

The Enduring Influence of William Shakespeare on the English Language

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Abstract:

In addition to significantly affecting the English language, William Shakespeare, a creative genius, revolutionized English literature. Within the scope of this research paper, we investigate how Shakespeare contributed to the development of the English language by utilizing prose and poetry in novel ways. Shakespeare contributed importantly to expanding the English vocabulary by creating new words and improving grammatical norms. Not only did he give thorough descriptions through his mastery of language, similes, and vivid imagery, but he also influenced how English is spoken today. This study focuses on the significant contributions that Shakespeare made to the English language, which continue to have an impact in the 21st century.

Keywords: English, Influence, Language, Expand, Unique style.

Born in Stratford-upon-Avon on April 23, 1564, the creative genius William Shakespeare died on April 23, 1616. April 23 was the date of his birth. England made him a national poet, and he was considered one of the greatest playwrights of all time for his creative achievements. Despite his lack of formal education, Shakespeare left an indelible impression on the English literary scene. Since then, people all over the globe have tried to emulate him. Everyone agrees that he is the most read and referenced writer in the history of the English language. Thanks to his language, sonnets, and tragedies, Shakespeare became one of

England's most influential writers. His writings have had a significant impact on English literature.

Many of his works are regarded as literary masterpieces, such as King Lear, Macbeth, Twelfth Night, and Hamlet. His plays were staged more frequently than those of any other dramatist. Shakespeare also improved grammatical norms while constructing his poetry and prose by coining new phrases. Therefore, it's safe to say that his diction affected the English language. Shakespeare was a trailblazer who brought a fresh perspective regarding writing. He possesses a unique talent for writing poetry and plays. His distinctive literary legacy is a testament to his mastery of language. He had a natural talent for using metaphors in his work.

This excerpt from Act 3, Scene 4 of Romeo and Juliet exemplifies one of his writing styles:

“Look, love, what envious streaks
Do lace the severing clouds in yonder East:
Night's candles are burnt out, and jocund day
Stands tiptoe on the misty mountain tops.”

Shakespeare's contributions significantly aided the standardization of grammar. He brought back the usage of suffixes in English grammar, which had been largely underutilized throughout his period. In addition, the norms his poems represented were later followed in the canon of English literature. Many people have altered Shakespeare's spelling, yet his grammar has remained unchanged. A Shakespearean critic by the name of Dr. Jonathan Hope said:

“He wrote during a transitional period for English grammar when writers had various grammatical options. Much of the grammar he chose now seems old-fashioned. However, it lends poetry to commonplace words and, significantly, while his spelling is often updated, his grammar is not.”

Shakespeare broadened the English language's vocabulary. In addition, he created around 1700 new words by incorporating suffixes and prefixes that are still in use today, as well as by changing nouns into verbs and verbs into adjectives. Through his efforts, he reimagined and refashioned the English language into a new form. By introducing a new set of terms still used today, he significantly contributed to the modernization of the English language. He came up with 135 new terms in English that are still in use today. It is possible to identify one of them:

‘What’s in a name? What we call a rose by any other name would smell as sweet.’

As a result of these contributions, he became an extremely well-known and influential literary personality in the English language. As a result of Shakespeare's skillful use of iambic pentameters, rhymes, and similes, his sonnets have contributed far more to the literary canon than his dictions. He was one of the first English poets to employ the iambic pentameter method, resulting in his sonnets having a particularly fascinating quality. A single iambic pentameter is represented by:

“Shall I / com PARE/ the TO / a SUM/men’s DAY?

Thou ART / more LOVE/ly AND / more TEM / per ATE.”

Moreover, he had a significant effect on many poets, including John Keats, who was one of them. According to legend, Shakespeare's works are claimed to have been on Keats's side while he was writing. He stated that it assisted him in reinvigorating and enhancing his creative abilities, and he also incorporated his writing style into his own. He sculpted the sonnet masterfully using his rhyming. He composed ten-syllable lines in his sonnets, which made them more rhythmic. For example, these lines from Henry V vividly demonstrate the rhythmic nature of his sonnets. His sonnets were perfectly in tune with that beat:

“Rush on his host, as doth the melted snow

Upon the valleys, whose low vassal seat

The Alps doth spit and void his rheum upon.”

