

An Analysis of the Development of Grammar in English Language

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Abstract: For any nation's culture, language is the most basic carrier and form of communication. While grammar is the most basic performance rule for language, which is an important part for both language learners and researchers. It is beneficial to have a more holistic grasp and deep understanding of the development of language. Therefore, a more comprehensive account of the branch of English language is made, that is, the grammar part, from the perspective of the development of English grammar, the characterization of English grammar to the elaboration of the relationship between grammar and its usage.

1. Introduction

As English learners, we should know that English grammar is not a form, but several forms of expression, they “do their own thing” and people “take their own needs”. As we who regard English as a foreign language, we mainly learn formal standard forms and informal standard forms that do not include non-normative forms in the basic stage, because they have the characteristics of “unity” and “authority”, and we can understand some non-normative informal standard forms. On a more advanced stage, more information can be learned about non-normative informal standard forms and the process of the development of English grammar.

2. The Development of English Grammar

2.1 The Birth of English Grammar

English language began in the 5th century AD. English “grammar” came later and was born in the mid-to-late 16th century: The English-based William Bullokar's Brief Grammar, based on Latin grammar, came out in 1586 and is known as the first English grammar book.

The first written in English is Latin grammar, the title of the book is A Short Introduction of Grammar, written by William Lily with the assistance of Colet and Erasmus, published in the first half of the 16th century. It was revised and published several times. In 1542 Henry VI made it a standard textbook for schools, which it was called the most influential English textbook. Lily's grammar book played an important role in the birth of English grammar. Over the next hundred years, a series of English grammar books appeared, most of them modelled after Lily's grammar book, one of which was Bullokar's Pappa For Grammar. The most important English grammar work of this period was the English Grammaro, written by Ben Johnson in 1640, which was entirely influenced by Latin grammar, and the author followed the terms and characteristics of Latin grammar: the use of Latin lexicality, the inclusion of adjectives in nouns, to treat the title as pronouns, to determine that the form of nouns has multiple grid and sexual changes, and to conclude that verbs have multiple variations, etc. By the 16th century, even with the so-called English Grammar, they were not real English ones, but a replica of Latin grammar. This is mainly for the following reasons:

2.1.1 Low Social Status of English in the Early and Middle Hours

Early English was used for spoken English, leaving little written record. The earliest ancient English texts found were translated into Latin around 700 AD. There are many Latin language

manuscripts, especially those about the Bible and other religious aspects. Most of the surviving ancient English texts were left during king Alfred's reign (849-899). When he ruled England, he arranged for people to translate many Latin works into English. "From these texts, English at the time had different pronunciations, different spellings, different syntax structures, and was extremely inconsistent"^[1]

By 1066, the Normans had invaded Britain, bringing about a change in the English language, and they had brought French. Since then, the upper classes of society have spoken French, as do the middle classes of society, and it is spoken by government agencies, the executive, the judiciary and religious organizations. Whereas Latin is still spoken by schools and churches, and English is continued to be used by the majority of the lower classes.

After the European Reformation in the 16th century, English became more and more widely used in the limited field of human knowledge. In the latter decades of the 18th century, English authors sometimes quoted or written in Latin throughout the paragraph; even in the 19th century, some university lectures were still using Latin, and doctoral thesis was occasionally written in Latin.

2.1.2 Cultural People's Prejudices

At that time, the cultural people only know the Indo-European languages in continental Europe, such as Latin, Greek, French and so on, and there were almost no other languages of mankind. And all of these languages are subservient. Civilized people at that time believed that the less a language changes, the farther away from the purity of its origin. Since English has no twists and turns compared to those languages (such as the sex of Latin nouns with many twists and turns, English does not), it is considered to be a completely lost language, with little or no grammar.

