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**Morphological Changes of the English Language from the
Seventeenth to the Twenty-First Century: A Comparative Study
of Shakespeare's Sonnet 146 and Carol Ann Duffy's Meditation**



¹Ufaq Binte Jamal

²Sumra Peeran

³Shagufta Yasmeen

¹Senior Lecturer, Department of Social Science,
Mohammad Ali Jinnah University (MAJU),

ufaq_jamal@yahoo.com

²Academics and Operations Manager, LRN-UK

sumra.peeran@lrnglobal.org

³Senior Lecturer, Bahria University, Karachi

shagufta.bukc@bahria.edu.pk

Abstract

This study compares Carol Ann Duffy's 'Meditation' and William Shakespeare's 'Sonnet 146' to examine English morphological changes. Verb conjugations, lexical invention, derivational morphology, and pronoun usage are reviewed to assess how Early Modern English changed into Contemporary English. This study descriptively analyses the texts to examine the diachronic morphological shift between these two poems. Data is collected by randomly picking stanzas from both poems. The study found morphological and lexical changes. These changes reflect deeper social-cultural developments like language equality and accessibility, which are appropriate for communication patterns and social position. This research also examines word formation patterns and discourse evolution from Shakespeare's creative and flexible derivation to Duffy's conventional compounding. English is an appropriate lingua franca today because this morphological modification emphasizes its universality, efficiency, and clarity. Conclusion this study shows how English morphological innovation reflects historical and cultural changes, demonstrating its pragmatic adaptability and endurance throughout centuries.

Keywords: Derivational morphology, Lexical innovation, Morphological evolution, verb conjugation, Early-Modern English, contemporary English

Introduction

Language develops with time, guided by the developing nature of its speakers as well as those who have other languages. Linguistic changes therefore follow the pattern of changes in culture, history, and society. The most obvious change would probably be morphology, which refers to the word's internal structure or its configuration. This paper traces the morphological changes and outline the development of English from an inflectional language full of complex and historical forms to a more streamlined and functional mode of communication that prevails today.

This paper aims to explore the changes in English morphology from the 17th century to the 21st, based on a comparison of William Shakespeare's Sonnet 146 as being characteristic of Early Modern English and Carol Ann Duffy's Meditation as characteristic of Contemporary English. Morphology is a division of linguistics that

studies the inner constitution of words to describe compounds, derivational units, and inflectional units. In all languages, morphological change is a gradual one, usually triggered by sociolinguistic changes, elimination pressures, or the need for communication. Language change in the form of morphological change has been visible since the mid-17th century, during which time the language started showing greater steadiness and simplicity in its formation (Barber et al., 2009). Some are visible in pronouns, verbal forms and their inflections, derivational morphemes, and the processes of new word formation and new structures within the language. For example, William Shakespeare, who was in the Early Modern English era, is an example of the volatile nature of language. In this time, English had been standardized to some extent by the invention of the printing press and the works of contributors to the language, such as William Caxton and Samuel Johnson.

Many of Shakespeare's works, from his own time and including Sonnet 146 contain various pronouns, verb tenses, and word formations characteristic of the 17th-century vernacular. The second-person singular forms of address, 'thou' and 'thy', along with verb endings '-eth' and '-est' is an example of considerable morphological growth in that age of times (Crystal, 2004). These were wordy forms, but they made it heavy-duty grammatical for the speakers. The difference in linguistic evolution from Shakespeare's time to Duffy's time is indeed vital since the latter uses the English of today. Carol Ann Duffy, a Twenty-first Century writer, writes in *Contemporary English*, that has developed through morphological and geographical twists throughout centuries. *Meditation* by Duffy is a representation of the modern state of language by the exclusion of archaic pronouns as well as inflectional endings, and inductive predominance of compounds and neologisms. The change from Shakespeare's complex morphological system to Duffy's reduced forms indicates a larger tendency in English toward increased efficiency and access. Modern English promotes clarity and flexibility, making it easier to communicate and relate to the world around (Leech et al., 2009). The greatest change regarding the morphology of the English language is the reduction of the pronoun system.

In Early Modern English, pronouns had characteristics of number, formality, and case. The singular second-person pronouns "thou," the subjective, "thee," the objective, "thy," a possessive, and "thine," a possessive before vowels differ with their

plural counterparts, "ye," and "you" (Blake, 2002).

