The American-English Spelling Reform

The Effects of Leaving the Nest and Breaking Away from the British

B.A. Essay

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Abstract:
This essay mainly focuses on American English and its development during the spelling reformation of the American English, and its historical context for a better understanding of the reasons brought forth by Webster to end all ties with the British Empire after the Declaration of Independence. As America was the desirable new land, the British had taken, and migration from different parts of the United Kingdom began in search of more gold. This migration created what America is known for, a melting pot, as settlers settled in different parts of America. As the new land developed and grew, Americans declared their independence from the British Empire. They wanted the power to govern their own nation and break away from anything that had connections to the Empire. That also meant that they wanted a new language, and Noah Webster became an essential role in this new language development. There were many scholars and politicians involved in the spelling reform, but Noah Webster’s ideas stood out. This essay does not only research the past of American English but the future too. Using the past as an example of what might come.
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1. **Introduction to American English**

It has been said that no English or American person can spell with certainty an English word they have not seen written or feel particular about the pronunciation of an English word they have only seen written and never heart spoken because of that. It makes the English language a part of a hard and challenging language to grasp. It probably has the most copious vocabulary of any European language (Zachrisson, 1931). The development from over one thousand years of major linguistics and social events that took place during that period (Crystal, 1998). It has an orthography, which is a disguise rather than a guide to the pronunciation as the English spelling is a spelling for the eye, not the ear (Zachrisson, 1931). R. E Zachrisson questions the objective of spelling, the purpose does it serve, and how it gives an idea of the pronunciation of words. Zachrisson writes that the concept of spelling should be simple, easy, and phonetic. More phonetical spelling, the better it serves the purpose.

In the times of Henry VIII, people were not afraid to write some words phonetically. Henry VIII tended to write *won* instead of *one*, and his daughter Queen Elizabeth wrote *clark, hart*, for *clerk* and *heart*. William Shakespeare’s work was known for its orthography. An example of Shakespeare’s are words such as *tuch* for *touch*, *vane* for *vain*, *sale* for *sail* (Zachrisson, 1931). With the present English spelling, putting American English and British English aside, the pronunciation is a sealed book to the working class. Sir George Hunter worries that with bad spelling comes bad pronunciation, which will encourage provincialism and discourage a diffusion among the working-class people. But with simple phonetic spelling, the men and women would learn to speak as good English as those who have been educated (Zachrisson, 1931). Looking at other Germanic languages, they go for phonetic spelling of loan words. In Swedish, you would find the terms *rut* for *route*, *byffè* for *buffet* and *byrà* for *bureau*. In German you would see *Scharm* for *charm*, *Maschine* for *machine*, and *Zirkus* for *circus* (Zachrisson, 1931).

The early pioneers of the field were thought to have a clear and correct idea regarding whether the English orthography needed to reformation. However, their proposals were not met with enthusiasm. Richard E. Hodges writes in his article “A Short History of Spelling Reform” in the United States of America that the objectives in spelling reform were to reconstruct the alphabet as Benjamin Franklin suggested. A problem that was not considered to be new, as it had been concerned since the 13th century, by a monk named Orm (Hodges, 1964).
Orm’s manuscript had a unique orthography, which scholars would say it were phonetic and gave a sample of how people spoke back then. While the *Ormulum* is a bible exegesis, it presented an essential role in orthography. For example; but not entirely written in the same manner as the manuscript:

Þiss boc is namnnedd Ormulum.
All mannkinn fra þatt Adam wass.
To þarrkenn Cristess we33ess.

(White, 1878)

Orm’s ʒ resembled the Anglo-Saxon’s ʒ, which conjures a soft g sound, and þ, ð, were used by Orm to express the *th* sound. Orm is considered not to have employed ð on no definitive principle but managed to avoid vagueness with his handwriting (White, 1878). During the studies of the Ormulum, scholars discovered a missing quire. This might be the result of its fair share of ownership. However, it is speculated that the missing quire might have been due to damage that needed repair by a bookbinder. Scholars say that the missing quire was still there as it can be found in the first transcript made by Jan van Vliet, who bought the manuscript from the heirs and one of the first to study the Ormulum (Dekker, 2018). Orm had the desire to simplify the Middle English spelling of his time but lacked the skill and sources to distinguish between the spelling of long and short vowel sound. His work was met with little to no enthusiasm and fell into the void, only to be brought back centuries later (Hodges, 1964).

