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PRESENT DAY ENGLISH AND INFLECTIONS

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ABSTRACT

In this Article we will go through The paper 'Present Day English and Inflections' discusses the course of change of English from Synthetic to Analytic language. And it

it presents an educated attempt as to how the English Language may unfold itself in future.

KEYWORDS :English, Inflection, Synthetic language, Analytic language.

INTRODUCTION

When a language's grammatical and semantic systems are subject to the changes in the endings of the words, we have a situation where language is called 'synthetic'. And when a language's grammatical and semantic systems are subject to the order of the words, we have a situation where language is called 'analytic'.

For example, in Urdu the three sentences 1) Billi Parende per jhapti, 2) Jhapti Billi Parende per, 3) Parende per Billi Jhapti, all convey the same meaning: 'Cat pounced on the bird' or

'Cat attacked the bird'. The change in the word order did not bring any change in the meaning of the sentences. However, this cannot be said of English, which has become a language that depends now on word order. If we change the word order, the meaning of the sentence gets changed. For example, if we say, 'cat attacked the bird' it conveys one sense, if we change this order and frame the sentence using same words

'the bird attacked the cat' it conveys an exact opposite meaning of the first sentence. Thus, the difference lies in the fact that Urdu is still an inflectional language that is tied to word endings whereas Present-day English is analytic language, which is dependent on word order.

English, like other Indo-European languages, was historically synthetic. It did not have fixed word order, it relied more on inflections, and its morphology was similar to the morphological patterning of other Indo European languages like, Greek, Latin, German, Russian, and Polish. Most of the modern Indo European languages like Urdu and Hindi are still synthetic in character. These languages rely on morphological rules than the syntactic rules to convey meaning. However, English started drifting from being synthetic to analytic during Middle English period.

All said and done, we must always bear in mind there are innumerable discrepancies still exist in English which does not make it a perfect analytic language. There are still relics of inflection that we find in the form of verbs, possessives, and so on.

Let us see where English still required shedding its cloak of syntheticity.

Verb conjugates differently for past, present and future tenses. However, it changes according to the person it denotes, is a clear reminder of its inflectional antiquity. For example,

The following sentences present the inflectional nature in which the verb appears:

1. a) I love
2. b) You love
3. c) He/she/ it loves

Unless the 's' marker is removed from the verb, it cannot be fully said

to be free from inflection. This 's' added to the verb, goes with the third person singular noun/pronoun, as we all know.

Thus, if we wish to have a completely free language from inflection, than we are required to do away with the 's'. In that case we shall have the expression 'he love; she love; it love;' instead of he loves, she loves and it loves. This is not a new phenomenon, certain varieties of English certainly have such patterning, which make them pretty analytic. For example, Peter Trudgill in his work Dialects has enlisted some such varieties. He writes, 'It interests dialectologists, though, that lots of nonstandard dialects of English have grammatical structures which are not the same as Standard English at this point. If you look at the following passage, which is written in the dialect of Norwich, you will see that it has a different kind of grammatical pattern.

Every time they go round John's there's trouble. He like his peace and quiet, and I understand that, but they don't see it at all. They get cross with him, and he get cross with them- you know how that is- and everybody end up shouting. Whenever we say anything about it, though he don't like that neither.' (p.42)

In this example of Norwich dialect, we can clearly see that the agreement between the third person and the verb does not follow the standard form or acceptable form of 's' addition. There are three instances in this short text where 's' of third person verb marker is dropped: 1) He like, 2) he get, and 3) everybody end up.

The future of the language seems to be drifting in this direction; where every form which carries any kind of inflection may cease to exist or disappear. The reason can be attributed to very many things. The analytic nature of the language, the popularity of the English language all over the world, large number of non-native people's aspiration to speak English, or ease of articulation etc. If it were from the native people's side than it certainly can be attributed to the internal factor like ease of articulation etc. or the educational or political dominance of the people who use such dialect and forms.

Trudgill writes that East Anglian verb forms don't have a present-tense ending at all, in any person. Particularly the dialects of Norfolk and Suffolk dialects. And most of the Black American and Caribbean dialects also do not have such end ing. (p.42).

CONCLUSION

Another area which requires fixing is the use of Auxiliary verbs. The verb 'be' is a classical example of inflection that still admits of changes in respect of person, number and tense. For example, the different forms of be are; 'am' 'are' 'is' 'was' 'were' 'being' 'been'. This can be got rid of if we suggest 'be' of any of its form being used for all persons and numbers. I heard few years back an engineering lecturer complaining of another that he said 'I was tolding'. Undoubtedly, by any stretch of imagination such expression can't be expected to be

accepted. But what struck me was such ‘slips of the tongue or unacceptable usages’ may point towards the areas where language can be simplified. Why not for past continuous tense instead of using ‘be’ form of ‘was’ plus ‘ing’ form attached to the bare verb, we directly convert the past form of the verb itself into past continuous form? For example, ‘I was telling’ into ‘I telling.’ By this token all verbs that end in

‘ed’ and that are traditionally called weak or regular verbs, can be easily converted for past continuous tense. For example, said-saiding, played-playding, talked-talkding, smelled-smellding or smelt-smelting, watched-watchding, etc. This can be applied to strong or irregular verbs as well.

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