History of English Language and Literature
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Lecture No 8d
Changes in Language: Early Modern English (continued)

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Hello and welcome again to the course History of English Language and Literature. Today's lecture is a continuation of the previous lecture where we begin to look at the various changes which were coming about in terms of the evolution of modern English language. We also noted how various, we also noted how various socio-political and religious changes were affecting major changes in English language from the medieval times onwards and how that contributed to the emergence of a more modern version of English language.

In continuation with our discussion, today we begin to look at the major influence of the book of Bible in shaping in English language. The translations of Bible played a major role in influencing the ways in which the English language began to shape up from the early medieval times onwards. We also noted this series of translations and this changing and shifting tendencies in terms of literary prioritization also had a long and controversial history.

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For instance as we had noted in one of our earlier sessions, one of the earliest translations by Wycliff in 1382 when he translated Bible from Latin into Middle English, there was this lot of, there was this concern about English not being a language worthy of conveying the profound moral and Biblical sentiments. But however we do find that English had come a long way from those early times and we also note that by the time the, by the time of the end of the medieval times and the beginning of the modern era, there is more acceptance for these translations from the earlier Wycliff editions.

In 1528 by the time Tyndale translated the New Testament from the original Greek, we, we also realize that there is more acceptance for Tyndale's conviction that people should be able to read the Bible in their own language. So accordingly we also find him using not very scholarly expressions in his translation but or using more plain and colloquial terms in order to bring the Bible closer to the common man. And some of the expressions Tyndale used as early as 1526, it also became accepted as standard expressions in English language.

For example certain usages which have come to stay on include the powers that be, the signs of times, the law unto themselves, eat drink and be merry etc. We also find that all of these phrases and usages, they continued to be used even outside the Biblical or theological context.

What perhaps became the most significant even in terms of influence the Bible exerted was the publication of the authorized version of the Bible which was the translation as been commissioned by King James the First in 1611.

In this version of the Bible which also came to be accepted as the more standardized version, we find that the grammar of an old form, in a sense that particularly in certain aspects suggest the word order. We find the older word order getting retained. We also find that in spite of the, in spite of the archaic nature of the structure of the language and the structure of grammar, some of the expressions have continued to live on. For example, we note that certain expressions are not colloquially used much but they have become part of certain literary expressions.

For example, they knew him not where we find the word order is not like we use in the contemporary, things eternal rather than eternal things and also older expressions of words God doth know instead of God does know, your cup runneth over. We do notice that certain expressions such as runneth is not a colloquially used, it is not part of the written language either. But nevertheless for certain scholarly and written expressions, this continues to be favored in particular forms of writing. And there was also lot of irregular works which were used in this translation including words such as spake instead of spoke but we also find that this has become quite old-fashioned and we do not use these expressions any more.

In the previous sessions we, in the previous session we noted that for a long time his was used as a possessive form instead of its, his was used as a masculine and the neutral form

because of which we have this statement from the authorized version of the Bible, if the salt have lost his savor, wherewith shall it be salted. At the later point with the introduction of its, we find his getting confined to the masculine form alone. There are also a number of proverbial expressions which were originally part of the Bible which has now come part of the English language, sayings etc.

There are also certain proverbial expressions which have now become part of the English language itself, for instance the saying such as money is the root of all evils, all things to all, the blind lead or leading the blind. Even the expression, at their wit's end, which is mostly used in secular context, has been taken from one of the proverbs in the Bible. It is important to remember that Bible was mostly heard by the church goers than read by individuals during those times. So the rhythm and cadence of the speech had a lot of influence on the, lot of influence on the English people of the sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries.

So thus we can even say that the translation which was popularized by King James the First, it not only influences the written form but it also influenced majorly the ways in which people were speaking. It is also said during those times

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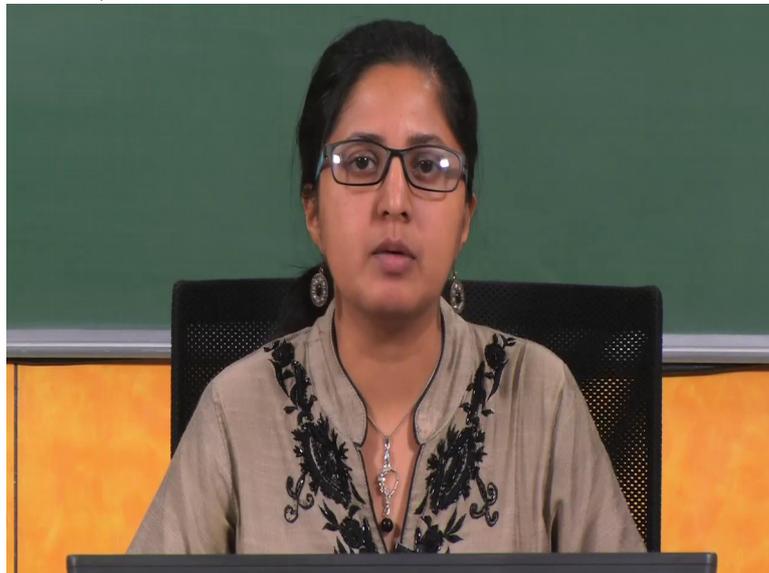
that people used to hear a lot of Bible and lot of Shakespeare during those times that many of the expressions from the Bible and from Shakespeare's plays, they became part of the everyday speech of the people and some of which we also note, have stayed on to the posterity as well.