There were many advocates during the Late Modern period of the English language that insinuated the spelling reform. President Theodore Roosevelt was the one who suggested the idea in an official letter, encouraging American Spelling reformers to take action. They started multiple movements, boards, societies, and publications. They were the Spelling Reform Association, Simplified Spelling Board, Simplified Spelling Society, and Spelling Reform Association later joined together in 1877 and formed the Committee of the American Philological Association (Zachrisson, 1931).

As the colonisation of North America started, the British brought with them their social traits, among that their spoken and written language. The advocates of spelling reform claimed that improvement and standardisation of American-English, AmE, pronunciation would be an advantage in introducing immigrants to America. Some had argued that those changes would lead to the loss of etymology of words, as they would be indistinguishable (Hodges, 1964).
2. The beginning of a spelling reform

2.1. A whole new world

Since the time of colonisation of America, the English language has been slowly changing from British English to what it is today; American English. Some say it froze while language evolved in Britain due to the English writer, William Shakespeare. The English language was introduced to Native Americans through the settlement of America. The Englishmen were not the only ones to settle in America, but eventually, Germans, Scandinavians, Spaniards, French, to name a few, were all part of the immigration. They all played a role in the development of the English language, not just pronunciation but spelling as well, questioning the origin of spelling (Lerer, 2007).

As the new world develops and new dialects evolve in the United States of America. There were two settlements, one in the south of Virginia, the other to the north in what is now called New England, both influencing the English language with their accents and slangs, creating a dialect. Many other languages influenced the American English, such as Spanish, French, and German (Crystal, 1998). These languages help separate the United States of America, or as it was back then, known as America, become a separate nation from the United Kingdom. John Adams may have issued a proposal in the Royal American Magazine for a national academy. However, it was published anonymously, though people suspect it to be John Adams due to his public and political status (Crystal, 1998). The reasons this “anonymous” writer gives were to perfect the English language in America. The writer mentions that the English language had improved in Britain, yet the English language can reach its highest perfection in America, which was known as the land of light and freedom. This “anonymous” writer proposes to leave a plan to be formed in each university and seminary, which will be known as Fellows of the American Society of Language, a society to annually publish an observation of the language (Sanyal, 2013).

2.2. Benjamin Franklin’s proposal to a new alphabet

Around the year 1768, Benjamin Franklin proposed a reform of the English orthography. Franklin’s reason was that the alphabet needed to be more phonetic. His goal was to designate all sounds to a letter, even a combination of letters that would represent that sound solemnly. He proposed to remove six letters from the alphabet; those letters were: c, j, q, w, and y
Franklin’s alphabet resulted in twenty-six letters as he replaced six for his letters for a more phonetic alphabet:

- sh in shell,
- ng in hanging,
- th as in that which was nonaspirated and
- th in thin which was the aspirated version of th,
- uh in must, and
- ah in not

Franklin wrote this scheme back while he was still living in London, and his intentions for his alphabet was to be for both Great Britain and America. People were not convinced of his method as he was the only one who had a good grasp of his alphabet. It was not until his letters to Miss Polly Stevenson came to light in his collected work called *Political, Miscellaneous, and Philosophical Piece*. Where they corresponded in a flirtatious manner written in Franklin’s alphabet shown in Figure 4, that once a person had mastered Franklin’s alphabet, it was easy to understand and use (Franklin, 1779).

