.

The internal way of viewing a language's history deals with pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary and how a language appears when it is written. It also deals with what could have motivated the occurrence of a language change. The author discusses these topics through the conventional division of the English Language's history. This includes the Old English Period, the Middle English Period and the current period of Middle English (Lohr, 2019). The article begins to map each period by discussing the various grammatical features, word etymologies and the influences on the creation of "English" as a language.

Lastly, the author talks about how the English language is in a process of constant linguistic change at various levels. It undergoes this change in both its standard and deviant forms and with respect to outside factors such as technological advancements and the impact of colonialism/imperialism, and internal factors within the language system.

1.4. Objectives of the Study:

1. To trace the evolution of English language usage over time.
2. To explore the factors responsible for the rapid evolution of the language.
3. To analyse the reasons behind the growth of internet grammar and syntax as the emerging means of interpersonal communication.
4. To establish the relationship between increased global connectivity and the change in language usage.

1.5. Hypotheses

1. The paper hypothesises that the English language has undergone change, and that too rapidly, between the 19th and the 21st centuries.
2. This change has been a result of various factors including cultural, global and technological.
3. Written language has become more informal, conversational, referential and immediate – grammatical coherence and correctness are secondary to rapid response, comprehension and emotive expression.
4. This change in written language can be mapped using personal epistles over the past three centuries, including the creation and development of the syntax and grammar of the Internet.
5. Lastly, the major effect on language, besides the various years of colonisation, globalisation as well as natural assimilation, has been the development of the Internet. It has increased global connectivity which has in turn deeply affected language.

1.6. Chapter Outline

The research is comprised of five chapters. Chapter one is an introduction to the theme of the research, and it also details its scope. The chapter is central to setting the tone of the paper – it is aimed at helping readers understand the reasons for the author choosing to conduct research on this particular topic. It includes the “Problem Statement” of the research, the “Objectives” that the author wishes to accomplish, and the “Hypotheses” that they have made. The chapter also includes a “Literature Review” section, that analyses the various literature – books, national and international journals, newspaper articles, research papers – that were used to source the content for this research. This literature has also been central to producing the backdrop for the present research.

Chapter two is a description of the research methodologies used to collect and analyse the data that has been used for the purposes of this research. This chapter includes a section on how the author has sampled and sourced the required data – from sourcing personal epistles from the Internet, to contacting respondents to submit personal text messages. The chapter also enumerates the various limitations of the research and the ones that the author had to face while conducting it. This chapter is central to providing a more transparent understanding of the research to the reader.

The third chapter analyses the data that has been mentioned in the previous two chapters and uses the data collected through the samplings and sources. In this chapter, the information is discussed in a coherent manner and pattern so as to detail the data that will be used to gain insight regarding the research. This section helps the author group the information in a logical and consistent manner to better discern and understand the patterns in the data. The fourth chapter makes use of this coherently displayed information to make inferences and offer insights regarding the data. It offers an explanation for the patterns that can be observed in the data, and also explains the reasons behind the various hypotheses.

Lastly, Chapter five concludes the dissertation. It is a summary of the Analysis and inferences and results – it adds to making the paper more reader friendly. It provides information about the various insights, inferences and understandings that the author made about the topic they chose, and offers a short and complete understanding of the topic and the various objectives undertaken by the author.

Chapter – 2 - Research Methodology

The topic chosen by the author is primarily an analytical topic rather than one that requires the collection of data. The analysis process required the author to go through various personal epistles and correspondences exchanged by various people between the 19th and 21st centuries. By going through these personal epistles, the author could view, chart, access and understand the changes that the English Language has undergone in a very tangible manner over the past two centuries. Therefore, rather than just collecting data, the paper aims to offer insight and explain how and why English has changed.

2.1. Research Methods Used:

The author made use of Data Analysis as the primary methodology for research. Data Analysis refers to the method of research where data that has already been collected is analysed to come up with rational and logical explanations, reasoning and information based on the chosen topic for research.

The paper uses qualitative data rather than quantitative data for research. Through qualitative data, the author analyses ideas and experiences that could have been instrumental in shaping the manner of changes the English language has undergone. The data is collected through textual sources of correspondence and the review of related and supporting literature. In addition to this, qualitative data makes the paper subjective to the author's judgements and has allowed them a few assumptions. This means that the methodology of content analysis is used in the paper.

Content Analysis, as defined by the Columbia Mailman School of Public Health, refers to the analysis of qualitative data to map and study pattern in terms of themes, concepts and even words. It allows the author to surmise the nuances of the studied texts to extract supporting insight from them. Thus, the author uses Content Analysis of Text to examine and study the transformation of the language and inspect the beginnings of the development of Internet grammar and syntax.

According to D.B. Bromley, the Case Study method refers to a thorough study, within the context of the real-world, of selected cases to make inferences about a hypothesis. In order to elucidate the analysis, the consideration of various personal epistles is an attempt at incorporating the research methodology of Case Studies. The epistles are analysed as examples to elucidate and provide evidence to various insights. The author also uses these case studies to highlight the inferences from the various observations made through supporting literature.

The case studies are also used to apply the inferences from the study and offer an explanation and evidence to the change that has occurred within personal correspondence itself. Finally, the author also uses them to map and chart the changes that the English language has undergone – as a sort of directory of the evolution.

2.2. Sampling and Sources:

For the primary research methodology to be Data analysis, the paper uses both secondary and primary data to try and synthesise the existing insights and analyse the change that has occurred in language historically. The author took into consideration the personal correspondence of people across the 19th, 20th and 21st centuries. For this analysis, the epistles used needed to be chosen carefully. Therefore, the following conditions were taken into consideration:

1. The epistles belonged to the period between the 19th and the 20th Century.
2. The epistles had to be personal– they had to **personal correspondence** between two individuals and preferably not formal.
3. For the modern epistles – emails, text messages – the primary language used in the text messages must be English. Therefore, the presence of language hybrids such as *Hinglish* should be limited.
4. The epistles also needed to be representative of their times so that the analysis could be as clean and straightforward as possible.

The epistles were sourced from various sources. The letters and older personal correspondence were sourced from publications, both online and print, that have published reproductions of these and are available in the public domain. This helped ensure that the author had vast choices to choose the epistles that were the best representations of the kind of language generally used during each period discussed. The epistles belonging to the 21st Century, like emails and text messages, were collected from a sample of 15 respondents who agreed to share their correspondence. Other correspondence such as Tumblr posts, tweets and memes were collected through the Internet, with relevant permissions taken, wherever necessary.

Additionally, other qualitative data used to make inferences and offer insights was sourced from various international and national journals, books and research papers, internet blog posts, and articles based on the same or similar topics. The author has used this data to draw parallels and understand the observations made from the epistolary analysis. These sources have also been used to support the author's interpretations and to support their hypotheses.