These pronouns also expressed social hierarchies where "thou" is used for familiarity or subordination and "you" for formal functioning or superiority. Shakespeare's Sonnet 146 takes the same form, employs "thou" and "thy" in their most intimate and personal fashion. By the eighteenth century, "thou" and its variants had fallen out of use and were replaced with the more generic "you" for singular as well as plural application. This change typifies a larger social process: the decline of strict class boundaries and growth of classlessness within the countries of the English-speaking world (Barber et al., 2009). Duffy's *Meditation in Contemporary English* shows that the pronominal system has been simplified with "you" as a single all-purpose form regardless of either number or style. This development is characteristic of the quest of English to avoid repetition for more effective expression.

Conjugations of the English verb similarly became more streamlined: third person singular was shortened from forms like "he doeth" to "-eth", while second person singular lost its "thou art" and became "-est". Inflection added grammatical sophistication but made the word more cumbersome. In Sonnet 146, Shakespeare uses the use of archaic imperative "live thou" and possessive word "thy," when he writes, "Then, soul, live thou upon thy servant's loss." Such forms, though highly expressive, are rarely found in Contemporary English, mainly using shorter verb conjugations and pronouns (Crystal, 2004). By the end of the twenty-first century, the marking of English verbs was generally uniform, with "the third-person singular -s ending being its marker, making the other persons marked." Ten Duffy's contemplation is consistent with the modern tendencies. The use of "finds" and "breathes" instead of "findeth" or "breatheth thou" is typical for a bigger tendency in the language usage with an intention to reduce and remove morphological vagueness by making grammatical schemes clearer.

Regularization facilitates learning and use of the English language, thus making it more accessible for users from different linguistic backgrounds (Leech et al., 2009). Derivational morphology, or word creation by adding prefixes and suffixes, has undergone many changes since the seventeenth century. In the Elizabethan age, the English language was seen at its best in the use of derived morphemes through which it was able to coin new words and meanings with relative ease. For example,

"ful" and "less" were attached as suffixes to produce some words that may seem strange to modern-day readers.

Morphology use by Shakespeare can be seen as original work since it shows the linguistic creativity of Early Modern English (Blake, 2002). derivational processes have been standardized in modern English, as here exemplified by the lines of poetry of Duffy. They follow established rules and patterns. Contemporary English is more open to compounding as well as neologisms; therefore, a language framework with ease of clarity and flexibility characterizes it. This drift is seen in the work of Duffy in "Meditation" through compound words and novel phrases expressing modern vernacular.

This shift shows the flexibility of English morphology, which maintains the balance between innovation and clarity (Barber et al., 2009). The evolution of English morphology can also be seen through the handling of compound words and lexical flexibility. Compounding was less common during Shakespeare's time, but it was often performed to meet the poetic or rhetorical demands. Some inventive choices made by Shakespeare in his language lead to compounds that are problematic for readers to understand today. On the other hand, compounding has become a conventional word-building process in modern English, and by so doing, it results in phrases that are quite comprehensible to the speakers.

Lexical flexibility has improved because morphological complexity is simplified, and it allows for increased focus on neo-word formation (Crystal, 2004). The redundancy of the old forms, like "thy," "thou," and "dost," indicates how the English language is dynamic. The language has progressively shed forms that have ceased to be functionally necessary, cleansing its morphology so as better to serve contemporary speakers' needs. Simplification of morphology fits into the larger linguistic trend toward efficiency and accessibility. This study shows just how much the English language evolved from a rigorous, inflected system into a more flexible, user-friendly form by comparing Sonnet 146 and Meditation.

This research uses a comparative methodology to look into the morphological features that appear in the works of Shakespeare and Duffy. This is an analysis of pronouns, verb conjugations, derivational morphology, and word formation, which will be used to shed light on the great changes that have shaped English over time.

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The findings highlight an impressive flexibility in language due to the communication needs imposed by a globalized world. The research deepens our understanding of linguistic development by explaining the relationship between morphology and many social, cultural, and historical factors. This detailed analysis of Sonnet 146 and Meditation portrays the development of the English language to accommodate its speakers, from complex, inflected, and rule-governed structures to more streamlined, accessible, and user-friendly forms. This is a living language that is constantly developing with the needs of communication, creativity, and globalization. Objectives of the Study This research aims to ascertain the distinctions in English morphology between Shakespeare's Sonnet and Duff's poem, "Meditation." Purpose of the Research The study focuses on the morphological evolution of the English language through a comparative analysis of Shakespeare's Sonnet 146 and Carol Ann Duffy's Meditation.