Furthermore, in Franklin’s collected work *Political, Miscellaneous, and Philosophical Pieces*, he presents his proposal and reasoning to a more phonetic alphabet, as seen in Figure 1. Franklin also displays his alphabet table in whole with an explanation for each letter. He also has an example of words to showcase each sound in Figures 2 and 3. This scheme and proposal to a new alphabet is what inspired Noah Webster, the arch-lexicographer to champion a different reform from Franklin’s (Whelan, 2002). In the end Franklin’s alphabet was met with dismay by his fellow scholars. Images for a better visual representation of Benjamin Franklin’s phonetical alphabet are shown in the next few pages.
Figure 1
Scan from Benjamin Franklin’s proposal of a new alphabet from in “A Reformed mode of Spelling”, in his collected work Political, Miscellaneous, and Philosophical Piece (Franklin, 1779).
**Figure 2 and 3**

Scan of the whole reformed alphabet table scheme from Franklin’s collected work *Political, Miscellaneous, and Philosophical Piece* (Franklin, 1779).
Another scan from the collected work *Political, Miscellaneous, and Philosophical Piece*. Here Franklin shows us his example of his alphabet in use (Franklin, 1779).

### 2.3. Noah Webster’s influence on the spelling reform

While there were many advocates for spelling reform in America, there was one man who would eventually stand out and become the most known American English spelling reformer, that man was Noah Webster. After America gained its Independence from Britain, Webster advocated that America should shake off and break away from all things British as well the British spelling of English (Whelan, 2002).

Noah Webster was a man who had multiple professions. He was born in Connecticut and a Yale alumnus from 1778, served in the US war of Independence, clerk, lawyer, and a
schoolteacher in Connecticut during the American Revolution. During his time as a schoolteacher, he was struck by the poor quality of teaching materials and how they fail to reflect the “new nation.” Webster is often credited as the man who changed the American spelling, mainly through his dictionaries (Crystal, 1998). The question lies on why the American nation took him seriously regarding the American Spelling reform, while they had all these different spelling reform movements.

Though many of the changes he had put forward in his dictionaries were evolving in the same direction of his reforms, he was generally sought to be responsible for the revised spelling of words. Words such as color and honor, dropping the u from the original words. It is considered that Webster was responsible for the adoption of aluminum instead of aluminium, which has, for decades, been deemed illogical by his fellow scholars. In contrast, others consider Sir David Humprey as the original source (Mathews, 1963).

Noah Webster hoped to separate all that was English from what was considered being American, expressing that spelling reform was a part of a bigger picture (Hodges, 1964). In his first edition of his first dictionary published in 1788, The American Spelling Book, Webster wrote that for the United States of America to adopt the present maxims of the old world would be to stamp the wrinkle of old age upon the youth (Webster, 1789). Since his first dictionary, Webster wrote The Compendious Dictionary of the English Language in 1806 and the American Dictionary of the English language in 1828.

Taking ownership of a developing language that would later be known as the American English, was an honour for most Americans. While these actions were highly criticised in Britain, it was known to be called the “Dictionary War” between the Americanism of Webster and those who were still in favour of British English. The war ended with victory to Webster as his spellings were used by the US Government Printing Office (Crystal, 1998).

2.4. Noah Webster’s alphabet vs. Benjamin Franklin

Noah Webster and Benjamin Franklin both agreed that the English language needed a spelling reform. However, they could not agree on the form of the alphabet that seemed to comprehend American English. Therefore, Webster did not see the advantages of adding the symbols, as Franklin proposed. In an appendix of Webster’s Dissertations on the English Language called An Essay on the Necessity, Advantages, and Practicability of the Mode of Spelling, and Rendering the Orthography of Words Correspondent to the Pronunciation, he explains the addition of the new alphabetic characters (Mencken, 1921). In the appendix,
Webster goes into detail about his concerns on Franklin’s alphabet as America’s situation is deemed most favourable for great reformations concerning the English language as the Declaration of Independence had opened the mind of men, bringing attention to improvements (Webster, 1789).

Webster had a few remarks to Franklin’s regarding the reformation would injure the language by obscuring etymology is that the etymology of word had been lost, and some etymology of words were never known. Webster presumed that only one-tenth of the words in the English language has yet to be discovered and that within a decade, the spelling would see little changes as it should still be at a broader distance from primitive roots (Webster, 1789). Another significant remark Webster had was his objection to Franklin’s claim that the change would render the books at that time, useless. Webster writes that it would not affect the difference of orthography does not provide printed books as illegible between persons who are aware of only one spelling, especially as during that time, Chaucer had presented his orthography in England. Yet, his works were more legible than Franklin’s after publishing their proposals to a new alphabet (Webster, 1789).

