

The Anglo-Saxon the Basis for a Universal Language

Assistant Lecturer Thanaa Hindi Salih

This article examines the case for Anglo-Saxon as the foundation for a future universal language. With the rise of globalization and digital communication, the need for a common tongue is growing. Currently English serves this role as a lingua franca, but it is argued that its complex spelling and irregular grammar make it ill-suited for widespread adoption. The study analyzes the evolution of English from its Anglo-Saxon roots in the 5th century AD. It is shown that Old English had a much simpler and more phonetic orthography compared to modern English. Grammatical structures like verb conjugations were also more regular and consistent in Anglo-Saxon. Through examining surviving manuscripts and early dictionaries, the core Anglo-Saxon vocabulary is identified which underlies much of contemporary English. An experiment is presented where simplified spelling reforms are applied to modern English based on historical Anglo-Saxon conventions. Volunteers from different first language backgrounds are surveyed on their ability to decode and comprehend this revised "Anglo-Universal" language. The results demonstrate significantly lower learning curves compared to Standard English. It is concluded that streamlining English back to its original Anglo-Saxon foundations could create a global lingua franca that is far more phonetic, regular, and easier to learn than the status quo. Adopting a reconstructed Anglo-Saxon lexicon and orthography would help overcome barriers to learning caused by irregularities in modern English. This "Anglo-Universal" language could serve as a viable foundation for a single world tongue.

Keywords: Anglo-Saxon language, Old English, English language, and linguistic characteristics.

I. INTRODUCTION

The Anglo-Saxon language, also known as Old English, developed from the languages brought to Great Britain by Anglo-Saxon settlers in the mid-5th century [1]. It is considered the earliest recorded form of the English language and is a distinct language from modern English [2]. The first Old English literary works date from the mid-7th century [3]. The English language itself developed from the West Germanic dialects spoken by the Angles, Saxons, and other Teutonic tribes who invaded and occupied England in the 5th and 6th centuries [4]. The West Saxon dialect became standardized as the language of government and as the basis for literature and religious materials in Anglo-Saxon England [5]. The Anglo-Saxon language served as the foundation for the development of the English language, and its literature continues to inspire modern-day authors [2]. Anglo-Saxon poetry is characterized by frequent use of alliteration and a simple and direct style [3].

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical framework for understanding the Anglo-Saxon language as the basis for a universal language involves examining its linguistic characteristics, historical significance, and its role in language evolution. This framework encompasses various aspects, including the phonetics, grammar, vocabulary, and cultural influences that shaped the Anglo-Saxon language [6]. The stages or periods of English literature have witnessed transitions in the development of the English language, including novels, poetry, prose, and theaters [7]. The English language has become the most spoken language globally, with over a billion people currently learning it [8]. Additionally, linguists are interested in the common framework on which all languages are built, known as universals of language, while also accounting for the great diversity of languages [5]. Parameters fixed during language acquisition contribute to the variation in languages, along with the arbitrary facts of the lexicon [9]. The phonetic aspect of the Anglo-Saxon language is indeed of particular importance. The rich system of sounds, including consonants and vowels, in Anglo-Saxon contributed to its expressive and versatile nature. The phonetic structure of Anglo-Saxon laid the foundation for the pronunciation patterns that

continue to be prevalent in English today [10]. The grammatical features of Anglo-Saxon, such as its inflectional system, played a crucial role in the development of English grammar. The complex system of declensions and conjugations in Anglo-Saxon influenced the structure of nouns, pronouns, and verbs in modern English [5]. Understanding the grammatical structure of Anglo-Saxon is essential in comprehending the evolution of English grammar [11]. The vocabulary of Anglo-Saxon has had a significant impact on the development of the English language. Many words from Old English are still in use today, while others have evolved or become obsolete. The study of Anglo-Saxon vocabulary provides insights into the historical roots and semantic evolution of English words, making it an essential component of understanding the universal nature of the language [12]. Additionally, research has shown that Germanic words, which have their origins in Anglo-Saxon, are learned earlier and processed more efficiently than Latin-based words in English speakers [13]. This suggests that the influence of Anglo-Saxon vocabulary extends beyond historical significance and has implications for word recognition and language processing in contemporary English [2]. The vocabulary of Anglo-Saxon has had a significant impact on the development of the English language. Many words from Old English are still in use today, while others have evolved or become obsolete. The study of Anglo-Saxon vocabulary provides insights into the historical roots and semantic evolution of English words, making it an essential component of understanding the universal nature of the language [12]. Additionally, research has shown that Germanic words, which have their origins in Anglo-Saxon, are learned earlier and processed more efficiently than Latin-based words in English speakers [13]. This suggests that the influence of Anglo-Saxon vocabulary extends beyond historical significance and has implications for word recognition and language processing in contemporary English [2]. The Anglo-Saxon language, also known as Old English, holds great historical significance and has had a profound impact on the development of the English language. Through the study of its phonetics, grammar, vocabulary, and cultural influences, we can gain a deeper understanding of how it has shaped English. Old English was highly inflected and had a mixed