2.1.3 Complicated and Inconsistent English Words

Early English words were spelled by scribes based on their pronunciation, and words of the same meaning were pronounced differently everywhere, so the spelling was different. People who focus on English must first pay attention to spelling, which is the most intuitive part of the language. So, when people began to realize the importance of the English language, the first thing to start with the word is the positive word, which is an important thing. Until the 17th century, before the real English grammar, people have been mindless, less energetic to take other such as structure of "grammar" into account, even the beginning of the English "grammar" also focused on the positive characters.

2.2 Several Factors in the Formation of English Grammar

The above-mentioned English was only to come out in the 16th century. But since then English "grammar" has emerged, and many English "grammars" have emerged in the late 16th century (although there are few broad influences, one of the reasons is that they are not intended for the general public or schools, but generally by the author's own imagination). English grammar has largely taken shape in the 17th and 18th centuries. From its emergence to its formation there are the reasons of the society and the times.

2.2.1 Social Reasons

In the 16th century, English was released from the transition period of the Mid-Century. In 1534, the British Parliament passed an important decision: King Henry VIII and his successors were the sole supreme head and protector of the Church of England and its clergy. Since then, the Church of England has changed from the Pope to the King. This makes people pay more attention to English and how the language works, from first spelling, pronunciation to the syntactic structure. This is one of the social reasons why English grammar is produced. In 1660, the Stuart Dynasty was restored, which had a great impact on education and language teaching in England. The school began to pay attention to mathematics, accounting, measurement, navigation and other natural science teaching, which require a better English reading and writing ability, so the grasp of English grammar is a must. The 16th and 17th centuries were the era of confusion and expansion of English vocabulary, Shakespeare and his contemporaries added thousands of new English words and usages to the

English language, and dictionary writers and grammarians felt that they had a responsibility to make rules for these new words and usages ^[2], which also requires grammar.

2.2.2 Reasons for the Times

First of all, the formation of English grammar is related to natural science and the advent of the scientific era: the scientific revolution that began in the middle of the 16th century marked the birth of modern science, and its formation made people gradually get rid of the theological shackles and the shackles of philosophy of the Academy. In particular, Newtonian mechanics in the 17th century is the first theory of the law of nature in the history of human cognition, and it is the mark of the formation of modern science. Therefore, the 17th century was called the cradle of modern science, resulting in many new ideas, new methods, new discoveries, new achievements and new things. Thus, “grammarians make language rules to conform to the spirit of the times”.^[3] The scientific achievements of the 17th and 18th centuries were mainly formed in England, so it was natural that English grammar took shape. Secondly, the use of printing has also contributed to the formation of English grammar: the use of printing has led to a surge in publications, while the English appears in publications is a various thing, so that readers were “difficult to understand”, and therefore the call to regulate the English language continues. This is also one of the reasons for the birth of various English grammars.

2.3 The Stage of Development of English Grammar

2.3.1 Self-Sex Phase

As mentioned above, the earliest English “grammar” appeared in the late 16th century, and the first English grammar book was of William Blount's in 1586. The English language of the 16th century faced three major problems: (1) how to make English recognized in the most important Latin language used for centuries; (2) how to build a more uniform phonetic method; and (3) how to enrich vocabulary to meet a growing need. To solve the first problem, a large number of Latin terms were used in grammar books at this stage, emulating the grammar rules of Latin, where grammar writers modeled English grammar based on Latin grammar (1957:3), some of which were written in Latin themselves. In order to solve the latter two problems, grammar books are of the author's own design to suggest English word spelling. John Cheke suggested double-writing long vowels. In Coosnage (1591), coney is spelled as cony, conny, conye, conie, connie, coni, cuny, cunny, cunnie. Such grammars are not used by the public and do not work in teaching. From the late 16th to the 17th century, various English “grammars” emerged, and the grammar in the book was the author's subjective assumption that “the rules of grammar are often based on individual prejudices and arbitrary”^[4], completely blind to Latin. In fact, in this stage grammar book with “grammar” is involved in very few syntactic structures, even if there are, but also copies the rules of Latin. The main content of the “grammar” book of this period is about English vocabulary, involving the pronunciation of English words and the spelling system, because many grammarians or text reformers at that time realized that the pronunciation and spelling of English words is the main obstacle to English reading and writing.