Another significant influence alongside the Bible was the Book of Common Prayer which was used mostly by the Anglican Church but some of the phrases which were part of this Common Prayer book, they also became

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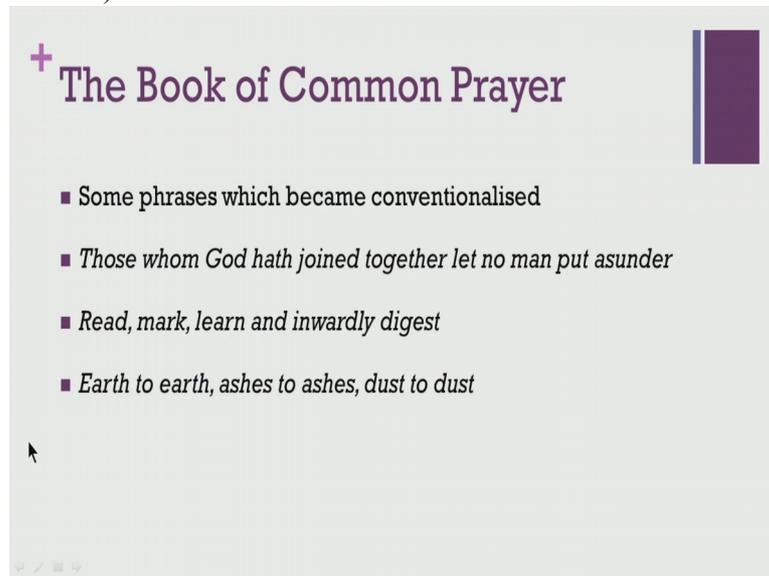
so conventionalized that they became almost undistinguishable from, whether that was from the Bible or from the Prayer Book. For example, the expression such as those whom God hath joined together let no one put asunder, it is now part of even modern Christian marriage ceremonies. And the expression read, mark, learn and inwardly digest and also this expression earth to earth, ashes to ash, also this expression, earth to earth, ashes to ashes and dust to dust. So we find that the Book of Common Prayer which was initially imposed on a
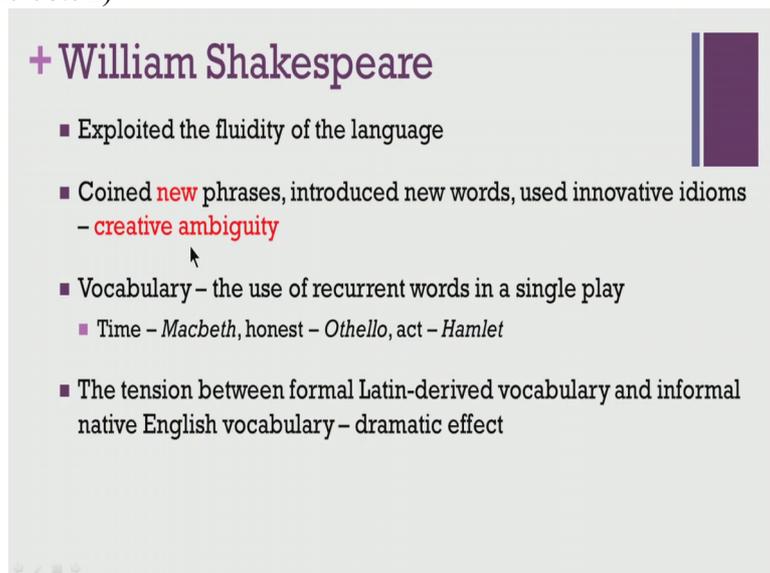
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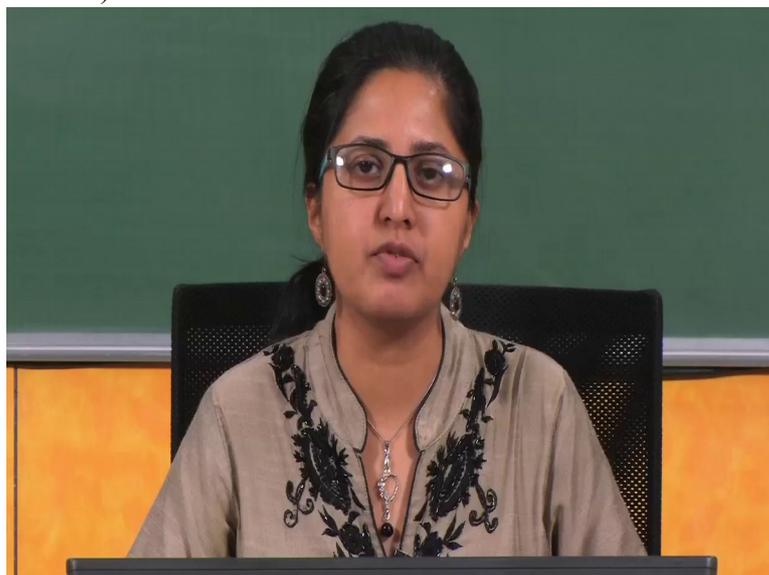
set of people, it later became quite definitive even in shaping the, shaping the linguistic patterns of a particular nation.