SVO-SOV word order, but over time, it underwent typological changes to become more analytic and adopt a mainly SVO word order [14]. The language also underwent significant phonological changes and saw a shift in its lexicon from mainly Germanic to a mixed Germanic-Romance type [15]. The borrowing of loanwords from other languages, such as Latin, Celtic, French, and Arabic, further enriched the English vocabulary throughout its history [16]. By exploring the characteristics and evolution of the Anglo-Saxon language, we can better understand the foundations of English and its role as a universal language [17].

2.1. Origins and Development of Anglo-Saxon

In the early 5th century, Roman troops began to withdraw from Britain to defend Rome itself against invading forces. The redeployment of troops was necessary due to growing pressures elsewhere in the Roman Empire, which required the military to be concentrated on the continent. Late antiquity saw an increase in warfare and external challenges, as well as more regular bouts of civil war [18]. The Roman army in late antiquity consisted of soldiers from various ethnic and territorial origins, serving far from their places of origin [19]. The placement of troops in the Eastern part of the Empire, such as Constantinople and Nicomedia, was a challenge for Roman emperors during wars and troop movements [20]. The origins of the Roman alliance system in the 4th century involved the incorporation of defeated foes into the military, providing a manpower reservoir for the Roman Republic [21]. The post-Sullan Republic saw a shift towards accelerated exploitation and decline in the Senate's control of war, with evidence of greed and pursuit of glory prominent [22]. With the protection of the Roman military gone, British towns and cities were left vulnerable to outside attack. Germanic tribes from Northern Europe, including the Angles, Saxons, and Jutes, began launching raids across the North Sea into eastern and southern Britain. These tribes were seeking new lands to settle as populations grew within their original homelands on the European mainland [23]. By the early 5th century, Germanic tribes began crossing the North Sea to colonize parts of Britain, establishing permanent footholds, and bringing their families and possessions with the goal of settling down rather than just raiding. Initially, raids in

the late 4th century targeted wealthy British towns for resources like gold and slaves. However, as the ninth century progressed, the Danes and Norwegians started to think seriously about conquest and settlement, leading to more frequent and organized attacks on the north-east coast of England. These raids undermined the power of Northumbria and strengthened the growing strength of Mercia, which became the most powerful kingdom in England. The boundaries of Mercia during this period are uncertain, but it likely included much of the West Midlands and extended eastwards to counties like Leicestershire, Northamptonshire, Derbyshire, and Nottinghamshire. The Germanic invaders, including the Anglo-Saxons, Jutes, and Angles, were able to conquer and displace the indigenous Celtic British populations in southern and eastern Britain. The British cities and kingdoms were unable to mount an effective defense against these well-armed invaders, resulting in the overrun of local militias and the sacking of towns. The newcomers drove deep into the interior, conquering territory and absorbing or displacing the Celtic British populations [23][24][25]. By the mid-5th century, seven prominent Anglo-Saxon kingdoms had been established across modern-day England: Northumbria, Mercia, East Anglia, Essex, Sussex, Kent, and Wessex. The invading tribes had succeeded in largely replacing the British language and culture in these newly conquered regions of Britain. The stage was set for Old English, derived from the ancestral tongues of the Germanic settlers, to emerge as the dominant language [26][24][27].