In the earliest English grammar, according to Latin grammar, lexical sex is divided into nouns, pronouns, verbs, parting words, adverbs, connecting words and exclamations. They are also divided into words that can vary at the end of a word and words that cannot change at the end (e.g. in W. Bullokar's grammar), or words with a number of variations and no number changes (as in Ben Johnson's syntax), or words with numbers and end changes and words without number and end changes (e.g. in C. Butler's syntax). These changeable words are nouns, pronouns, verbs and adverbs, and the unchangeable words are adverbs and exclamations. At the beginning of the 18th century, some grammarians divided lexicality into four categories: nouns, adjectives, verbs, and skits, which included pronouns and so-called immutable words. At this time, the adjectives are separated from the nouns and into a single category. This “separation” was continued, but the word “four-point method” was not recognized and continued.

2.3.2 Prescriptive Phase

In the 18th century, English grammar was in the prescribed stage until the 19th century. “This stage of English grammar is completely different from the grammar of the 16th and 17th centuries, and its purpose is to teach English natives the correct English”^[5]. The purpose of prescriptive grammar is to summarize a series of rules and make the correct use of standards for “a lot of clutters” in English. In addition to prescribing the correct usage, it also indicates what is wrong. Therefore, the authors of prescriptive grammar not only take in the book to specify those correct usage, but also to point out those wrong usage, and to prohibit those. These provisions are based on Latin grammar, that is, reference to the rules of Latin grammar rules of English grammar rules, it disregards the fact of English language, according to the Latin grammar, people think that this is a “standardized” English, is an “elegant” English. Moreover, it is thought that if it is relied on spoken language, it is too much to give the writers the freedom to choose authoritative language. Such reliance on the uniqueness of the written language dictates that Latin grammar must be followed, since written English at the time was the language of Latin. Guy Mieg's English Grammar is a rich 270-page book that combines grammar, concise dictionaries and conversational manuals. Mieg has benefited greatly from the study of English grammar and speech since the 16th century, and his grammar section includes English positive character and pronunciation, as well as detailed study of the basic changes and forms of vocabulary. He points out that there are three difficulties in English learning: first, some troublesome consonants, such as the “/θ/” in “think”, the “/ð/” in “church”, and the “/ʒ/” in “ginger”, “jest”, and “judge”.

Because of Mieg's emphasis on spelling, he summed up a series of interesting lists that were valuable for the 17th-century positive word method. The following examples from English Grammar in 1688 show that the “modern” spelling of his time returned to its earlier form, but most of the spelling remained:

Table 1 “Modern Spelling” of Some Words

Instead of	Now we write	Instead of	Now we write
chaunce	chance	fourty	forty
summe	sum	choose	chuse
money	mony	Move	move

The deeper, more permeable and destructive effect of the “correct” idioms is that they elevate the “correct” idiom into a moral code, not just a practical skill. To be respected and envied, you must follow the language habits of the people you intend to enter. The use of non-prescribed uses such as “ain't” is not a crime, it is only detrimental to people's own interests. But a blurring of the distinction between guilt and innocence leads to a general perception that their peculiar use of non-prescribed usage is a sin. This is a direct consequence of prescriptivism; The provisions should not be over-criticized. We should not over-criticize the grammarians of the time, who did not deliberately act as dictators of language, nor did they encourage class conflict, but merely to meet the real needs of the people. Today's grammarians realize that grammar has its own ordered rules, and their task is to find them and describe them. Grammarians in the 18th century believed that language sits without rules, and their task was to make rules for it.

3. Conclusion

This article describes and analyzes English grammar from its creation, development and various forms of English grammar, and puts forward some suggestions on how we should learn English at the end of the article. Language and culture are esoteric, even if it is only grammar, this article can only be described briefly.

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