
Origin of Words in English Literature: A Brief Study of Some Words

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Abstract

The discussion of creativity is very large as its credibility in various fields of works – may be literary or non-literary is endless or limitless. There is no sphere of activity in the universe without having creativity. The word ‘creativity’ can be defined in innumerable ways and methods. It is generally said that ‘creativity’ is the characteristic of a person to generate new ideas, thoughts, different alternatives, solutions and possibilities in a unique and multiple ways. It is also opined that it is the ability of conceiving something unpredictable events and it must be expressive. It is the mirror like thing of how beautifully a person can reflect his mind power in any given circumstances. It cannot be concluded that it is a genetic, but can be developed if someone keeps on learning and a comprehending things with a rare and exclusive perception. Creativity is a brain storming and mind blogging activity in which the writers or poets or speakers have to contemplate beyond their imagination for stimulating something worthwhile and it should be useful to the relatively connected events. Some authors opine that creativity leads to innovation. The application of fresh theory or a conceptual work is to create additional values for the organization whether it is business, government, society or anything. What does not exist hitherto whether it is technology, product, kaizen on the basis of a research or search is considered as innovation. Creativity hides lot of absurdity which can be observed in poetry/lyrics, but it is a beautiful and wonderful caricature resulting in utmost enjoyment of the viewers/readers. Fecundity is the soul of literary development. This article is an attempt to focus on the creativity in English language.

Keywords: Bible Language, Origin of words, Shakespeare's Creativity, Words created by Error

Introduction

Change is the law of life. Life lives in creating so many things seeking a very happy living. Creativity sans life is not at all worth living. It becomes dull, dark, obscure, and irrelevant. A

zeal is to be generated that governs the entire nature. Technology is changing very rapidly outdating the existing one. Therefore, nobody can guarantee that the world is going to be the same after a few years as everything changes with the blink of an eye. If we want to travel along with the world, then the only alternative is to be creative and innovative. Creativity refers to conceive a fresh or new idea or plan while innovation signifies initiating something new to the new system which is not introduced or existing hitherto. Therefore, creativity can be asserted in many ways – a few are here:

- Creativity is an art
- Creativity is a skill
- Creativity is a necessity
- Creativity is an imagination
- Creativity is a thrill
- Creativity is an idea
- Creativity is a hyperbole
- Creativity is an absurd

Creativity in English Poetry

The following lines are drawn from “Primer of English Literature from 670 to 1832 AD. English had been invaded by French words and though it had become in Edward-III’s reign, the national tongue; it had been transferred as a language. Between prose and poetry, it is viewed that poetry is an art and the artist in poetry is one who writes for pure and noble pleasure – the thing he writes and who desires to give to others the same or a similar pleasure by his poems which he had in writing them. The things he most cares about are that the form in which he puts his thoughts or feelings may be perfectly fitting to the subjects and that subject matter and form should be as beautiful as possible but for these he cares very greatly and in this Chaucer stands apart from the other poets of his time. Chaucer wrote because he was full of emotion and joy in his own thoughts and thought that others would weep and be glad with him and the only time he ever moralizes is in the tales of the Canon’s Yeoman and the Manciple, written in his decay. He has, then, the best right to the poet’s name. He is, within his own range, the clearest of English artists.

William Wordsworth, in his preface to *The Lyrical Ballads*, says that there is no essential difference between the language of prose and the language of poetry. But he maintained this essential difference between the two. The language of poetry is different from that of science. Poetry begins where matter of fact, but science ceases to be merely such and to exhibit a further truth; the connection it has with the world of emotion and its power to produce imaginative pleasure. A *lily* flower described by a poet is named as *Hexandria Monogynia* by a botanist. At times, the creative imagination on a particular event, situation, differs from one to another. *Lily* flower is beautified as a *lady of the garden* by Edmond Spencer. Another poet sees *lily* as a full moon. Yet another one claims it as the face of his lady love. The imagination goes on unending. Hence the language of science is denotative and the language of poetry is connotative, figurative and emotive.