After Bible perhaps the most important influence during the Renaissance times on English language was that of William Shakespeare himself. We have noted multiple times about the various ways in which Shakespeare and his plays influenced the English language in various forms. We noted how he had brought about a particular; he had brought about a new sense of linguistic awareness itself. And we also noted that in spite of the profound kind of influence that he had, he also catered to different classes of people regardless of whether they were learned or whether they were illiterate, whether they were the groundlings, whether they were part of noblers, regardless of all those things we find him catering to the linguistic taste of almost all classes of people.

So we can say in a way he exploited the fluidity of the language which was prevalent then. It is again useful to remember that English language was not yet standardized during Shakespeare's time. So there was also a lot of flexibility available. He could also experiment a lot with language because there was no standard spelling; there was no standard set of words. It was, it was more open to all kinds of experiments and possibilities. So we find Shakespeare making the utmost use of all of these newer possibilities.

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We find him coining new phrases, introducing new words; using innovative idioms and all of these also had contributed much to the creative ambiguity that dominated many of his

linguistic aspects. He also used his vocabulary to create a lot of drama and dramatic effect. For example he was the one who began using recurrent word in a single play in order to create dramatic effect. For example in his play Macbeth, we find the word time being used over and again to create this, to drive home this idea that time was perhaps the most, perhaps one of the most important characters in the play itself. And also the term honest being used over and again in the play Othello and the term act being used many times in the play Hamlet.

This also showcased the multiple ways in which language could be used not just for communication and expression but also to create the dramatic effect. We noted in the previous session that during this transition time,

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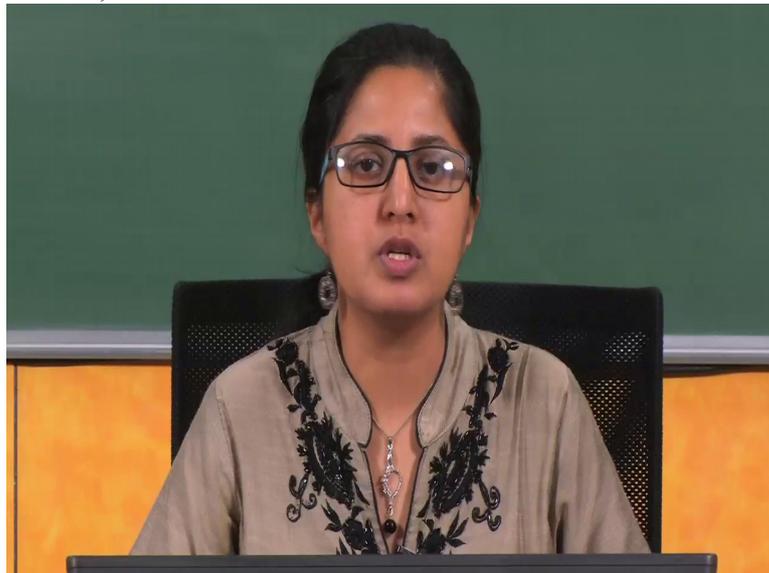
there was an ongoing tussle between the words that had Latin origin and the words which had more native Anglo Saxon origin. So we find Shakespeare exploiting this also to his own convenience and we find that in many of his works, it is possible to notice a certain tension between Latin derived vocabulary and informal native English vocabulary. And this is also used to create a certain dramatic effect because when one uses both of these sort of words from different background in the same dialog or in the same context, it also had the possibility of, it also had the possibility of catching the popular attention or also catering to different tastes at the same time.