2.2. Spread of English through British Empire

English became established as the dominant administrative language wherever British settlers and traders went due to the rapid expansion of the British Empire between the 16th and 20th centuries. This was facilitated through colonization and the influence of British colonialism. The British introduced English language education in the Indian subcontinent as a means of training Indian interpreters and as a vehicle of colonial enlightenment [28]. The Long-Term Average Speech Spectrum (LTASS) and Dynamic Range (DR) of speech, which strongly influence estimates of Speech Intelligibility Index (SII), were found to be different for Indian languages compared to British English [29]. Britain's funding of English language

teaching (ELT) initiatives in developing countries, including India, has been a consistent part of its aid policy, influenced by ideational factors and institutional embedding [30]. The colonization strategies employed by the British resulted in the emergence of distinct varieties of English, known as "Englishes," in different regions of the world [31]. Ambiguity in language, including lexical ambiguity, can be found in both written and spoken forms, as seen in the British television series *Mind Your Language* Season 1 [32]. One of the earliest and most important colonies in North America was established by English settlers in the 17th century along the eastern coast, which eventually became the United States. As more settlers arrived, the English language became dominant and helped unify the 13 colonies prior to American independence [15][33][34]. In the 17th and 18th centuries, the British East India Company established trading posts in South Asia, particularly in India, which later grew into vast colonial territories. During this time, English became the language of government, law courts, and higher education under the British Raj [35]. The British East India Company's goal was commercial profit, and they gradually increased their political and military influence in India [36]. By 1757, the company asserted its military dominance and began colonizing India economically and juridically [37]. The British saw the legal system to accommodate an "open" economic market and reduce the costs of controlling the country [38]. The appointment of Warren Hastings as Governor of Bengal in 1772 marked a new stage in the British legal redesign of India, known as the Hastings Plan, which was first implemented in Bengal [39]. The 19th century was a period of British imperialism, characterized by the acquisition of colonies across Africa, Asia, and Oceania. These colonies were obtained through conquest and force, allowing the British Empire to expand its control and influence. The English language played a crucial role in facilitating this imperial project, serving as a lingua franca that connected diverse populations under British rule and enabled communication and commerce. The empire's vast territories and diverse populations presented challenges, but the British Empire maintained relative equilibrium during this period, focusing on expanding commerce and extending their rule rather than acquiring vast territories [40][41][42].

By the early 20th century, the British Empire encompassed around 25% of the world's population and territory, cementing English as a premier global language [43]. Even after independence movements took hold across Asia and Africa in the post-WWII era, the newly independent nations often retained English in government and education [44]. Its utility as a neutral international language ensured its continued prominence [45]. Today, while Britain is no longer an imperial power, English remains widely used internationally as a shared second language due to its early colonial spread and role in globalization. It has become the dominant or co-official language in scores of former British colonies.

2.3. 20th Century Rise of American Influence and Technology

After World War II, the United States emerged as one of the dominant global superpowers. With many other nations weakened by the massive devastation of the war, America experienced rapid economic growth in the post-war period. This growth, coupled with military strength, allowed the US to flex its political muscle on the global stage [46]. The increasing dominance of the English language was one way in which American influence spread globally. As the US became a leader in global trade, commerce, Hollywood films, and popular music, English began to spread to all corners of the world as a common international language of business, entertainment, and popular culture. This cemented English as the dominant global tongue [47]. The advancement of telecommunication technologies and the internet played a significant role in the rapid dissemination of American music, films, and goods worldwide [48]. The internationalization of American culture through cultural transfer has both fascinated and caused fear in other cultures [49]. The American way of life and culture have become increasingly imitated and symbolize what is fashionable and up to date, leading to the fading away of local traditions and national identities [50]. Massive technological innovations in the late 20th century, including the invention of computers and the internet, have accelerated the spread of American soft power. The interconnected global network created by the internet has allowed American technology companies, websites, entertainment, and culture to reach massive new global audiences [51] [52][53]. The internet, which became

increasingly commercialized and accessible to the public in the 1990s, has played a significant role in this process [54]. The rise of Silicon Valley as the epicenter of the digital revolution positioned American tech giants like Microsoft, Apple, Google, and Facebook to dominate the emerging digital landscape, amplifying American influence [55]. Today, English remains the primary language of the internet, further solidifying American technology's impact on global communication and media consumption patterns [56]. Innovations in computing and online connectivity have accelerated and expanded the cultural imprint of 20th century American leadership [57].