In the times of Renaissance Poetry, the Elizabethan age, the music of poetry was very sweetly and soulfully carried forward very profoundly by the authors in different metres. Some poets opined that poetry always dominated the prose irrespective of its excellence. Some critics said that Thomas Hardy's poetry on his terrain, perhaps in 'Hardy' font, affords an understanding of why Hardy thought prose was an inferior form. Hardy wrote some exceptionally moving love poetry. He was also credited with coining the term *cliffhanger*. So to say that creativity is valued as a hall mark in all the genres for its glory in poetry, prose, drama, essays – comedy or tragedy in the sense.

Creativity in Indian literature is as old as oceans and mountains. It looks exaggerated, but it is not far from truth as we had Vedas and Upanishads in Sanskrit language since immemorial time. *Hanuman*, the staunch disciple of *Lord Rama* in *Tretayuga* had sculpted *Ramayan* on monolithic rock plates as there was no other instrument to write on. Similarly, sage *Valmiki* scrupulously scripted *Ramayan Epic* in the Vedic period itself. Veteran Sanskrit poets like *Kalidas*, *Bhavabhuti* had used palm leaves for composing their verses (*kavyas*). Though the contents of their poetic verses are true, there is a lot of imaginative creativity using their thoughtful intellect. Can this voyage be possible with any advanced technology popularly known as "Artificial Intelligence" which is heartless and headless? It is the human brain that has abundant and immeasurable power of creativity.

To say about a brief note of creativity – A speculation is made on the origin of words. Each word in any language must have been uttered first by a human being. And others must have used it and given its currency. However, it is difficult to say who used this or that word first especially in the absence of records. But there are some well known users of a specific language whose written works are available to the world over after their death. There are many creative writers and all of them use the resources of the language – sounds, words, sentences in fresh and original ways in order to communicate their complex ideas and emotions. Many of these writers coin new words and phrases for their artistic purposes and some of these expressions pass into general usage.

Shakespeare's Creativity of Words

William Shakespeare is considered as the greatest and best novelist and dramatist among all the writers of English prose and poetry. Surprisingly he used only 25,000 (twenty five thousand) words in all his works. What is further astonishing is that over two thousand words in his plays were either the words he coined or put into print for the first time. Many of these are now so common as to be called household words. In fact the word, *household* was coined by Shakespeare. He could not find suitable words in the English language prevalent at his times. He seems to have not satisfied to use the word 'kill' or 'murder' in his tragic treatise, *Hamlet*. He, therefore, coined a new word, *assassination* as a replacement for *murder*. To cite some more examples, his coined words are *auspicious, barefaced, birthplace, countless, dauntless, eyeball, farmhouse, fashionable, hostile, ill-tempered, incarnadine, laughable, multitudinous, priceless, schoolboy, stillborn, tranquil, unreal, upstairs, vulnerable, well behaved*. Shakespeare, further, converted many verbs into noun forms. I have no *say* in this matter. *Say* is a noun; *lip* and *beggar* are also used as verbs. He used many verbs as nouns, such as *control, dawn, dress, hatch, import, indent*, etc. He had made many such conversions, phrases, adjectives, adverbs, etc. Though such conversions are quite familiar phenomenon today, it would be remembered that it was Shakespeare who improvised these in a prolific and productive manner. There is an intellectual bricolage of Shakespeare whose esoteric zeal had always crossed his inner zone.

Coming to another giant figure John Milton (17th century), he was the first to use the words *irresponsible* and *pandemonium*. The latter word which was the name Milton gave to the abode

of the devils has now come to mean any situation in which there is a lot of noise, activity and confusion. Jonathan Swift (18th century) contributed the noun-adjective, *Lilliputian* as well *Yahoo*. We got the word, *utopia* which is book-title of Sir Thomas More (16th century). The word, *pessimism* was first used by S.T. Coleridge (early 19th century) and Bernard Shaw (20th century) gave us the phrase *life force*.