Objectives of the Study

The aims of this study are as follows:

- **Morphological Differences:** Study the use of pronouns, verb inflections, derivational morphology, and word formation impacting Early Modern and Contemporary English.
- **Morphological Simplicity:** Investigate how English morphological complexity and standardization changed over time, including the loss of inflectional ends and also the archaic forms.
- **Study Lexical Invention:** Investigate the development of word-formation processes with the modern trends of compounding and derivation.
- **Linguistic Scholarship:** The flexibility of the English morphological system clarifies contemporary linguistic change and the historical evolution of the language.

Research Questions

1. What are the key morphological differences between Shakespeare's *Sonnet 146* and Carol Ann Duffy's *Meditation* in terms of pronoun usage, verb conjugations, and word formation?
2. How has pronouns and verb conjugations in English evolved from the Early Modern period to the contemporary era?

Literature Review

One of the primary focal concerns within the scope of linguistic study is the examination of how the constitution of the morphemes in the English language has evolved throughout the history of diachronic developments in lexicon, phonology, and grammar. This comparative analysis of Shakespeare's Sonnet 146 and Carol Ann Duffy's Meditation is set within the context of this broader scholarship on morphological development in English. The critical research on the evolution of Early Modern English, Contemporary English and the socio-cultural issues that appear relevant to the adaptation of language, will be culled.

English takes a morphological shape. The morphological form of the English language was simplified considerably. The Early Modern English "represented a transitional phase and one marked by the gradually diminishing inflections," as Baugh and Cable (2012) pointed out. At the time of Shakespeare, inflectional endings, such as "-est" for the second person singular and "-eth" for the third person singular, were still in use. However, by the late seventeenth century they started to become unused; this was an inevitable consequence of the general drift toward an analytic language.

In contrast, Barber, Beal, and Shaw (2013) conducted this research to establish whether the decrease in inflectional forms leads to changes within society, such as the literacy rate and the impact of print culture. Ultimately, the morphological regularization that occurred in Contemporary English was due to these changes, allowing English to standardize. Rather, Huddleston and Pullum (2002) argue that the morphology of Modern English is straightforward and coherent. The fact that the use of "s" ending is a panacea to the verb conjugation of the present tense is one proof of a streamlined process. Moreover, the redundancy of such outdated pronouns as "thou" and "thy" is yet another manifestation of this trend towards efficiency.

The loss of the second-person singular pronoun-thou, thee, and thy-has been documented comprehensively by Lass (1999) and Görlach (2001) who have also identified the linguistic and sociolinguistic forces that caused the shift. Associated in Early Modern English with matters social and privy, these pronouns were in decline as this period saw the movement of a highly stratified English society to an egalitarian one.

The uniform "you" in Modern English has absorbed these differences, resulting in a

degree of talk that corresponds to the changing informality of mass culture. Since Romaine (1982) onward, linguists argue that this is one area of a wider English movement toward reducing redundancy, because the difference created by the standard pronouns is no longer considered necessary to get by in everyday discourse. Another domain of research is the development of English verb morphology. Rissanen (1999) and Nevalainen (2006) have offered perceptive accounts of the complexity of Early Modern English verb conjugations that resulted in the simplified paradigms found in Contemporary English. For instance, the ending that eventually replaced the third-person singular "eth" ending of Early Modern English ("he liveth") was the "s" ending, affected by phonological and sociolinguistic change.

This type of regularization is by the general trend in grammatical English towards analytic constructions, which reduce the significance of the inflectional extremities of words, as per Rissanen. Auxiliary and order terms are of greater significance. According to Nevalainen, the eighteenth century's efforts at standardization resulted in the development of numerous grammatical models that have had a significant impact on contemporary English.

Derivational morphology, encompassing compounding and affixation, has undergone substantial changes in contrast to Early Modern and Contemporary English. Plag (2003) asserts that Contemporary English affixes adhere to more structured procedures, whereas Early Modern English affixes were employed in various inventive methods. Bauer (1983) argues that compounding is becoming the most widespread means of word formation in modern English. Duffy's *Meditation* abounds with many new vocabulary words and compound words that excite contemporary readers. Shakespeare often resorts to derivative constructions that are not very archaic or very intuitive, which illustrates how the standards for morphological formation have changed throughout history. In comparison to Early Modern English and Contemporary English, derivational morphology, which comprises compounding and affixation, has undergone tremendous change. As against the creative as well as variable use of affixes during Early Modern English, Contemporary English affixes are characterized by more systematic processes, as opined by Plag (2003).