In addition to his vivid images and similes, Shakespeare is known for his poetry. To convey pictures, he employed rather forceful phrases. His similes described the scene as a whole, another impressive feature.

He significantly influenced the world of English writing through his plays, although many writers admired his sonnets. Because Shakespeare employed the blank verse method, his plays impacted the English literary canon. The blank verse approach was the most effective way that Shakespeare used it for his tragedies, and this style was utilized in many of his works. An example of blank verse derived from Hamlet is presented in the following:

“But woe is me, you are so sick of late,
So far, from cheer and your former state,
That I distrust you. Yet, though I distrust,
The discomfort you, my lord, it nothing must.”

In addition, his approach to writing in blank verse is extremely lyrical, significantly impacting many other contemporary writers, such as Christopher Marlow. He also used soliloquies in his tragedies that affected authors. The classic play Hamlet by Shakespeare comprises seven soliloquies, which contribute to the play’s distinctiveness in its way. One of the most well-known soliloquies in Hamlet is titled “To be or not be,” and it deals with the subject of what the purpose of existence is:

“To be, or not to be ...
...Be all my sins remembered.”

Many other authors utilized this method to generate an internal struggle inside their characters. Shakespeare’s tragedies, the first of their sort written by any English poet, inspired him to follow in the footsteps of the great ancient poets. Furthermore, he adhered to the old Greek style. In the following years, he encouraged many authors to follow in the footsteps of Aristotle and Homer. The tragic play Romeo and Juliet that he wrote had an impact not just on the English language but also on the entire world. He went on to become one of the most influential authors in the American English language.

“My bounty is as boundless as the sea,
My love as deep; the more I give to thee,
The more I have, for both are infinite.”

In addition to these literary characteristics, he developed a new vocabulary. The sources that are currently accessible indicate that he came up with around 1700 new terms that were used in a variety of contexts (please provide a reference). These are some of the terms that he came up with.

Buzzer

A buzzer is a unique term in the English language created by Shakespeare. It is a word that brings to mind obscene game shows, which is a particularly unpleasant image. In Hamlet, however, it was employed in a more informal discourse.

Unreal

In addition to the term that we now use to imply “cool” or, in certain instances, “unbelievable,” Shakespeare was also the one who came up with the phrase that may appear to be “unreal.” On the other hand, in his day, the term “unreal” solely meant “not real.” He had been a lover of a good un-prefix for a long time, and he came up with many terms that included it. He even added it (although it was not the first time) to one of the words we now connect most closely with the Zuck: “unfriend.”

Phrases Shakespeare Invented

Here are some phrases Shakespeare is said to have invented, many of which are commonly used today.

- “It’s Greek to me” (Julius Caesar). When you say, “It’s Greek to me,” you realize nothing is understood.
- “Fair play” (The Tempest) – Looking at the games fairly, i.e., showing an exact notice.

- “All that glitters isn’t gold” (Merchant of Venice) - We usually use this phrase after discovering that something that looks good is not that great.
- “Break the ice” (The Taming of the Shrew) – Asking polite questions when you meet someone.
- “Clothes make the man” (Hamlet) - Although not always true, this phrase implies that a person’s dress tells you something about who they are.
- “Too much of a good thing” (As You Like It) - It is said that “too much of a good thing” (i.e., money, love, food) is not necessarily good for you.
- “In a pickle” (The Tempest) - To be “in a pickle” is to be in trouble from which you can not come easily.

Shakespeare’s Contribution to English Vocabulary

Shakespeare’s influence on the English vocabulary is perhaps one of his most remarkable achievements. According to estimates, he is responsible for creating about 1,700 terms, many of which are still used today. Words like “bedazzled,” “lonely,” “majestic,” and “hurry” are examples of his ability to create new terminology that filled holes in the language that was prevalent during his period. These additions strengthened the language, providing subtle methods to communicate complicated thoughts and emotions. These additions were not only novelties.