There are many poets, writers and literary scholars of English coined several words, phrases and thereby the language is dynamically developing to dizzy heights. Every year, new words are decorating the dictionaries. It is stated that there are 1, 71,476 English words in the latest Oxford Dictionary. Syntagmatic system of approach to literature is always relevant to coin new words. A few Sanskrit words were considered recently and admitted in the English dictionaries – such as *guru*, *gadde* ([high seat](#)), *mantra*, etc. After the surgical strike conducted by the Indian Government in the month of February 2019, Wing Commander Abhinandan's name was recommended by Prime Minister Narendra Modi to add in the English dictionary with a meaning- *congratulations*. Thus there is no limit in diaspora of knowledge, but should have a rational ratiocination.

Creation of OK

The use of O.K. to express agreement was perhaps reinforced in American English by the fact that it was used by Martin Van Buren, one of the American Presidents, during his presidential campaign. The letters O.K. were the initials of his nickname (eke name strictly speaking) which was Old Kinderhook (perhaps one of the slogans was OK OK). Interestingly this abbreviated form is now treated as an acronym and has given rise to full forms like *Okay*, *Okey* and *Okeh*. And now there are also reduplicated forms like *Okey-doke* and *Okey-dokey* which serve as interjections. Euphemism sometimes travels in forming literary work.

Creation of ZERO

What figure will come after 9, 19, 29, 39, 49, etc? The world mathematicians could not create anything. Our Indian Vedic Scholar, Brahma Gupta created *ZERO*, who is the contributor and creator of *Zero*. Thereby the value had been identified in the form of 10, 20, 30, 40, 50, etc. The figure or number, *ZERO* is the Indian contribution to mathematics.

No developed country in the field of Science and Technology can reach to the high intellectual Vedic Scholars of India even after one lakh years. To cite an example, Indian mathematicians have calculated the time factor to the 1/1000 fraction of a second. This minutest of the minutest fraction is named as *truti*.

Bible Language

The amazing fact was that the holy Bible was originally not written in English. The Old Testament of the Bible was written in Hebrew language and the New Testament was in Greek. And both of these have been translated into all major languages of the world. Though the first English version of the Bible was that of John Wyclif (around 1382 AD), the most influential translation of the Bible is the Authorized Version (also known as the King James Version). It was published in 1611. This was the collective work of a committee of forty seven church scholars appointed by King James-I. Seven years were spent for the work of scripture which has also been considered a literary classic since it has exercised a tremendous influence of the English language and literature.

There is a lot of creativity in the Bible. Though many of the words used here had been coined by earlier translators, it is the Authorized Version which gave them widest currency. Examples of such words, *Peacemaker* (blessed are the peacemakers), *long suffering*, *loving*, *kindness* apart from metaphorical phrases like *to kill the fatted calf* and *to cast pearls before swine*. What is remarkable is that even by that time a lot of foreign words had entered the English language. But the vocabulary that these Bible translators employed was predominantly native in character. Using only about six thousand different words the Authorized Version achieved a simple yet powerful and poetic prose style.

Words Created By Error

The nice little fruit which we all love to eat, *Orange* was originally named as *Norange* or *Narangi* (the name in Hindi). But, when it was used with the indefinite article (a) before it, as '*a norange*', it was misheard, misrepresented and then misspelt as *an orange*. Similarly, *helpmeet* is mistakenly understood and its usage as *helpmate* means a partner (wife). There are many such errors ratified in regular usage.

Conclusion

There was no English in the world almost up to 5th century A.D. Britishers spoke only in a language known as *Celtic*. After 5th century only Latin was the communicative language. From 7th century onwards English literature was coming into existence. English was the hybrid language from the mixture of Latin, Greek and French. Even today, most of the English words have the strong basis of these three languages. As Sanskrit is the root cause of all Indian languages, every language has its etymological history behind formation and English is no exception. Every now and then, new words from other languages are taking admission in English dictionaries. Since Britishers ruled America, Australia, Africa, India etc., this language has become world official language. Many poets and writers since medieval period have been coining new words as they are not finding suitable ones to their taste. It is true. Unless somebody creates, how languages improve under linguistic flavour? Therefore, creativity is the combination of diachronic and synchronic study of any literature. All creations on the moon light enhanced the beauty of romantic poetry.

*Puzzled over a damozel
As she left a smile with me
And left me with a smile
Stunned at her spontaneity*

*My life is in bloom in your presence and
My life is in gloom in your absence*

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