According to Bauer, 1983, compounding has become the preferred mechanism of word creation in Contemporary English. The sheer presence of compound words and

neologisms that appeal to the modern reader in Duffy's *Meditation* provides proof for the historical development of morphological standards. Shakespeare often uses derivative formations, which are either archaic or less intuitive. Millward (1996) and Crystal (2003) are just some of the researchers who have examined the loss of archaic morphology, such as "dost" and "thy." Crystal notes that Modern English has adopted a much thinner morphological profile than its predecessor and has since developed these items into stylistic features of historical or poetic speech. The obsolescence of the morphology of the English language is proof of how flexible it is in adjusting to the way people want their communication delivered.

A number of researchers, including Crystal (2003), Millward (1996), have analyzed the disappearance of the archaic morphology, among which are "dost" and "thy." According to Crystal, these have become aspects of stylistic features of historical or poetic diction, with Modern English using a much leaner morphology. The ability of English to adapt to the needs of communication by its speakers is manifested in the loss of English morphology.

This paper cites others' works, such as Short (1996), to support the fact that literary texts comprise information that is of strategic importance to a study of language development. Using Shakespeare's *Sonnet 146* and Duffy's *Meditation* to compare, this investigation draws upon a rich literary heritage to trace the larger linguistic currents. For example, Hughes (2010), in his work analyzes the compositions of Duffy concerning contemporary linguistic norms, including the use of intelligible syntax and morphology to reach a modern audience. Linguistic creativity, as Hope (2010) explains, also serves as an example of the labyrinth that Early Modern English morphology outcomes pose in terms of the global usage of English and its evolution.

The morphological simplification and regularity of English are the basis for it becoming a global language. Simplified morphology makes English more comprehensible to non-native speakers, which enhances its chances of being used as a *lingua franca*, according to Graddol (2006). This development can be traced from the complex inflectional patterns found in Early Modern English to the present straightforward forms observed in Contemporary English. For example, there is a shift from the complicated inflectional paradigms of Early Modern English to the

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relatively simple forms found in Contemporary English. From the works discussed in this review, English morphology is dynamic and subject to many influences, such as those social, cultural, and historical factors.

The structure of this research paper, holding the discourses of Sonnet 146 and Meditation forward, takes our overall understanding of the evolution of the English language forward toward clarity, efficiency, and accessibility. Next, Shakespeare and Duffy will be used as case studies to show the connections between historical linguistics through examples of application. This paper bases its argumentation on the opinions of other scholars, such as Short (1996), who maintain that literary texts contain data that is of considerable significance to the study of language change. This study is a continuation of the literary tradition in establishing larger linguistic trends by comparing Shakespeare's Sonnet 146 and Duffy's Meditation.

For instance, through the analysis of Duffy's works concerning linguistic modernity, such as accessible syntax and morphology, aimed to gain popularity among a modern readership in Hughes (2010). Similarly, the linguistic innovation made by Shakespeare, as identified by Hope (2010), is well exemplified in the richness of Early Modern English morphology. Implications for the world in the use of the English language and its development. The simplification and regularization of English morphology have substantial implications for its status as a global language.

Graddol (2006) notes that the shortened morphology of English facilitates its adoption as a lingua franca by increasing its accessibility for non-native speakers. The transition from the complex inflectional patterns of Early Modern English to the simplified forms observed in Contemporary English is a prime example of this trend. The reviewed literature shows that social, cultural, and historical factors indeed affect the dynamic English morphology.

The general knowledge regarding the evolution of the English language into clarity, efficiency, and accessibility is further developed through the analysis in the context of this paper, which continues the discussion of Sonnet 146 and Meditation. To substantiate the theme, Shakespeare and Duffy will be presented as examples that describe the relationship between historical linguistics and its application.