In Webster’s dictionary, he commented on some prejudices of other English lexicographers, grounding his reforms by Franklin’s “those people spell best who do not know not to spell.” Webster spanned a whole class of silent letters, such as the u in our, the a in thread, feather, and steady. He also transposed the e and the r in many words that ended in re, such as the words theatre, centre, and lustre, turning them into theater, center, and luster. In the end, he had antedated the simplified spellers with a long list of phonetic spellings, from tung for tongue to wimmen instead of women and heinous for heinous and cag to keg (Mencken, 1921). However, by the time the American Dictionary of the English Language was published in 1828, Webster had abandoned most of his spelling reform plans while having a handful of spelling changes in it (Hodges, 1964).

In Webster’s letter to Thomas Dawes shows his acts to sentiments expressed in his postscript of the letter. He had abandoned plenty of spellings, which he once insisted at the beginning as a lexicographer. His tradition of spelling has always been sufficiently strong as it has a noticeable difference between English and American spelling. In Webster’s letter, he explains his reasoning for his spellings. Such as cigar, as it is the Anglican version of the Spanish word cigarro, or his reasons to not spell honour, candour, or errour, as these words derive from Latin and should because of that be spelled honor, candor, and error. Webster’s reasoning for his Americanised words is, in fact, going back to the origin of the word and that
the Anglican version of these words should be *honeur, candeur, and erreur*. Judging by this letter, Webster rejects innovations but wanted to innovate back to the connection of the etymology of the words (Mathews, 1963).

### 2.5. Thomas Jefferson’s input on spelling reform

In 1813, Thomas Jefferson wrote a letter to John Waldo, addressing the request John Waldo had for him regarding Waldo’s “Rudiments of English Grammar.” Jefferson mentions that he made a judgment in the letter that under these new circumstances of replacing words and phrases, creating names for new objects, even transfer old words to new creations, will form the American dialect. Jefferson points out that as a large group of Irish settlers and Scots arrive, the new terms are to be introduced. He questions if the English language would have been disfigured by the poetry of Burns with his Scottish dialect, or if the Athenians considered Doric and the Ionian, and other dialects had disfigured their language but found that it was on the contrary. They were sensible and constituted the riches of their language (Jefferson, 1813).

Jefferson’s visions on the improvement of the English language is that the source of a composition is that one family has the same root with another as shown in the Greek language, and to which the English did before but in Anglo-Saxon form. Should the compound be allowed with every preposition, both sense and sound would be in their favour. Jefferson gives an example to take an English root, the verb “to place” and the Greek and Latin roots of cognate meaning, adopted in English with the particular prepositions would look like on table 1.
Table 1
Table taken from Jefferson’s letter to John Waldo. (Jefferson, 1813)

As the English language is founded on a broader base, it is cable to be both native and adopted, with freedom of employing its material and by that becoming superior to that in copiousness and harmony (Jefferson, 1813).
This vision of Jefferson to improve the English language with free use of its faculties would help to realise what could come after a course of time. Good writers, the approbation of men of letters, the judgement of sound critics, and no more Edinburg Reviewers would give the reform a beginning with hopes that it would be as rapid as the reform in France that happened over the course of 20 years. Although it was under the auspices of Britain and its science and innovation, examples set by France had paralysed the spirit of improvement. Jefferson views that America has no distinct class of literati, and everything is new and no innovation to be feared. The nation is engaged in active pursuit, and science is an occupation that will subordinate to the main occupation of a man’s life, which means that only a few are qualified to have the leisure to write. During that time, the English language could continue to be stationary. Still, the nation should not let that happen, and in order to enlarge the employment of writers and scholars, a new orthography should separate in name, and power, from the mother tongue (Jefferson, 1813).

The need for American English to evolve as a separate language was what both Thomas Jefferson and Noah Webster recognised to be a necessary action to go further away from the British Empire without crumbling the whole ecosystem created in the United States after the Declaration of Independence. It was expected that America would speak different and unintelligible from England. However, it turned out to that similar because of the global communications that took place as the world evolved, and trades between countries became common, and the different dialects converged (Jefferson, 1813).

