

(Late) Modern English (5): The age of the dictionary (The age of Johnson)

- 1604: *A Table Alphabeticall* (dictionary of difficult words)
- 1721: *The Universal Etymological English Dictionary* (N. Bailey)
- XVII-XVIII century: feeling of unease about the language (e.g. some added letters to words claiming that they were from Latin, but they weren't: **island** and **scissors**)
- Proposal for an English Academy (following the example of the Italian Accademia della Crusca in 1583 or the Académie française in 1622)



(Late) Modern English (5): Johnson's Dictionary

- 1755: Definition of over 40,000 words (it influenced Lowth's *Short Introduction to English Grammar* in 1762 or Murray's *English Grammar* in 1794)
- Origin of some current grammar controversies
- *Shall vs. will*
- A sentence can't finish with a preposition
- Two negatives make an affirmative



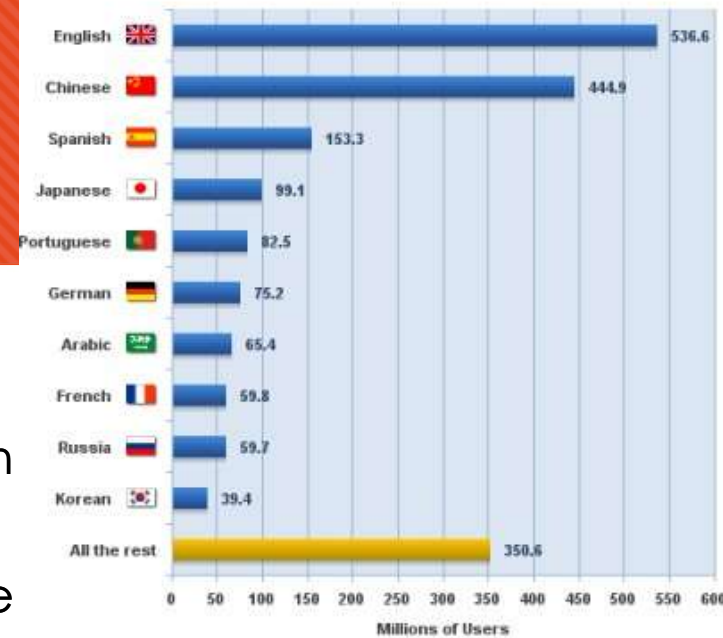
(Late) Modern English (6): From the Industrial Revolution to today

- Thousands of new words especially in Science and Technology
- Pronunciation and grammar have had little changes
- Three main events characterized the development/enrichment of (Late) Modern English vocabulary:
 1. Industrial Revolution (e.g. 'railway', 'train', 'engine', but also scientific words from Latin and Greek, like 'oxygen', 'caffeine', 'bacteria', 'biology', etc.)
 2. Rise of the British Empire and the successive development of the USA after 1776 (e.g. 'boomerang', 'kangaroo' from Australia, 'jungle', 'pyjamas', 'shampoo' from India, 'tomato', 'potato' from North America)
 3. New technologies and internet (e.g. 'to text', 'to google', etc.)

English today (1)

- Accents and dialects underline both regional and social diversification;
- 'Americanization' of world culture (above all thanks to pop, dance, rap music and TV series);
- Main influence of English → vocabulary (loans);
- Mixed languages → Franglais, Japlish, but above all Spanglish (Tex-Mex)

Top Ten Languages in the Internet
2010 - in millions of users



Source: Internet World Stats - www.internetworldstats.com/stats7.htm
Estimated Internet users are 1,966,514,816 on June 30, 2010
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<https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/americanization>

English today (2): Social identity



- Age, occupation and **gender**
- Vocabulary (1. what happened to words like 'postman'? → gender neutral language, 2. New words like 'transgender', 'bromance');
- Grammar/written language → *(s)he*, *s/he*, or *they* or change sentence

English today (3): Gender issues

- (1) a He is a **master** of the intricacies of academic politics.
b 😞 She is a **mistress** of the intricacies....

- (2) a He is a professional.
b She is a professional.

👉 Sexual connotations in both cases

- (3) a Mary hopes to meet an eligible **bachelor**.
b 😞 Bill hopes to meet an eligible **spinster**.

Vocabulary

- 500,000 – 2,000,000 words
- Counting from written English (→ standard forms which sound educated)
- Core vocabulary → half a mln words
- English has a wider core vocabulary than any other language in the world → foreign influences, flexibility
- Objections for words that are changing (e.g. gay, verbs in -ize)

Spelling (1): The origin of irregularities

Irregularities are due to:

- Roman missionaries who didn't understand some sounds of Old English (not enough Latin letters to reproduce Old English sounds → Runes; e.g. *th* → *ð*). Some graphemes could reproduce different sounds (e.g. the grapheme 'g' for /dʒ/ and /g/);
- French scribes (after 1066) replaced some Old English spelling because they didn't understand it (1. 'cw' became 'qu'; 2. 'gh' instead of 'h' as in 'night'; 3. 'ch' instead of 'c' as in 'chair'; 4. 'ou' instead of 'u' as in 'neighbour'; 5. when 'u' was next to 'v', 'n' or 'm' it was replaced by 'o' because they were written similarly as in 'one');
- 1476 William Caxton introduced the printing in England. Necessity to adopt a 'standardized' spelling and made it stable. Unfortunately, in those centuries, while spelling was becoming stable, pronunciation began to change (see 'Great vowel shift'). So, our spelling is the same of Chaucer's time, but pronunciation keep changing.
- XVI century: showing etymology in spelling (e.g. they added a 'b' in 'debt' to underline its Latin origin from 'deBitum') and attempts to amalgamate some spelling forms (e.g. 'gh' was added in 'delight' because 'light' was spelled with 'gh');
- XVII century: loans (French, Latin, Greek, Spanish, Italian, Portuguese, etc.)

Spelling (2): Reform attempts

- 1876: Spelling Reform Association (USA)
- 1908: British Simplified Spelling Society (UK)

1949: *Nue Spelling (NS)*
presented to Parliament

1980s: International English
Spelling (*Interspel*)
By V. Hule at Harvard

Pros	Cons
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Language would be easier to learn (for children and foreigners);• Writing would become quicker;	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Practical introduction;• Acceptance by everyone;• Gradual or neat change

Uses of English: Language variety

- Tendency to refer to 'English languages' or new 'Englishes'
- **Accent** (way of pronouncing which identifies the speaker's place of origin; except RP speakers who are simply identified as British. Mixed accents are fashionable today) vs. **dialect** (includes not only pronunciation, but also variations in grammar, vocabulary and spelling). Dialects is mostly used in informal context (colloquial speech or vernacular literature)
- Speech (inexplicit, spontaneous, informal and domestic vocabulary, manoeuvring strategies, tone of voice) vs writing (explicit, structurally intricate, precise vocabulary, organization, graphic features);
- Social groups' slang (especially religious and legal English)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oD0XUcJ9stM>

"I, ___, take thee, ___, to be my wedded husband/wife, to have and to hold, from this day forward, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish, till death do us part, according to God's holy ordinance; and thereto I pledge thee my faith [or] pledge myself to you."

Technology (1)

- Netspeak (Internet as a medium of linguistic communication)
 1. E-mails
 2. WWW
 3. Synchronous and asynchronous chatgroups (MSN)
 4. Virtual worlds (Second Life)
 5. Social media
- No traditional speaking or writing;
- 'Written speech':
- Writing → typing
- Speech → quickness, segmental properties, but no intonation, stress, rhythm (emoticons)