2.3. Limitations:

The research topic did present its limitations during the process:

1. Due to the personal nature of conversations, the identities of the 21st-century respondents have been kept confidential. Thus, no personally identifiable information was asked of the respondents, and any mention of personally identifiable information within the correspondence has been hidden and has not been made public. This means the epistles of the 21st Century are less “emotional” in nature compared to their 19th and 20th-century counterparts.
2. The 21st-century epistles also lack context as they are snippets of ongoing conversations rather than a complete conversation within themselves.
3. The research data is mainly qualitative, and the small sample size of respondents makes it hard to generalise the data to the population.
4. In addition to this, it was not possible to interview every single writer in the epistles (for obvious reasons), which would have been beneficial in providing more insight into the cultural and social reasons for the existence of language in its form and its change

Chapter – 3 – Analysis

3.1. Mapping the change in language through Epistles:

Belonging to the Indo-European family of languages, English has West-Germanic roots. Originating from an Anglo-Frisian dialect in Britain between the 5th and 7th centuries AD, the first known form is Anglo-Saxon or Old English – which was brought to the British Isles by Anglo-Saxon migrants who came from modern-day Germany, Denmark and Netherlands. Then came Middle English with its Germanic, Flemish and Frankish roots (Haylock, 2021). Finally, early Modern English arrived in the 15th Century with extensive sound changes and the “Great Vowel Shift.” The spread of the standardised London dialect of English that the government used, and the influence of printing on the language, were integral to the changes that language underwent.

Then arrived the English Renaissance. Along with it came more words with Greek and Latin Root words, primarily influenced by the Italian Renaissance and Shakespeare’s plays based in Italy. Finally came Late Modern English – the present standard form of the language that we use today. The publication of the first dictionary was what led to this creation – it standardised spellings and word usages and made the language more rigid. Next, the influences of the Industrial Revolution and related technological advancements introduced a slew of vocabulary that changed the English Language forever.

The easiest way to understand the changes in languages and map them is to look at the written form of language and analyse it for style, grammar, and vocabulary. Language changes according to the changes and circumstances its users are subjected to – the using literary devices to move away from conventions and the tweaking of syntax to depict tone are all immediate changes that turn into permanent ones through repeated change. In being the written

form of language, literature is subject to this change. It has the power to cause changes in language and to alter its everyday usage, provided that it is popular and widely regarded.

Thus, centuries of published and interpersonal communication have shaped each other and language to its modern form. Epistles, refer to writings directed at a person or a group of people, usually in the form of didactic letters. They refer to all forms of written interpersonal communication. They have been around since the conception of Language and can include everything from diary entries to leaflets, pamphlets and newspapers. Other classic examples include telegrams and letters. More modern examples could be text messages, blog posts, emails, tweets, and even memes.

Letter writing began as a form of communication between the governmental heads of different nations. They were used to correspond regarding the stately matters of the respective countries and keep up with each country's changes—for example, the correspondence between Middle Eastern leaders and Egyptian Pharaohs (Britannica Kids, 2021). Epistles were the main form of communication over the centuries until the arrival of the 20th Century. Letter writing has slowly faded from daily practice with the introduction of more connective and faster technologies like the telephone, email and text messages. Instead, it has evolved into a more immediate, pictorial and referential form of conversation. Thus, the art of letter writing has evolved from communication to conversation. It has gone through an evolution, moving through various phases and being subject to different rules throughout its existence.

Epistles have also been a means of communicating about one's life and surroundings, which moved on to become expressions of emotion and garnered a certain immediacy lacking in the previous versions. Letters evolved into telegraphs, which transformed into emails, and which have finally reached their newest stage of text messages. Language itself has evolved through this transformation. This transformation can be mapped using various epistles exchanged

throughout history up until the modern period. Let us start by examining the English language in the 19th Century.

As seen from the literature published in the 19th Century, the written language is formal, embellished and robust. It is used to express events as eloquently as possible – simplicity and conciseness are not taken into account: complex and long sentences, a varied vocabulary, and composite usage of punctuations. The language used was very different from the kind of language used to converse, and formal language was used, even while writing a letter to a family member. This was perhaps indicative of the level of education received by a person and their temperament.

The kind of language used in the letters indicates the various rules that people and their produced entities were subject to at the time. A prime example of this is the adapted version of Abbe d'Ancourt's *The Lady's Preceptor* (1743): the book was adapted from a French book by Abbe d'Ancourt by a Cambridge scholar to suit English Society. The book enumerates a litany of rules that women should subject themselves to, including but not limited to rules regarding "keeping secrets", "being too inquisitive", "egotism", "play", and "letter writing". (D'Ancourt, 1776). Such books were at the heart of society at the time and the rules enumerated were followed diligently.

To take a non-literary epistle into consideration, Abream Scriven's letter to his wife Dinah Jones is a prime example of this phenomenon. The letter is an emotional goodbye from Scriven to his wife after being sold as a slave in 1858. However, even in such an emotional letter, Scriven states that he has been sold to a slave owner in New Orleans, and he expects to write again once he reaches his destination. Scriven also speaks of how he will miss his wife and children and how he expects her to tell her parents goodbye on his behalf. He ends the letter with, "I remain yours truly husband until death." The letter is short, concise, and to the point.

Even though it is a heart-breaking and emotional goodbye to his wife, Scriven instructs her to do various things, offers very little information, and informs his wife of only what has transpired.

"Dinah Jones, my Dear Wife, I take the pleasure of writing you these few lines with much regret to inform you that I am Sold to a man by the name of Peterson a trader and Stays in new orleans."¹ (Scriven, 1858)

As evident, the language is again embellished and formal. It follows the unwritten yet concrete format that letters from a similar era tended to follow. It is hard to pinpoint the used tense in the sentence as the letter seems to follow no apparent tense. The long winding sentence serves both as an introduction and as a summary. A modern version of this sentence might have been split into various sentences, with each emphasising the three different things that the sentence is trying to express. Here, the reader must read between the lines to gauge the actual depth of Scriven's emotion. In his instructions and special requests lie all the words that have been left unsaid. They are communicated via the subtext and reading between the lines rather than using more space on the page.

A similar example of this can be viewed in Paul Smith's Letter to Lucy Johnston and her erstwhile reply. The first letter was an interrogatory letter asking Johnston to explain the unfavourable comments she had made to a mutual friend against the writer. It implores the receiver to explain their statements. However, the letter is extremely polite: it uses the theory of negative politeness to deliver its purpose rather than being scornful and rude.

¹ Abream Scriven, letter to Dinah Jones, September 19, 1858.

"Of course, what is merely your opinion, I have no right to resent, though I regret that it should be so unfavorable, but I have a right to demand your grounds for asserting that I am an arrant flirt, a hypocrite, and concerned in more than one dishonorable transaction." (Frost, 1867)

The length of the sentence is a testament to the temperament of man in the mid-1800s. In the case of both letters, the formality of each letter shines out. The use of negative politeness is representative of the interactions between various people. It can be inferred from the letters that Smith and Johnston are acquainted with each other and might even be friends. The slight directness of the letters in the way they deal with the subject matter offers us that information. However, in each letter, the writing is cautious – they do not offer too much information or say the "wrong thing". They also lack too much emotion – the letters make little to no mention of the writer's emotions. Those are to be understood through the subtext again.