Through his creative process, Bard’s inventiveness extended to creating new phrases and terms. Among the many examples of how Shakespeare’s ingenuity entered daily discourse, phrases such as “break the ice,” “heart of gold,” and “wild-geese chase” are just a few examples. It was clear that he had a profound knowledge of the adaptability and potential of the English language, as seen by his invention of new words and phrases, which enabled the language to develop and change throughout time.

Innovations in Grammar and Syntax

These works of Shakespeare contributed to the expansion of the vocabulary. They played a significant part in developing contemporary English grammar and syntax. Because of his adaptable use of language, he was able to engage in imaginative wordplay and syntactical experimentation, which in turn impacted the grammar and pronunciation of the English language.

Throughout his dialogue, Shakespeare frequently utilized unconventional word sequences and sentence patterns to generate rhythm and highlight specific speech features. His poetry, for instance, featured a significant amount of enjambment and inverted the subject-verb-object sequence (“Something wicked this way comes”), all of which contributed to developing a more dynamic and expressive form of the English language. These tactics not only fulfilled his creative aims but also proved the language’s adaptability, which inspired succeeding writers to investigate and stretch the limitations of English grammar.

Vivid Imagery and Similes

The use of similes and vivid imagery in Shakespeare’s writing is still universally regarded as one of the most acclaimed features of his work. Each play and poem he has written demonstrates his capacity to generate tremendous visual and emotional experiences using words. Through the use of powerful and evocative imagery, Shakespeare was able to enable his audience to imagine events and experience emotions with a substantial degree of intensity.

In the play “Macbeth,” for example, the metaphor of existence is described as “a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing,” encapsulates the character’s existential despair in a very clear way. Similarly, in the play “Romeo and Juliet,” the metaphor “It is the east, and Juliet is the sun” expresses Romeo’s adoration for Juliet and sheds light on the significance and brilliance that Juliet possesses in his life.

Not only did these vivid imagery and similes improve the emotional impact of his works, but they also contributed to the enrichment of the English language by giving new ways to express and comprehend the world. Shakespeare’s ability to draw from a wide variety of

sensory experiences and convey them via his characters continues to impact writers and speakers in the modern day.

The Legacy of Shakespeare in the 21st Century

It is impossible to overstate the magnitude and longevity of Shakespeare's impact on the English language. Over more than four centuries, his writings have been studied, performed, and praised. His influence on the language is still very much present. Many of the terms and phrases that Shakespeare developed are still in use today, which is evidence of the enduring significance of his contributions to the English language.

As an additional point of interest, Shakespeare's works have been translated into many languages and transformed into a wide variety of types of media, transcending linguistic barriers. The universality of his topics and the enduring quality of his language are further highlighted by his influence extending to a worldwide scale.

Shakespeare is a cornerstone of literary study included in educational curricula worldwide. This ensures his impact will mold new generations of readers, writers, and speakers. When students engage with the works of Shakespeare, they not only obtain an understanding of the historical evolution of the English language, but they also learn to appreciate the richness and flexibility of the language.

Conclusion

As a result of his dictions, sonnets, and tragedies, Shakespeare is considered one of the most influential authors in the history of the world. Without Shakespeare, our English would not have been updated. It would be a hole in our lives if we did not have words we use daily, such as "a sorry sight" or "as pure as the driven snow." The famous words "to thine own self be true" from Hamlet and "out damn spot" from Macbeth would not be available to us if we did not have them. Because of this, he is still known worldwide, even today.

It is impossible to overstate the significance of William Shakespeare's contributions to the English language. He was able to change English literature and expand the language's possibilities via his original vocabulary, unique grammatical structures, and vivid imagery. His writings continue to have an impact in the 21st century, impacting not only literary

traditions but also the expressions people use in everyday life. We acknowledge the ongoing legacy of Shakespeare's creativity and its great influence on the English language as we continue to devote ourselves to the study and celebration of Shakespeare.

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