Research Methodology

A qualitative and comparative approach is hereby applied to investigate the

morphological evolution of the English language as viewed in the above selected texts: William Shakespeare's Sonnet 146 and Carol Ann Duffy's Meditation. The methodology involves a full linguistic analysis while focusing more on morphological differences created between these two texts so as to drive home the wider historical and social influences on the evolution of English. Shakespeare's Sonnet 146 was selected through random systematic sampling techniques as a facsimile of Early Modern English because of its abundant use of inflectional ends, archaic pronouns, and complicated verb forms unique to the 17th century. Carol Ann Duffy's Meditation embodies Contemporary English, showing aspects of the current morphology, such as the ablation of archaic forms, simplified verb inflections, and linguistic innovation through compounding and neologisms. These works were selected based on their literary value and linguistic features that can provide an appropriate context to examine the history of English morphology.

Findings and Data Analysis

The study makes a major discovery concerning the morphological development of English. It proves to be quite elaborate and comparative by making critical comparisons between Carol Ann Duffy's Meditation and William Shakespeare's Sonnet 146. It structures the results based on four key morphological domains: verb conjugation, pronoun use, derivational morphology, and lexical innovation.

Pronouns and Inflections

Developments and Simplification of Pronouns

The shift in pronoun use from Shakespeare's Sonnet 146 to Duffy's Meditation reveals the morphological tendency for simplification of English. In the seventeenth century, pronouns like "thou," "thee," "thy," and "thine" served to visually render singular from plural and formal from informal contexts. These forms also reflected the social stratification of the time, where pronouns represented intimacy, respect, and even levels of social standing. For example, "thou" usually means close relationship or subordination, whereas "you" indicates politeness or superiority. In Sonnet 146, Shakespeare uses pronouns to show the complexity that linguistic tools invoke. When he writes,

"Then, soul, live thou upon thy servant's loss,"

The person-to-person pronoun makes it more intimate by using "thou" and "thy" to

make the sonnet more emotionally profound, and individually engaging, giving the sonnet an intimate quality. However, this intricate system of pronouns requires that one familiarize oneself with the different forms and contexts. Contrary to this, by the time Duffy wrote *Meditation*, the English pronouns were much simplified.

The only pronoun employed is "you," which serves the purpose of addressing the reader in an inclusive style, irrespective of number or formality.

Their usage had been significantly simplified before Duffy's composition of *Meditation*, as the singular and plural contexts for universal pronouns adopted "you," thereby eliminating "thou," "thee," and "ye." This evolution in language history reflects a movement towards equality by eradicating distinctions of formality and social class through its universality.

Duffy's poetry refrains from these archaic forms, making it more accessible and contemporary, aligning with modern readers' expectations.

This evolution illustrates how English morphology has adapted to shifting social structures, prioritizing clarity and minimizing redundancy.

Verb Conjugations and Inflections

Archaic Verb Conjugations in Early Modern English

Verb conjugation is one of the examples of morphological changes in English. In Shakespeare's time, verbs were inflected much more frequently than in Modern English, using endings such as "-est" for the second-person singular and "-eth" for the third-person singular. The sentence "Shall worms, inheritors of this excess," shows verb forms that are grammatical now but sound archaic to most present-day readers.

These verb endings provided additional grammatical cues at the same time as increasing the linguistic complexity. Shakespeare's use of this complex morphological system, where verbs were inflected for tense, person, and number, can be seen in Sonnet 146, where "live thou" is in the archaic imperative form that makes it richer but more dependent on older linguistic rules.

Standardization of Verb Forms in Modern English

On the other hand, Duffy's *Meditation* follows the reduced system of verb inflection in Modern English. Modern inflectional endings are mainly taken by the third person singular "s" ending, such as "finds," "breathes," while the others are not inflected. The old inflectional endings like "est" and "eth" are totally replaced by the simpler forms.

This standardization represents a significant morphological change, reducing the cognitive load resulting from the learning and use of English verbs. The standardization fits in with a broader pattern of morphological optimization in the language, making second-language acquisition easier. Furthermore, the omission of these archaic forms in Meditation reflects a shift away from grammar where many relationships have to be encoded morphologically toward one in which meaning is more direct and therefore more transparent.

Derivational Morphology and Lexical Creation

Innovation and Adaptation in Early Modern English

During the seventeenth century, English demonstrated considerable flexibility in derivational morphology, with authors such as Shakespeare challenging linguistic norms to generate novel words and meanings. Suffixes like “-ful” and “-less” were employed in manners that may appear unconventional today, enriching the meanings of existing terms. This linguistic creativity epitomized Early Modern English, an era marked by swift expansion and innovation in language.