### 2.6. Objecting the spelling reform

Since the beginning of time, there has never been a unanimous decision on things. Whether they are on the subject of war, a merge of countries, official language, or even an alphabet, there will be an opposing view. The American spelling reform had a few groups of people who were opposed to the proposals; most of them were also against the Declaration of Independence. Thomas Lounsbury, emeritus professor of English at Yale University, wrote back in 1909 about the problem of the orthographic situation that had established in the United States of America after the Declaration of Independence and spelling reform proposals of the English language by advocates (Lounsbury, 1909). In his book he criticises, the works of Noah Webster and compares Webster John Walker, who was a spelling reformer in England.
Lounsbury starts to criticise Webster and Walker but mainly mentions his dismay of the adoption of the Roman alphabet, as it did not have a sufficient number of letters that were required for the English language. The inability was aggravated by the loss of signs which the English language originally had. Those two letters were; a Rune called thorn, Þ, and the other was the crossed D, Ð. These two letters were used to represent the hard sound in thin and the corresponding soft sound in then. With these two letters that were unknown to the Roman alphabet, would meet extinction from the general use in the fifteenth century, letting the digraph th take their place. However, the thorn left a memorial in a form that resembled the character Y. Once the thorn became extinct, Y would be replaced, for example, in print, the word ye. That later goes back to its original state of the character Y, which became cherished and often used by persons who indulged in the delusion of writing and speaking in Old English (Lounsbury, 1909).

Because the signs to indicate sounds in English are insufficient, it makes the language challenging to encounter. This is a defect of which the English language shares with several tongues that had adopted the Roman alphabet. Other cases that make the English language full of characteristic and exclusive is the progressive movement of some vowel sounds. Historically the development of the English pronunciation has lost their original values. While they deviate from the unique sounds, they brought out harmony with the cultivated tongues of modern Europe. These are the things that had made English peculiar to the hears of other languages (Lounsbury, 1909).

With this, it is safe to say that Lounsbury’s criticism proves that no reform of any kind has yet to determine an unmixed blessing and that the reform of English orthography to create an Americanised version would be one of them. A profound change in spelling would involve disadvantages in language development. A conflict between the old orthography and the new orthography arising would only lead to failure and cause annoyance. With these disturbances, Lounsbury was confident that nothing would become of it. He addresses to the believers of the permanent benefits of the reform of the English language that it would outweigh the temporary inconveniences and annoyances that they create and will have to bear with the hesitations of those who might like the final result of the new orthography. However, not wanting to put in the effort to research the goal or have time to wait for it. These reformers who consider the state of the orthography corrupt as it is a remnant to the British Empire would have to consider that it would lose more benefits than gaining benefits in return.
Lounsbury’s objections are perceived as artificial. He believes that those who are happy with the English orthography pre-reformation are delusional. There are no other tongues that can justify this behaviour. For example, the Italian language is a phonetic language. It does not believe that any Italian scholar would feel any less satisfaction up on finding the Graeco–Latin word *philosphic* had converted his speech into *filisofia* than an English scholar does when seeing the word as *philosophy*. He acknowledges his inconsistency and laziness and admits that he himself would write *jonetic* instead of phonetic. While he confesses his misspellings, he knows that there are strict and virtuous defenders of spelling who also lack consistency and would hold up for writing *phansy* and not *fancy*, like their high etymological ideals.

Common sense had sporadically overtaken the users of the English language was chaotic as it resulted in the displace of the *ph*, giving the Greek word *phantasia* to *phantasy* and finally *fantasy* as the final form. While to the true believers of etymological spelling and pre-reformation English should then be writing objectionable as fonetic. This hollowness emphasises the fact that the opposition to change is just as equally pronounced in the words where the current form is a result of ignorance that gives erroneous ideas of their origins. In other words, the “corrupt” spelling defies the pronunciation of the word and give false impressions (Lounsbury, 1909).