It is also possible that the letters were cautious due to the lack of privacy their means offered – intercepting and reading letters was easy. Personal correspondence, as discussed historically, is a close depiction of a person's thoughts, beliefs and character. Thus, it is easy to make inferences regarding the writer's character and who they are as a person by reading it. In a society that valued good character and model behaviour, as was the case with Victorian Society, the insinuation that a person did not have favourable character could be very damaging to an individual's public perception.

Another such example is the letter Mark Twain wrote to J.H Todd in 1905. The letter was penned as a complaint to the creator of "The Elixir of Life". Twain, who had seen a lot of death and illness in life, and had been widowed just a year prior, was appalled at receiving such a product and related pamphlet. The letter is scathing and yet highly polite. A similar letter today would have been full of expletives, but the social rules of the Edwardian era would not have allowed for someone of Mark Twain's stature to make use of such language. The letter, again,

is penned in a manner similar to Abream Scriven's letter. The emotion and the actual matter of the letter are to be understood by reading between the lines.

"The handwriting is good and exhibits considerable character, and there are even traces of intelligence in what you say, yet the letter and the accompanying advertisements profess to be the work of the same hand."² (Twain, 2010)

A possible explanation for the use of such embellished language in interpersonal correspondence is the need for precision. Without the immediacy that the Internet affords us today, correcting a mistake made in a letter (after realising the same too late) or clarifying a stance/request/incident clear after a misunderstanding would likely be a cumbersome process requiring several letters and several weeks. Formal language ensures a certain level of politeness and respect that is likely to cushion misunderstandings and mistakes. It also ensures a level of impersonal clarity that is important when correction is not possible.

Also, besides being just correspondence, the letters are physical representations of people's lives in times when visual representations such as videos and photographs did not exist. In such a case, the need for the letters to be as authentic, transparent, and elaborate as possible becomes essential. The letters were the only thing that could be used as depictions of the lives that had been lived. In a manner similar to how video is becoming more and more sophisticated, written language in the 18th Century was the primary means of communication and, as a result, at its most sophisticated peak.

The 19th Century was also when the rich and famous, whose letters are both widely accessible and widely studied, were classically educated. Besides this, English grammar as an entity

² Mark Twain, letter to J.H. Todd, November 20, 1905

separate from Latin grammar was established in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. The rich being classically educated by teachers who were anywhere between 20 and 50 years their senior allowed for a mixture of language that used both classical and modern grammar and formal language taught to them in schools. The language depended on readings from the past and was a strange concoction of modern language and that of the yesteryears. It is important to note that the rich used more formal language tones, while the poor and the uneducated used unrefined and coarse language.

Moreover, education during this time was not widely available to all. It was only with various education acts passed in the 1860s and 1870s in the United Kingdom that education was made available and compulsory for all. For example, after the Public Schools Act of 1868, several public day schools were established in various places across the country. In 1880, it was mandatory for all children, between five and ten years old, to attend school by another education act (U.K. Parliament, 2021). As a result, the poor were provided access to the resources of the rich, and similarly, the rich were able to access the poor in a less oppressive set-up. As the poor became educated and were exposed to the language of the rich, the rich were also exposed to the former's language. The formal tones of the rich were exposed to the coarse and unrefined tongue of the poor, and the conjunction altered the rules of language, both verbal and written, slowly to as we recognise them today.

This shift in language can be noted in letters written by various individuals in the early decades of the 20th Century. The letter Ernest Hemingway to F. Scott Fitzgerald in 1934 is one such example. The letter is a reply letter, written Fitzgerald after he asked for Hemingway's honest opinion on the former's book, *Tender is The Night*. The letter is written in a language that is warm and familiar: what one would expect from one's friends. The effect of the introduction of more colloquial and easy-going language is evident in the letter. The tone is affectionate,

yet reprimanding, affording the letter an honest and heartfelt quality. The need for formality and embellishment has been done away with.

"Goddamn it you took liberties with peoples' pasts and futures that produced not people but damned marvellously faked case histories. You, who can write better than anybody can, who are so lousy with talent that you have to—the hell with it."³ (Hemingway, 1959)

In the realm of the possibility of phone calls and telegrams, the embellishment of the writing has declined, and language shines with a rather plain quality. Hemingway, a journalist and writer known for his economical and understated writing style, did not use ornamental language in his writing, which is evident even in his letter to F. Scott Fitzgerald. The usage of expletives is common in his writing, and the letter is a far cry from Mark Twain's letter. In telling Fitzgerald how much he disapproves, Hemingway is honest in a way that 19th-century language deemed nearly impossible.

Chris Barker's letters to Bessie Moore are another example of how language developed the honest and expressive nature of informality. In a letter dated 29th and 31st January 1945, Barker writes to Moore about his impending return from the outpost in North Africa and speaks of how he longs to see her. The letter is full of emotion and hope and expresses a desire to see Moore as soon as possible. It is saturated with excitement, and Barker even expresses his desire to make their relationship public.

"I hope that you will not start buying any clothes (if you have the coupons left) because you think you 'must look nice' for me. I shall be sorry if you do. Just carry on as near as possible to normal. My return at the present time allows us to make public our mutual attachment. I shall

³ Ernest Hemingway, letter to F Scott Fitzgerald, May 28, 1934

tell my family I hope to spend a week away with you somewhere during my leave. My counsel to you is to tell as few people as possible."⁴ (Barker, 2014)

Similar to Hemingway's letter, the letter is open, full of emotion and uninhibited in what it wishes to express. Here the sentences are shorter, easier to comprehend, and the writing does not seem to follow any binding rules. In imbibing the various nuances of the dialects of the rich and poor, language became less embellished and easy to understand. It is also possible that the short nature of sentences for expensive telegrams was adopted for letters as well, considering the ease of writing it would provide.

As with telegrams, as phone calls became more and more accessible to everyone, letters became rarer, and the language used is more conversational than ever. In addition, the introduction of TV shows, music and films, inducted into language slang terms that evolved at a rate faster than ever seen before. For example, "swell", a word that would have been extremely popular in the 1950s, was already out of use by the 1960s and was unheard of by the 1980s. Naturally, this effect on language was seen in the manner in which people wrote as well. This extract from a letter written in 1958 by three Elvis Presley fans to the then President of the United States, Dwight D. Eisenhower, is very representative of this fact:

"We think its bad enough to send Elvis Presley in the Army, but if you cut his side burns off we will just die! You don't no how we fell about him, I really don't see why you have to send him in the Army at all, but we beg you please please don't give him a GI hair cut, oh please please don't! If you do we will just about die!"⁵ (Kelly, Bane, & Mickie , 2015)

⁴ Chris Barker, letter to Bessie Moore, 29th and 31st January 1945

⁵ Linda Kelly, Sherry Bane and Mickie Mattson, letter to President Eisenhower, 1958

As people became more accessible via different means, writing became a rather second-hand choice: when one could access those people one knew via phone calls, a handwritten letter was a cumbersome alternative. Moreover, as people fell out of touch with writing, the language used to write became more conversational and informal. This point is demonstrated by a reply letter by Spike Milligan to Stephen Gard from February 1977. Gard, in his letter, had enumerated various complaints to Milligan, and the latter responded similarly. The reply is humorous, and even though it is to a stranger, the language used is as though the letter were to a friend. While the language used here is in line with the other 20th century letters previously discussed, the tone is formal and placating, and yet the language used is as informal as the letters shared between Fitzgerald and Hemingway.