Expansion of Compounding

Shakespeare's lexical choices in Sonnet 146 reveal a tendency toward manipulating derivation, inventing words that fit the poem's and rhetoric's stylistic and artistic expectations. At times, however, this innovation results in forms that might sound archaic or obscure to modern readers. Standardization in Modern English Duffy's Meditation demonstrates the standardized derivational processes of Modern English. Modern derivational morphology has established patterns, which ensure the balance between creativity and clarity. Thus, even though Duffy's poems do use compounding and neologisms, these innovations are based on predictable rules; therefore, new words or phrases remain understandable for the reader. This trend toward standardization reflects the accommodation of English morphology to the needs of an international community. Modern English takes great care that word-formation be intuitive and obvious, favoring linguistic ingenuity yet keeping clear and accurate.

Compound Lexemes and Lexical Plurality

Morphological Clarity in the Age of Shakespeare

Shakespeare's word-formation method heavily depended on affixation and inflection rather than compounding. Compound words did exist during the Early Modern

English, but their use was not as prevalent and often was made only for poetic or rhetorical purposes. This basis on affixation points out the prevailing linguistic rule of the time where morphology plays a more technical part in generating meaning.

Development of Compounding in Modern English

Duffy's *Meditation* exemplifies the contemporary English propensity for compounding as a systematic method for generating a new lexicon. Modern English affords increased lexical adaptability, permitting authors to amalgamate known components to create intuitive compounds that enrich expressiveness.

In these compound phrases, Duffy juxtaposes concepts to represent the trend prevailing in contemporary linguistics-which of course-characterises the facility with which compounds become intelligible and increase the liberties of word formation. Morphology has come to improve the possibilities of subtle expression within a streamlined grammatical frame that underscores the adaptability of English.

Morphological Obsolescence and Linguistic Adaptation

Decline of Archaic Forms

The vanishing of morphological forms such as "thou," "thy," and "dost" exemplifies the inherent phenomenon of linguistic obsolescence. These forms, once vital for communication during Shakespeare's era, have progressively diminished in everyday usage as English has evolved to emphasize simplicity and efficiency.

In Sonnet 146, archaic forms provide historical and poetic depth but may limit the ability of modern readers to understand them. Their obsolescence speaks to the flexible nature of English, which allows elements that are functionally irrelevant or provide unnecessary complications to be dropped.

Duffy's *Meditation* is a representation of the stripping down of modern English morphology to make it more accessible to an international readership. The removal of dialectical forms makes her writing reach out to modern-day readers, as clarity and universality are much key considerations in language. This development expresses the dynamic nature of the English language, which continually accommodates the needs of its users through tradition and innovation.

Modern Accessibility

The juxtaposition of Shakespeare's Sonnet 146 and Duffy's *Meditation* illuminates a unique change that has evolved within English morphology. Language has changed

from a very inflected, rigid system to a more economical and flexible form of expression and communication. These changes show in greater social and cultural changes to facilitate communication, promote egalitarianism, and stimulate creative efforts.

This analysis will show that the development in English morphology is rather a linguistic event, but also one of historical and social evolution. In so doing, the morphological differences between Shakespeare's writing and Duffy can very well present the versatility of the English language, keeping it relevant in such a rapidly changing world.

Discussion

The comparison of Shakespeare's Sonnet 146 with Carol Ann Duffy's Meditation sheds light on the magnificent changes in English morphology during the course of the centuries. The changes in the pronouns, verb conjugations, derivation morphemes, and word development seem to show the simplification and adaptation of the English language for the changing needs of its speakers, echoing other social and linguistic developments.

The morphological reduction in pronoun and verb use from Shakespeare to Duffy highlights that pattern of declining linguistic complexity, as noted by Baugh and Cable (2012).

Early Modern English used a complex pronomial system with "thou," "thee," and "thy" with connotations of formality and familiarity. These pronouns required special verb inflections, such as "-est" and "-eth," which added layers of inflectional complexity. Conversely, Duffy's contemporary usage streamlines these systems by employing "you" universally, reflecting modern English's shift towards egalitarian and universally comprehensible language.