The success of a spelling reform solemnly depends on the adoption of the rising generation. It needs to be desirable and feasible in order for the rising generation to apprehend. Unreasonable ignorance that shields behind the prejudice can be ignored, but the honest ignorance of those scholars in training is not as easy to ignore as it inclines them to favour the tradition and not to question the dispute fully and fairly. In any case, the proposed change needs to follow the way of least resistance, as they have to encounter a peculiar formidable hostile force of the unintelligent opposition of the intelligent, the uneducated against the educated. The recommended alternative for adoption must have an outset of support, either in the present or past usage; they must be in accordance with the operation of laws modifying orthography of a language (Lounsbury, 1909).

In American history, after the Declaration of Independence, the emigration of the group called Loyalists was an event that is comparable to the expulsion of Huguenots from France after the revocation of Edicts of Nantes. The Loyalists represented the conservative and moderate elements in the United States. Their removal meant the elimination of the component in the body politic. This resulted in the many early errors that the republic made in finance, diplomacy, and politics (Wallace, 1914).
The United Empire Loyalists are a group that was against the language reform that happened in the United States and immigrated to a land that is now called Canada. While their importance is considered to be high, there had been little attention to them in Canadian histories. They were often said to be contradictory and confusing; they did not want to break the unity of the race, while many of them had different racial backgrounds. Another major reason for the little attention the movement got in Canadian history was that for a significant period of their lives, they spent it in the American colonies and, therefore, part of American history. While geographically, it made sense; this deprived the Loyalists, as they were known in the United States of America, of their past and much of their meaning, resulting in a strange impression of the group now called the United Empire Loyalists in Canada (Shelton, 1965).

The disposition in the United States regarding the English language after the Declaration of Independence, the nation felt antagonistic and ambivalent towards the language that they rejected the option to give English a privileged status, an official language, or as a foreign language (Crystal, 2016). Because of the newly established United States, Webster’s dictionary was the solution to the revolutionists’ desire to break away from the British.

3. The effect of the spelling reform in America

3.1. The suffix -ium and -um of aluminium

In 1807 the young English Chemist, Sir Humphry Davy, named a new element as aluminum but settled in 1812 that the spelling should be aluminium. His scientific colleagues were acceptive of the naming as it corresponded with the suffix -ium. That way, the spelling of the newfound element would be in harmony with other names that had been named by Davy. However, this was a different story in the US. Noah Webster’s Dictionary from 1828 had the spelling as aluminum, which was the preferred spelling of the element among American chemists.

Searching in the archives of the American newspapers shows that up to the 1890s, both spellings were popular, and in 1895 a shift occurred, and the suffix -um became the dominated spelling, while the suffix -ium maintained popular among scientists. During this progressive period of journalism in the United States of America, the metal became widely available, and journalists needed to confine in popular writing and looked to Webster’s Dictionary, which had become a highly influential work of that time. This was an unofficial change in the US, and it
was not until 1925 when the American Chemical Society adopted the spelling to make it official, while the -um spelling had already taken place and became popular before their decision. And because of the popular searches by the journalists, it is considered that Noah Webster was the advocate for this highly debated change (Kvande, 2008).

3.2. David Humphrey’s glossary

Another, maybe more apparent effect, Webster’s dictionary had on the English language, can be found in the first glossary of American English to British English. It was David Humphrey who had been the first to compile an American English Glossary. David Humphrey was a native to Connecticut and a Yale graduate. He was considered valuable to the military during the Revolution and was highly admired by George Washington. After Humphrey’s service, he became a writer and wrote two major dramas; *The Widow of Malabar* and *The Yankey in England*. The latter drama was about a class distinction in America with a focus on the third class, the *Yankey*. Those in the third class received limited access to free public schools. For people to understand the play, Humphrey incidentally created the earliest known glossary (Mathews, 1963).

The words used in his drama were peculiar and had hard accents or emphasis in certain words. Some were spelled differently from the appearance in the play itself, but with over 150 words, they were more or less just as common in England and in America before 1815 though his glossary was often drawn upon by other writers about Americanism (Mathews, 1963).

3.3. Different development of the English language in Canada

While the focus throughout the history of the English language had always remained on the language reform of American English, Canada had its own development. It was mostly a French colony, and in the 1750s French settlers were deported to Acadia but then were replaced by immigrants from New England, who named the land Nova Scotia as an inspiration to a New Scotland (Crystal, 1998).