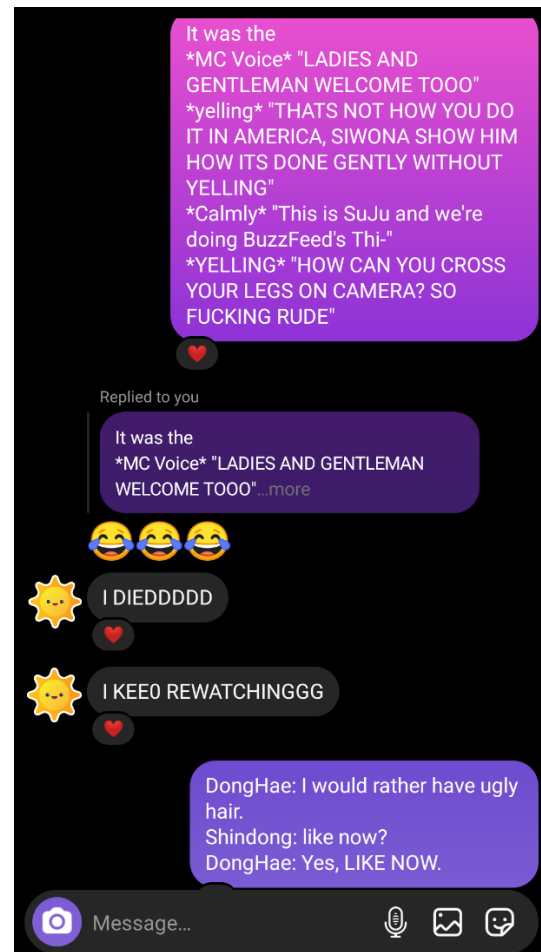
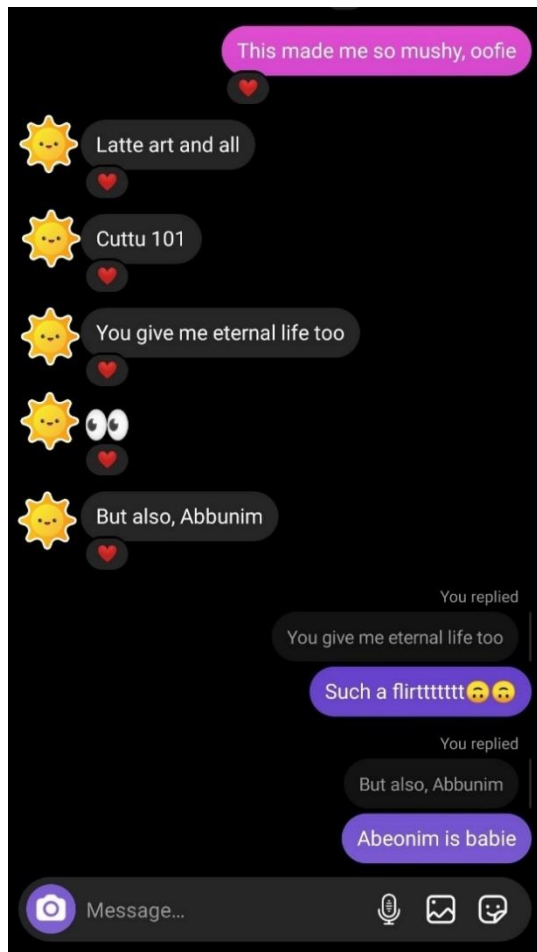
"This mixed with cries of "mother" and a free flow of dysentery enabled me to be taken out of the line and down-graded to B2. But for that brilliant performance, this letter would be coming to you from a grave in Italy."⁶ (Milligan, 2012)

Thus, it is easy to surmise that slowly, as a direct result of the increasing number of means of communication, language in the 20th Century became very informal, direct and frankly, coarse by the standards of the 19th Century. With the advent of the internet age in the 20th Century, newer methods of communication have been created, and the immediacy of language has been made more popular. Communication today is conducted at a speed that has never been seen before. It is instantaneous and immediate. A message sent right now can be expected to be replied to within the next second. This naturally affords language itself a kind of immediacy that has never been seen before.

⁶ Spike Milligan, letter to Stephen Gard, February 28th, 1977

With the Internet came the internet slang and "txtspk". These were used to reduce the time to type out a message so that conversation could continue at a quicker pace. Popular examples include "B4" for before, "u" for you, and "abt" for about. In addition, Text Speak involved omitting vowels and contracting words to fit them into the strict word limits on Text messaging applications. Today, with the limits gone, text speak is used ironically to reminisce of the innocent past of the Internet. However, the impact of text-speak on language is still present.

Contractions to replace words are still prevalent and have now taken on to mean different things than the original word. Prime examples of this involve "bro" or "sis". While initially used as contractions for Brother and Sister, a "bro" now means a close friend, someone with whom you are incredibly intimate and share a great camaraderie, and a "sis" is your best friend forever and can even be considered a common abbreviation for "Sisters in Spirit". With the advent of the Internet, misspelling words as a means of expression is also how language has evolved. Take, for example, the word "boi". "Boi" taken from "Boy" refers to someone who has done something silly and is used when you are either looking to tell someone off or trying to explain something that should not warrant an explanation. Another such example is "Babie" or "bb". The misspelt versions of "baby" are used to describe someone who is being or acting extremely adorably.



Again, language has become incredibly immediate and visual. A large part of this is the result of the amount of pop culture used to express oneself on the Internet today. As a result of the wonders of the Internet, today, a textual conversation is not merely textual. It is now an audio conversation (sharing of voice notes) and a visual one (sharing of photographs, GIFs and videos). Hence, back referencing visual messages is not an uncommon phenomenon. With the advent of social media applications, it is possible to share videos/images with personal commentary and have instantaneous conversations about the videos/images. Using pop culture as a means of expression is common in written conversations and even permeates verbal ones.