3. English as Today's Lingua Franca

English has indeed become the dominant language of international diplomacy and negotiations. It is widely used in interactions between countries at various multilateral organizations such as the UN, NATO, European Union, and ASEAN [58]. English is also the language in which important treaties, agreements, conventions, trade deals, climate accords, and resolutions are drafted and signed [59]. This trend is not limited to former British colonies, as even nations that were never under British rule have adopted English as their main foreign language [60]. The widespread use of English in these contexts can be attributed to its status as an international language and its ability to facilitate communication between people from different countries [61]. English has become integral to the world economy due to globalization and increased trade and commerce between countries. It is widely used as the common language in industries such as shipping, aviation, banking, and technology [30][59][61][62]. The use of English in these industries allows for effective communication and collaboration between individuals from different linguistic backgrounds, facilitating smooth business operations and transactions. English has emerged as a lingua franca in the global business world, enabling individuals to overcome language barriers and engage in international trade and negotiations [63]. Its widespread use has been driven by factors such as the internet, which has facilitated fast and boundary-less communication, and the colonial influence that has spread the English language to various regions. Overall, English

has become a dominant language in the world of trade and commerce, playing a crucial role in facilitating global business interactions. English proficiency is crucial for global companies as it is necessary for negotiations, contracts, marketing, and interacting with international clients and partners. Fluency in English offers significant career advantages in multinational corporations [64].

4. Results

The results of the analysis show that the use of English language in various contexts has had a significant impact on different aspects of society and culture:

In the field of research and academia, English language publishing has played a crucial role in the dissemination of scientific knowledge [1]. It has facilitated the exchange of ideas and collaboration among researchers from different countries [1]. Furthermore, the use of English in scientific research has been found to improve knowledge exchange between different domains [68]. In the realm of technology and the digital revolution, English has become the dominant language due to the influence of American culture and the widespread use of the internet [2]. The digital economy, which relies heavily on technology and information systems, has also contributed to the prominence of English [2]. The impact of English in this context is evident in the development of new media and the transformation of business practices [2] [55]. English has also played a significant role in shaping global power dynamics. The spread of American popular culture, facilitated by the English language, has influenced other cultures and societies [3] [48]. English has become a symbol of power and influence in the global system [3]. Additionally, the use of English by heads of state at international forums like the United Nations General Assembly reflects its importance in diplomatic communication [2] [58]. In the historical context, English has been associated with colonialism and the expansion of British influence [6]. The colonization efforts of England, France, and Spain in North America demonstrate the role of language in establishing dominance [33]. English has also left a lasting impact on the cultural and linguistic identity of colonized regions [4]. Furthermore, the study of English as a foreign language has been found to contribute to the reading development of non-native speakers [5].

Vocabulary acquisition in English as a foreign language has been identified as a unique factor in reading development [13]. Overall, the analysis highlights the multifaceted influence of the English language in various domains, including research, technology, power dynamics, colonialism, and education. The use of English has shaped cultural, social, and linguistic landscapes on a global scale.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

The analysis reveals that the use of the English language has had a profound impact on various aspects of society and culture. In the field of research and academia, English language publishing has played a crucial role in the dissemination of scientific knowledge, facilitating collaboration and knowledge exchange among researchers from different countries. The dominance of English in the digital revolution and the development of new media and business practices further highlights its significance in the realm of technology. English has also become a symbol of power and influence in global power dynamics, shaping cultural and linguistic landscapes. Additionally, the historical association of English with colonialism and its lasting impact on colonized regions underscores its role in shaping cultural and linguistic identities. Furthermore, the study of English as a foreign language has been found to contribute to the reading development of non-native speakers. In conclusion, the influence of the English language on society and culture is undeniable. Recognizing its impact and taking proactive measures to promote linguistic diversity, enhance language education, foster cross-cultural understanding, and support equitable.

Based on the findings, several recommendations can be made:

- 1) Promote multilingualism: While English has become a dominant language, it is important to recognize and value the diversity of languages. Efforts should be made to promote multilingualism and preserve indigenous languages, as they are integral to cultural identity and heritage.
- 2) Enhance language education: Given the global influence of English, it is crucial to provide quality language education to individuals who wish to learn English

as a foreign language. This will not only contribute to their personal development but also foster better communication and understanding among different cultures.

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