A significant shift happened in relation to the United States of America and its Declaration of Independence in 1776. Where the *United Empire Loyalists*, the loyal supporters of Britain felt the need to leave the United States of America for Canada, making the start of what could be called Canadian English (Crystal, 1998).
The spelling of Canadian English can be seen as a mix of both British English and American English. When that occurs, it cannot be identified as American English or British English. It is possible to see a pattern as the spelling of American English is widely popular among the press, and the British spelling is the norm in journals and school textbooks. This represents the real difficulties for those who want to generalise the Canadian English, which is considered as part of the uniqueness of the Canadian linguistic situation (Crystal, 1998).

3.4. Globalisation – A form of Standard English

When a language develops, there is no way to measure growth. However, the English language has been monitored and can be traced back 400 years (Crystal, 1998). As a language with diverse dialects, the globalisation, or internationalisation of the English language is inevitable. As the British empire and power grew, it made the English language spread around the globe to places further than North America, such as India, Australia, and South Africa (Algeo, 2006). While dialects are considered mainly as regional, they are also social. A group that speaks the same form of the language, so listing out the differences between dialects, would be excessive (Algeo, 2006).

With different dialects, British English and American English have a defined set of grammatical and lexical features that both agree on, creating a standard language, Standard English. Standard English is what Peter Strevens calls an embodiment of what educated speakers of English agree on to be the internationally accepted usage, the most suitable dialect of the native speakers of English to teach their children and foreign learners of the English language (Strevens, 1972).

Standard English carries the most prestige within a country, a social concept in which some nations have a high standing in the eyes of others, as this can derive between social class, political strength, and educational background. This version of English is chosen by those considered to be powerful and highly influential in the government and education (Crystal, 1998). The future of many languages has been highly debated. As the world’s economy started to grow with traders travelling between countries, the American and British varieties of the English language have influenced each other over the years. This can be observed in Canadian English, as Canada practises both in their version of the English language, yet when you see it, you would not necessarily think of Canadian English (Crystal, 1998).
3.5. Future of the English Language

Due to globalisation and the Internet, the English language could be on the path of another spelling reform. Much like the probability of any other language. A spelling reform made through communication between people is a new way of communication. David Crystal writes a chapter about the future of English spelling in his book Spell it Out. He does not agree with so-called prophets of doom that have suggested that the English spelling would change due to spelling variations found on the Internet. Crystal is confident that the spelling will be improved by the Internet and technology of the future. He presumes that a linguistically sophisticated generation of search tools will evolve in order to take grammar, semantics, and discourse structure into account. Crystal argues that because of the evolution of spelling that has set its course, the computer will not make spelling obsolete (Crystal, 2014).

Considering the fact that we are now in the era of the Internet, the age of globalisation; the English language has become an influential language. Even though the British Empire has now ceased to exist. The significance of the language is still in place. As the Empire once controlled a large part of the world for an extended period. The English language still plays a significant role in today’s business, science, politics, and economics (Roux, 2014).

When contemplating the future of English as a global language, we need to pay attention to the indications that go against the general trend. A significant change in the balance of the power of the English language could affect the standing of other languages so that they can begin to take over functions that are currently taken by the English language. Political factors might make groups of people within a country antagonistic to English. Pressures arising due to the need for expressing community identity might disrupt the ability of English to be able to function as a global language (Crystal, 2016).

3.5.1. Future of American English

The United States of America rose in power when they cut ties with the British and be free from not only their government but the language and became known for their “Americanism.” The growth that came to the English language during the twentieth century came mainly from America. As the country who rose against the British Empire, declared independence and the importance of distinct their written works from the British would only lead to a major shift in the orthography and spoken language (Crystal, 2016).
When the “English Plus Resolution” began, it recognised the English language as the primary language of the United States of America, with the importance of other languages spoken by United States residents and asserted that the linguistic resources would be conserved and developed. With various arguments of the uniqueness of the United States, they need to be carefully noted by people in other countries, for ethnic minority and immigrant populations are everywhere (Crystal, 2016). This would repeat and emphasise the value of multilingualism in the community of the United States on the global markets and improve the diplomatic efforts by enhancing communication and understanding between nations, races, and ethnic groups. While there was no official-language movement in Britain, it is not impossible to imagine a resembling situation developing there (Crystal, 2016).