(Anonymous 2, 2021)



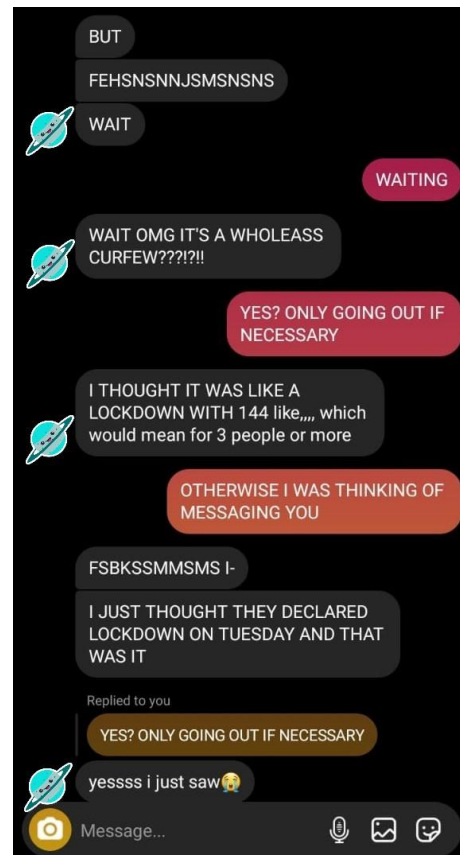
(Anonymous 3, 2021)

Emoticons and emojis have also invaded the written communication space and have even begun to influence written language on the Internet. For instance, 'UwU' or 'uwu' refers to the feeling of being overwhelmed by how cute something is (Urban Dictionary, n.d.). The word is pronounced "oo-w-oo" and has directly been taken from the emoticon that expresses the face people make when they see something charming. Other examples of words being influenced by emoticons and even abstract sounds include "omo" (used to express shock and disgust, or even admiration) (Urban Dictionary, n.d.), "asdfghjkl" (used when your excitement is beyond words (Urban Dictionary, n.d.), it can be replaced with any string of random letters known as a keyboard vomit), "oof" (an expression of melodramatic defeat that stems from a video game sound) (Urban Dictionary, n.d.), "ugh" or "eugh" (used to express sighs or groaning sounds),

and "hnng" (an expression used to describe someone extremely attractive) (Urban Dictionary, n.d.).

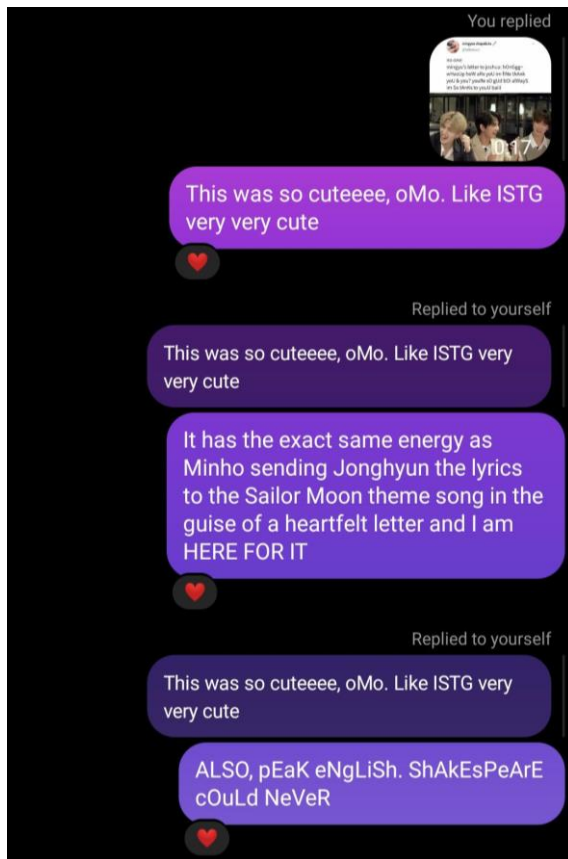


(Anonymous 1, 2021)

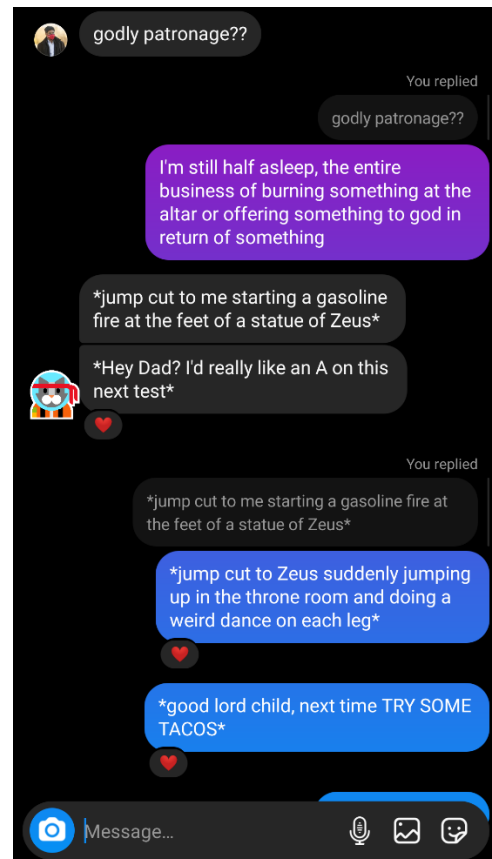


(Anonymous 4, 2021)

Thus, it is safe to say that the Internet has created its own grammar and rules. For example, emphasis is laid upon by capitalising text to depict doing an action, the action is described and put into two asterisks used as quotation marks, and alternate letter capitalisation is used to mock someone via Text.



(Anonymous 1, 2021)



(Anonymous 3, 2021)

Alternate letter capitalisation as syntax stems from a popular tweet by a now-suspended Twitter account that shared a screenshot from the popular TV show *SpongeBob SquarePants* with added commentary. The meme was created using a Screenshot of *SpongeBob* from an episode of the TV show where Squidward discovers, upon reading *SpongeBob*'s diary, the latter's propensity to act like a chicken whenever he sees plaid (Matt & shevyrolet, 2018). The tweet put a screenshot of *SpongeBob* next to a "bird with arms" and added commentary in alternating letter capitalisation. This became immensely popular and created the meme format that has been extensively used since its conception in 2017. This syntax format was created from the alternating letter capitalisation and *SpongeBob*'s face creating the effect of mockery in written text.



Bf: "I don't even know her like that"
Me: "I doNt EveN KnOw heR liKe thAt"



(@lexysaeyang, 2017)

As evident from the evolution of the syntax of alternate letter capitalisation, Internet grammar is an entirely new entity that has been created from the need for expressive language that is concise yet emotive. Furthermore, with the immediacy of communication came the requirement of instantaneous replies. A message no longer warrants days, weeks or hours for a reply; the reply is expected within a few seconds, a few hours at the maximum. Thus, replying using traditional language becomes a hassle. Additional to the immediacy expected from replies and messages, it is challenging to read a lengthy message on a phone. While this problem has primarily subsided with the advent of smartphones with big screens, it would have been immensely difficult to read messages longer than a few sentences on the original small screened large keyboarded phones.



(xeliqe, 2014)

Another problem with the bar and flip phones was the keypad that they used to possess. Instead of the QWERTY keyboard for comfortable typing, the phones used a numerical keypad with accessibility to the alphabet possible by pressing each key several times. Naturally, typing out a simple “hello” on such a keyboard was a cumbersome process, let alone typing out a grammatically correct response. The ease of embellished and formal language disappeared as accessibility and immediacy were made standard features. As a result, developing a new syntax and grammar specific to this predicament became increasingly necessary. Internet syntax and grammar is the solution. Internet grammar is largely correspondent to phone usage and social media and has not permeated the email space simply because emails, for the large part, were accessed using computers and were used in the formal communication spaces of work and school.