This transformation is an expression of wider socio-cultural change. The loss of formal linguistic differences accords with Crystal's (2004) assertion that current English represents a more equal society, where language no longer dogmatically enforces strict standards of inequality. Duffy's work shows that the simplified pronoun system and verb forms increase communication efficiency, reduce cognitive load, and provide greater inclusivity.

The regularization of verb conjugations illustrates a wider linguistic trend towards

efficiency. Shakespeare's frequent employment of conjugations such as "dost" and "liveth" demonstrates the highly inflected character of Early Modern English, which offered expressive potential but necessitated the memorization of numerous rules. In contrast, Duffy's dependence on standardized forms like "finds" and "lives" corresponds with the regularization noted in modern grammar.

Biber et al. (1999) emphasize that contemporary English's diminished dependence on inflectional endings enhances clarity and facilitates learning. This regularization reinforces the concept that morphological complexity decreases when it lacks functional utility, a perspective endorsed by Bybee (2006). In Duffy's text, this simplification guarantees that verb conjugations are intuitive, illustrating a linguistic system refined for accessibility and practicality.

This demonstrates wider, less formulaic approaches to word-formation in Early Modern English. Here, the application of the suffixes "-ful" and "-less" was more fluid, producing forms that are now antiquated. In Duffy's choices of lexis, on the other hand, there is a contemporary preference for more predictable patterns of derivation and affixation. This development follows on from Plag's (2003) argument that contemporary English favours derivational processes which promote semantic transparency and clarity.

Duffy's work exemplifies the creative capacity of contemporary derivational processes, including compounding and affixation, which facilitate the formation of novel yet intelligible terms. This equilibrium between innovation and predictability highlights the flexibility of modern English morphology, allowing it to address the requirements of an evolving linguistic environment while maintaining clarity.

The importance of compounding in Modern English highlights its increasing applicability as a productive morphological process. The motivation of Shakespeare in making compounds was often based on poetic demands, and the result may seem obscure to the modern reader. On the other hand, compounds of Duffy are more transparent and are according to current usage, but it reflects the trajectory of lexical creativity.

Lieber (2009) indicates that the proliferation of compounding in English corresponds with the simplification of other morphological systems. This adaptability facilitates the efficient formation of new terms while conforming to established

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grammatical conventions, a phenomenon observable in Duffy's capacity to effortlessly incorporate innovative compounds into her poetry. This development underscores the versatility of English as a medium for precise and expressive communication.

Obsolescence of particular morphological forms- "thy" and "thou"- demonstrate the ability of the English language to evolve. The use of these forms by Shakespeare brought out the hierarchical and formal structure of society during his time. However, their obsolescence in modern usage is in tandem with the economy of the English language, as highlighted by Jespersen (1922). Functionally non-clarifying forms lose their currency in everyday use but continue to be applied in a few specific circumstances.

Duffy's accessible language illustrates this linguistic simplification. By discarding archaic forms, modern English has transformed into a more adaptable and universally intelligible language, catering to a variety of speakers and global contexts. As English evolves, morphological simplification guarantees its effectiveness as a medium for communication across multiple domains.

The results correspond closely with the theoretical framework presented in the literature review.

The simplification of morphology, as pointed out by Baugh and Cable (2012) and Crystal (2004), has been of great importance in the development of the English language.

The loss of inflectional endings and the levelling of verb forms represent just two means through which language is becoming more efficient and user-friendly. Derivational creativity and lexical flexibility, as described by Plag (2003) and Lieber (2009), also mean that English can play around with innovation while still achieving clarity. The comparison of Shakespeare and Duffy exemplifies the evolution of English as a dynamic language—adapting to the requirements of its users while maintaining its expressive potency. These morphological alterations facilitate communication and reflect wider social, cultural, and cognitive transformations, as highlighted in the examined literature.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the evolution of English morphology from Shakespeare to Duffy

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illustrates substantial linguistic and socio-cultural changes. The transition from intricate inflectional structures to a more simplified and inclusive language signifies wider societal transformations, encompassing the erosion of strict social hierarchies and the advancement of democratic communication methods. Duffy's employment of standardized forms and straightforward language improves clarity and accessibility, dramatically contrasting with the complex metaphors and lyrical patterns characteristic of Shakespeare's era. This transition exemplifies the versatility of the English language and highlights its function as a worldwide communication medium that promotes inclusion and precision. The approach ultimately demonstrates a significant relationship between linguistic development and cultural transformations, emphasizing how language adapts in response to societal changes.

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