To this day, American English continues to develop and grow as the world becomes more technical and more advanced. Nations are creating different technologies, and artificial intelligence, AI, in those technologies is growing and recording multiple accents and dialects so that the AI can understand everyone who speaks a certain language. For them to do so, they look at the general trend of spoken English. The younger generation develops their version of English, which leads to slang and different phrases — leading to a distinct possibility of the future of American English.

However, David Crystal writes in his book *Spell it Out* that there is no correlation between the general trend of writing in shortcuts like it is done on platforms such as Twitter. Especially when a search engine like Google has been developed where the slightest spelling error will render access to the correct domain and even if a word when searching is misspelled, the search engine will either anticipate the right word or bring up an error if the spelling is beyond understandable. His prediction on spelling and grammar is that it will improve with the technology that exists to help (Crystal, 2014). Especially since the coming generations tools are more advanced than older people had with the printed page. Online orthography has the advantage of being far more diverse, and the role of the teacher will be more important, not only to teach how to spell but also how to choose the appropriate spelling that fits the situation (Crystal, 2014).
4. Conclusion

Over time the English language gradually changed, both in the United Kingdom and the new world, America. America was a melting pot, where explorers sailed from all around the world is searching for a new world and a new life. With that development, a method of measuring language growth is not easily done. To pinpoint a certain period when Americans stopped speaking British and started to speak American, one has to research American history and contemplate the indications that go against a general trend.

With those different dialects created due to the mass immigration to the new world and open trades between countries, British English and American English have a defined set of grammatical and lexical features which both agree on, therefore, creating a standard language, the Standard English. Standard English could be called the embodiment of what educated speakers of English have agreed on to be the internationally accepted usage. The aftermath of the Declaration of Independence, America sought to break all ties with the British Empire, in all the ways they could. Thomas Jefferson recognised the necessary action needed to break away from the British Empire but set out his concerned that it must be done without damaging the ecosystem and foundation that had been built in the United States before and during the revolution and declaration of independence.

That being said, it was expected of America to speak differently and unintelligible from England, however, it turned out to be similar. Global communications between countries would take place and making the difference between American English and British English not as distinct as the prediction and made trading more comfortable. Making the American English language different and unintelligible was something that Benjamin Franklin tried with his phonetic alphabet. People thought his symbols were too chaotic and could not see the alphabet as their own. Noah Webster agreed with Franklin on the subject of needing a spelling reform but did not agree on Franklin’s views and alphabet. Webster saw no advantages to take out the six letters Franklin proposed and add Franklin’s symbols. America’s situation was favourable for a far greater reformation concerning the English language.

Noah Webster played an essential role in the American English orthography. Webster’s dictionary became a significant influence for decades to come. His dictionary from 1828 influenced the current spelling of the metal $Al$ as $aluminum$ instead of aluminium; the American chemists preferred this spelling. Both spellings of the metal were popular up until 1895, where a shift occurred, and the suffix -um became the dominated spelling over the
suffix -ium. This is an example of an adoption that was desirable and feasible, resulting in this change to be accepted among the nation. This led to Webster’s assumption that only one-tenth of the words in the English language had yet to be discovered, and within the decade, the spelling would see little changes.

David Humphrey’s earliest glossary helped Webster’s cause for Americanism. His glossary was often drawn upon by other writers about Americanism. But Webster is credited as the man who changed the spelling through his dictionaries. Webster’s dictionaries were desirable and feasible, but most importantly, accessible to all. Giving him a great advantage against different spelling reform movements, and something that the rising generation of Webster’s time were able to apprehend — proving his point against Benjamin Franklin’s proposed reform and his phonetic alphabet. Designating all sounds a letter was considered reasonably lawless. But the scheme and proposal help further Webster’s cause and dictionaries.

Many of Webster’s dictionaries later, the American English language and its spelling was America’s way to prove that their independence was more than just a declaration; it needed to be evident in written form. With that and with different nations migrating to America helped develop the English language as it is now and separate the two countries.
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