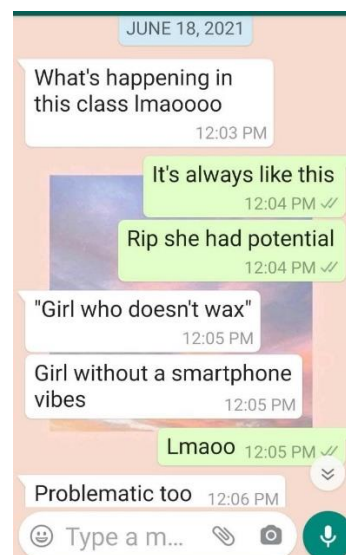
Internet syntax, therefore, became central to textual communication via cell phones and has remained an essential part of communication since its debut. Besides the predicament of keypads on old phones, which has largely been done away with, while the advent of smartphones and the QWERTY keyboard did abet the need for contractions to some extent, it

remains alongside the requirement of conversational immediacy. As stated before, conversational immediacy is even more prevalent than ever – the increased accessibility and connectivity afforded by the Internet has made it so that a message reaches a person nearly as soon as it is sent or at least within a few seconds.

Naturally, a reply is expected as soon as the sent message has been read, this calls for succinctness in writing that affords the easy flow of conversation. Long-winded sentences with proper grammatical connotations and embellished formal writing tones do not offer the quickness that textual conversation requires today. Shorter sentences, sometimes even sentence fragments, are becoming the norm. While this means the ease of typing and the smoother flow of conversation, it takes away the subtext from sentences. Long sentences are subtextual and can convey emotion and tone more smoothly than shorter sentences. To add to this, the comprehensibility of a sentence that is written by taking the time to arrange thoughts and ideas in a coherent manner is higher than that of a sentence threaded together for a quick response.

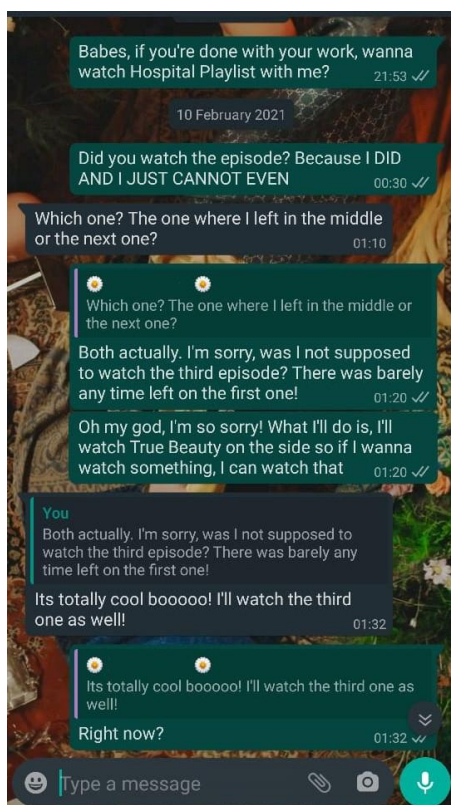


(Anonymous 5, 2021)

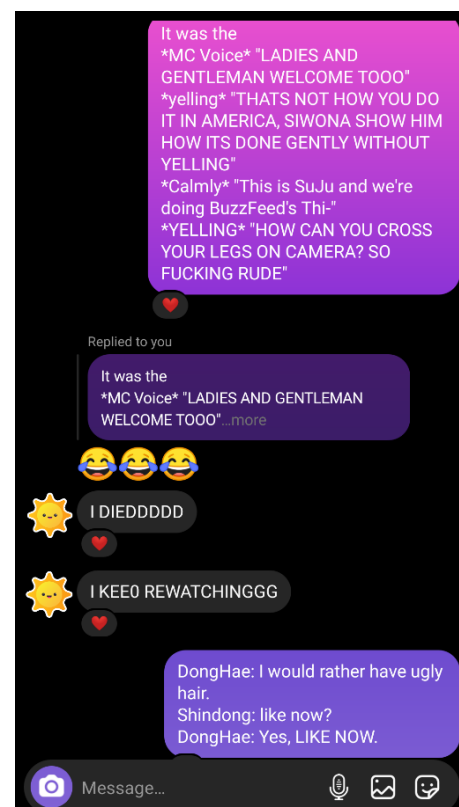


(Anonymous 6, 2021)

The written language used in text messages today caters to the expectation of succinct yet emotional messages. The tone is more conversational, informal and expressive. It does not call for correctness or grammatical coherence – the expression of emotion succinctly and effectively is the priority. For example, the sentence “I have lost all ability to can” or its more frequently used version, “I can’t even,” are both sentences that do not fit general grammatical standards. Both are relatively common on the Internet, but their meaning is nearly incomprehensible to anyone unfamiliar with Internet grammar and syntax. A loose translation of the two sentences could be that “I am so dumbfounded and surprised that I have lost my ability to express clearly how I feel in coherent sentences. That is how deep my excitement goes with respect to the topic, I suggest you also take a look to share in the excitement!”

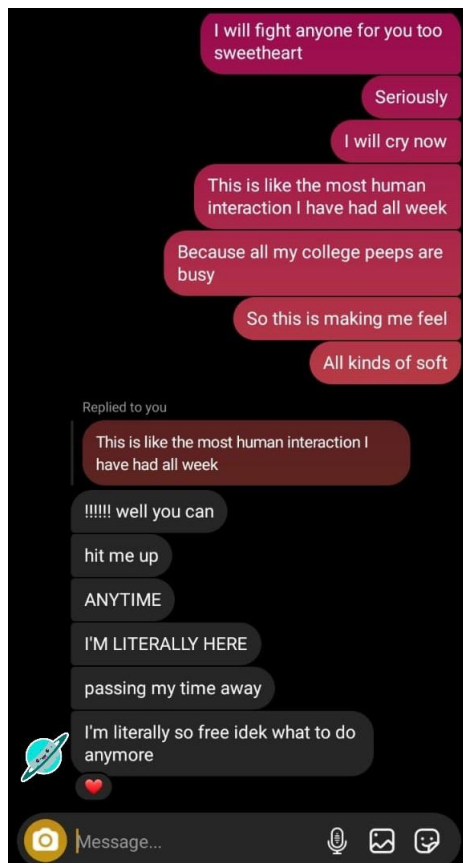


(Anonymous 7 , 2021)

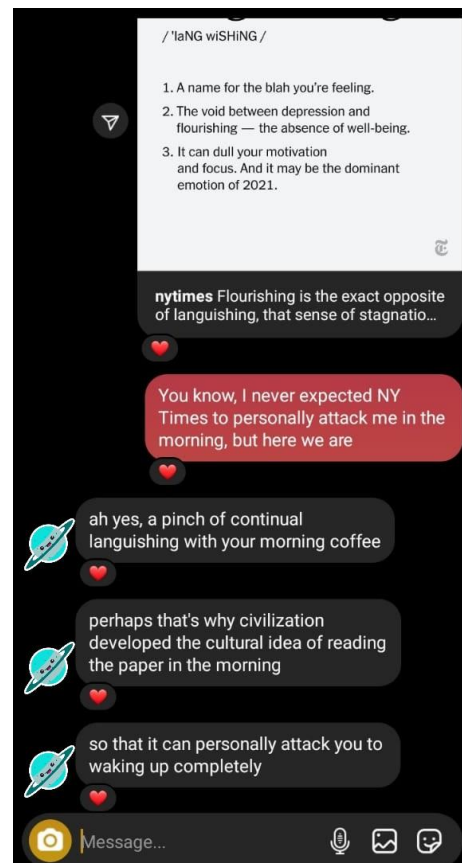


(Anonymous 1, 2021)

In their conciseness and grammatical incoherence, both sentences are direct and effective in conveying the writer's emotion. They make it possible for the writer to express the depth of their emotions simply and efficiently – the correctness of the grammar if the tone and emotion have been appropriately conveyed become secondary. For example, the elongation of the last letter/syllable can be used to effectively convey a wide range of emotions from sincerity to whining, excitement and even the action of calling out for someone cutely. Another example is the “keyboard vomit” (asdfghjkl) more effectively conveys the emotion of being dumbfounded or excited beyond words than stating, “I am so excited that words are beyond me, and my frustration is making me haphazardly tap my keyboard”.



(Anonymous 4, 2021)



(Anonymous 4, 2021)

(@nytimes, 2021)

Another effect of this need for the accurate conveyance of tone and emotion without description is overly exaggerative language. With the lack of expression on a medium that does not afford body language or tone, Internet users have made the use of Hyperbole commonplace. A Hyperbole is “an extravagant exaggeration.” (Merriam-Webster, n.d.). It is essentially used to express strong emotion in written language, but the intention is not literal. For example, to express via text message, how wonderful the writer thinks a person is, they might say, “Can she step on me?” or “I would give away my entire fortune to her if she asked”.



(@maralie, @feralmermaids, & @lemonadesoda, 2016)

Also, with the ease of expressing tone and emotion with longer sentences no longer affordable, the newer syntax has come into play. Such syntax allows the sender to deliver an emotionally appropriate and sufficiently succinct response within seconds. For example, sentences are written in the Upper Case to convey the idea that someone is screaming – this can convey a wide range of emotions – from horror to excitement and from rage to surprise. Alternative text capitalisation is used to express mockery, and question marks at the end of sentences can be used to depict upturns and intonations in voice (when the sentence is spoken out loud) rather than the interrogation.

pervocracy:

argumate:

pervocracy:

Part of the New Internet Grammar: using question marks not to denote questions, but upturns in voice, so that a tentative statement gets a question mark but a flatly delivered question doesn't.

why would you do this

It just seems right?

Reblogged 2 years ago from richterran
(originally from pervocracy)

214,736 notes

Source: pervocracy

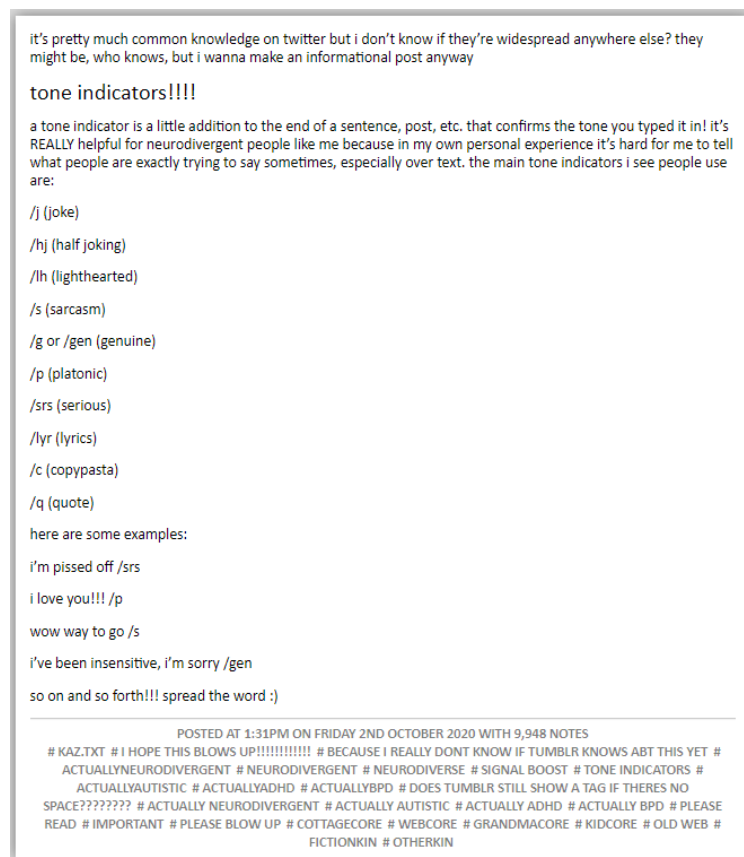
(@pervocracy & @argumate, 2017)

Sometimes, words are intentionally misspelt to add a sense of dialect and accent to the written Text (the phenomenon of eye dialect). For example, in the popular Twitter meme used to mock British people speaking, "you look beautiful love" is changed to "yu luuk beutiful loaf" (my heart, 2020) and "it's Tuesday, isn't it" is changed to "it's chewsday innit?" Another example includes this popular meme:



(FG28, 2020)

In addition to this exists the concept of “tone indicators.” Tone indicators refer to “little additions to the end of a sentence, post, etc.” (@reecebug, 2020). They help confirm the original tone of writing intended by the author. Some examples include “/hj” (half-joking), “/s” (sarcasm), and “/srs” (serious). (@reecebug, 2020)



(@reecebug, 2020)

Chapter – 4 – Results and Interpretations

The previously listed information offers much insight into the English language's growth, development, and transformation over the past two centuries. It maps out the changes that can be noted in the English language and offers insights into the possible reasons for these changes. After considering these examples, closely comparing the various epistolary writings and trying to understand and map the changes, it is possible to make a few inferences regarding the topic.

First and foremost, it is easy to conclude that written epistles today are vastly different from their 19th-century counterparts. The first reason is the greatly varied mediums of communication. But the language having undergone great and fundamental changes is also an important reason that can be pinned to the difference in the treatment of written language in these epistles. These changes have been the result of various factors that come into play when considering language change. These include social, political, technological, environmental and moral (Mantiri, 2010).

The changes that the English language underwent between the 19th and the 20th Century were primarily affected by political and social factors. Political factors include colonisation, international or intranational migration, and invasion. It is possible for languages to change through something as simple as the migration of people from one place to another, or even ideas and practices like colonialism and cultural imperialism. Social factors can include the influence of foreign languages on a language, dialects and even the colloquialisms that develop depending on various demographics such as age, gender, level of education, and even standing in the social sphere.

The 20th Century saw the expansion of English as a global language, rather than just being the official language of the British empire. With the emergence of the United States of America as

an international superpower, and the increased exchange of technical, academic and professional information, English underwent a makeover spearheaded by globalisation. British imperialism and colonialism in the previous centuries had already cemented the presence of English as a language for global exchange – but with the introduction of America into the mix, the spread of the language was unstoppable.

The political and military activities of the United States, for example, in South Korea and Japan, introduced a slew of English words into the Japanese and Korean languages. However, it also imbibed a large number of words from these languages into itself. Words like Karaoke, Sushi, Karate, Ninja, Zen and Futon from Japanese were introduced to the language like they had never been before. This is not a new phenomenon. Of course, the journey of foreign loanwords in the English language is as old as the language itself, but this phenomenon has always been a significant contributor to change. Colonialism, too, has had its effects on the language – in a manner similar to Japanese, several loanwords were taken from the languages of countries that the British colonised. For example, words such as Punch (Panch), Bazaar (Bazaar), Shampoo (Champoo), and Chit (Chiththi), are all loan words from Hindi.

Cultural imperialism also plays an essential role in the rapid change of the English language between the 19th and 20th centuries. As with the spread of the English language through the actions of the United States of America in the 20th Century, the spread of films and other media also made it possible to make English popular in previously inaccessible areas. Here, people began to learn English to further their education in primarily English-speaking countries or increase their professional, industrial and commercial value in a world dominated by English-speaking countries. This newly learnt language was not always native in its treatment and mixed with the native languages of the speakers. It gave birth to language hybrids.

Language hybrids were also crucial to changing the English language in the 20th Century – they became the norm of speaking within the language learners and adopted their native grammatical structures to some extent. In doing so, the structures also permeated into general English usage, furthering the standardisation of the language from the British/American versions. For example, Indian English is a standard form of English separate from American English or British English – while it primarily uses the same structures, it also introduces “Indianisms” to the English language that is now accurate. As Indians began to move across the globe, they took this version of the language with them, and it is possible that slowly the original form of the language itself changed.

As discussed earlier, social factors are also responsible for the changes in languages. Much like the introduction of newer education acts in the U.K. that helped the language of the rich and the poor assimilate, other social factors have also affected the way the English language has changed. The perceptions of various ideas, beliefs and concepts differ with the social status of people. The level of education, the economic standard of living, the neighbourhood that one grew up in – all these things become factors of change. The significant change in the English language during the 20th Century emerged from the growth of a new middle class after the first and second World Wars.

The newer sensibilities of people who had experienced the war in poverty or as soldiers brought their own loanwords, colloquialisms, and other variations to the language. These spread to the masses through interactions between various people, and the English language underwent a certain change again. Similar to this is the concept of change in language through technological advancements.

Technological advancements like the development of the telegram, the telephone and the Internet have played essential roles in the change that language has undergone. The telegram

first introduced the concept of conciseness – it was quick to send a telegram, but it was expensive to send one. This meant that whatever was being said needed to be said as efficiently and succinctly as possible. Thus, a newer, more succinct manner of communication was needed and here came the usage of smaller sentence fragments to offer explanations.

With the coming of the telephone, and it being more readily available, longer conversations could be had on the telephone at whatever time one wished to have them. This meant that the need to write long letters was nearly done away with. Sure, one would still write them, but, as telephone technologies became more efficient and cheaper, writing a letter became a hassle. Slowly, people began to lose practice writing the letters by hand, and the more formal writing tones began to fade. It was more convenient to write as one would speak via the telephone, rather than offering long-winded explanations in embellished language to make oneself clear. Any clarifications could be corrected over the telephone, and with the far more liberal turn that society had taken, “social propriety” had taken a backseat.

Lastly, with the arrival of the Internet, clarifications became even more straightforward, and the time of correspondence was cut down to mere seconds. This means that replies, too, were expected within seconds, and with the development of hand-held small-screened phones, the ease of reading on a small screen and typing on a tiny keyboard was prioritised over grammatical correctness and coherence. Even with the advent of larger screens and qwerty keyboards on phones, the need for immediacy remained. Thus, the language began to take an even more informal turn. Newer words were introduced, the connotations of content shared on the Internet offered newer meanings and inferences to pre-existing words, and the ability to share images, videos, GIFs and stickers has added to the manner in which language has evolved.

Enhanced interpersonal connectivity has made language more emotive, expressive, immediate, pictorial, informal and conversational. It has enabled language to create newer grammar and syntax to fit the conventions of the internet space, which is one where it is hard to convey tone, emotion and intent. The syntax has developed so that some Internet grammar might be incoherent to non-frequent users of the Internet, let alone 19th or 20th Century counterparts. The syntax helps reduce these issues and create a space for technical discussions and lingual advancements, all while being credited to teenagers on the Internet.

Modern epistles are more immediate, more informal and far more extensive and expressive. The various rules that they were subject to have been done away with, and conversation is free-flowing, easy to understand, and self-referential. With how communication has changed and developed over the past Century, with newer and quicker forms of communication coming up almost every year, the epistles themselves have evolved to become reflections of the quicker format. They are more concise and expeditious and are also incredibly visual as compared to their previous version.

The language itself has taken a similar turn. The rigid classical structure of language prevalent in the early 19th Century was shaken and reduced by the early 20th Century and completely gone by the advent of the 21st. Language today is a reflection of the broken rules of epistles. It is more playful, more fluid and more open. It is an amalgamation of the various dialects of the 19th Century and their growth into this modern form. It is informal and more familiar, and more pictorial, and uses more non-conformist forms of lingual expression than ever.

Chapter – 5 – Conclusion

The data, information, and epistles presented above help one conclude that the changes that the English language has undergone are fundamental to its evolution and development. In being a language that started with the arrival of migrants to Britain, English has kept true to its roots and has developed in a manner that is logical, understandable and coherent. The language has changed on lexical, syntactical, grammatical and vocabulary fronts and has emerged as a modern language that is global and widely understood and accepted.

Through personal epistles, it has been possible to map language and garner an understanding of how these changes have occurred. The epistles from each period differ in how they treat written language and its rules, convey emotions and ideas, and in their tone of writing. The epistles from the 19th and the early 20th centuries are formal, embellished and ornamental. They use grammar as a weapon for clarity and try to maintain as much poise as possible. They use concepts such as negative politeness to express emotions, even in deeply personal letters, and the emotion is to be understood through the subtext. The letters are highly mindful of social rules and conventions and take into account the need for politeness and propriety. The language -used reflects this – it is grammatically correct and coherent.

In the case of later 20th Century writings, the writers can exercise freedom in the way that they use language to express themselves. Increased connectivity has allowed for more informal and conversational writing, and the assimilation of the various sections of society has enabled the mixing of language like never before. At the same time, the introduction of various political, social and technological factors affected the manner in which language evolved in the 20th Century. The thick divide between the language of the poor and the rich was no longer too

much of a concern, and with more general education, language standardisation was also made possible.

Lastly, with the introduction of the Internet in the late 20th Century, communication in the 21st Century was completely revolutionised. Heightened interpersonal connectivity had led everyday written language to become more informal, conversational, open and immediate. It has also become more visual: the language of the Internet is to be seen, not heard or read. The introduction of newer syntax and grammar to fit the evolving needs of communication platforms also adds to the changes that language has undergone.

Thus, language itself has evolved in a manner that is exponential and dependent on various factors and makes for an exciting study of English.

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