This also shows that the English language was quite flexible and malleable that it could even accommodate these varied forms of words into the same conversation or into

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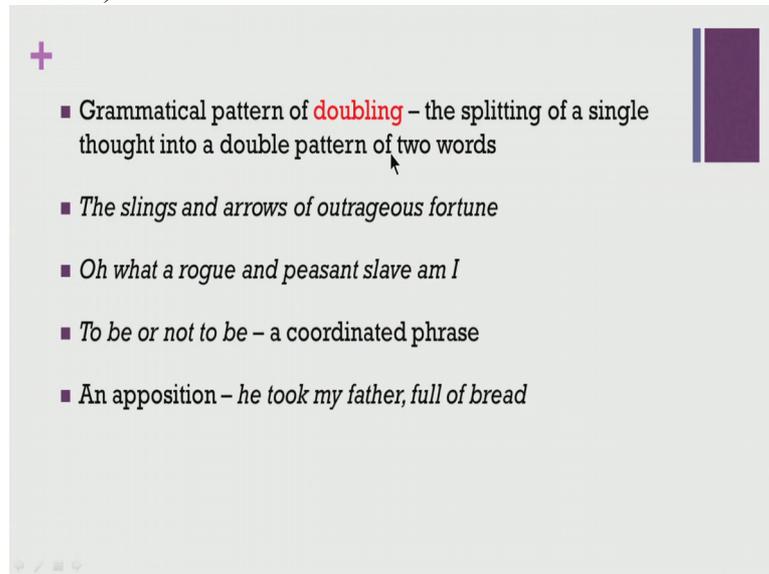
the same context. Shakespeare also experimented with the use of the grammatical pattern of doubling which means the splitting of a single thought into a double pattern of two words. And because of this we have certain interesting expressions which have now become part of the language such as the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune, oh what a rogue and peasant slave I am, oh what a rogue and peasant slave am I, to be or not to be which is perhaps one of the most quoted expressions from Shakespeare. This is a coordinated phrase when we talk about the grammar in it. He also popularized certain appositions such as he took my father full of bread.

We do find all of these words do now have a meaning even outside their original context which was their dramatic context and we find them getting built into language and also giving

a much more literary flavor to the literary, and we find it giving a much more literary flavor to even

Shakespeare's contribution to vocabulary

- "in all of his work – the plays, the sonnets and the narrative poems – Shakespeare uses 17,677 words: of those 1,700 were first used by Shakespeare" – Warren King
- Borrowed from classical languages and foreign languages
- Changing nouns into verbs, changing verbs into adjectives, connecting words never before used together, adding prefixes and suffixes, devising words wholly original
- New words – Oxford dictionary records over 2000 words
- *Seen better days, strange bedfellows, a sorry sight, full circle*

commonplace expressions. If we try to survey the contributions, if we try to analyze Shakespeare's contributions to English vocabulary, it would be interesting to note that Warren King, one of the later linguistic historians, he remarks, in all of his work the plays, the sonnet and that of poems, Shakespeare uses 17677 words. Of those, 1700 were first used by Shakespeare. This was quite a feat.

In one of the earlier sessions when we discussed Milton we also noted that Milton had only half the vocabulary of Shakespeare. He was also considered as one of those, one of those

earlier stalwarts who experimented a lot with language. In Shakespeare's vocabulary and new coinage it came from different sources. He borrowed freely from classical languages and also from foreign languages without bothering whether he really knew the etymology of it or not. So as we noted in our discussions about Shakespeare, he used everything for the stage.

So even the new words that he coinage, even the new words that he coined he did not bother to find out whether it was grammatically accurate or whether it would fit the context given the

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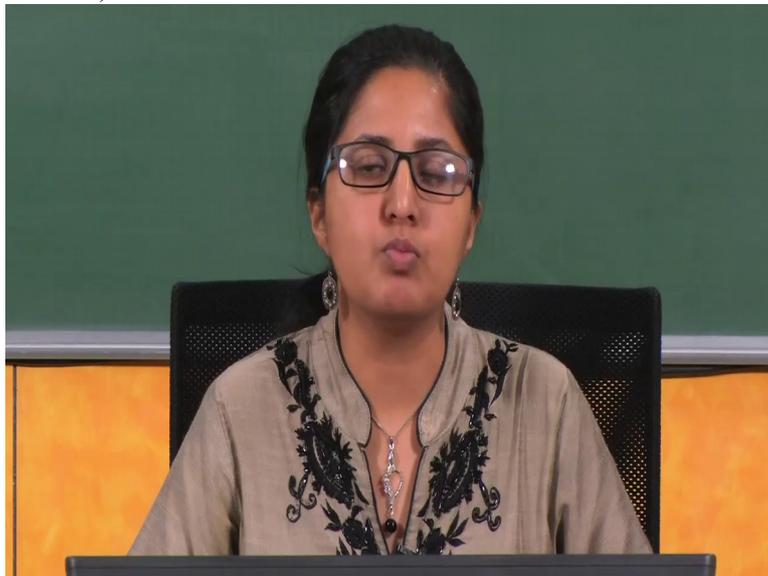
etymology of the word but if he at all thought that it would be popular, he did not, he did not think twice before adding it, before making it part of his

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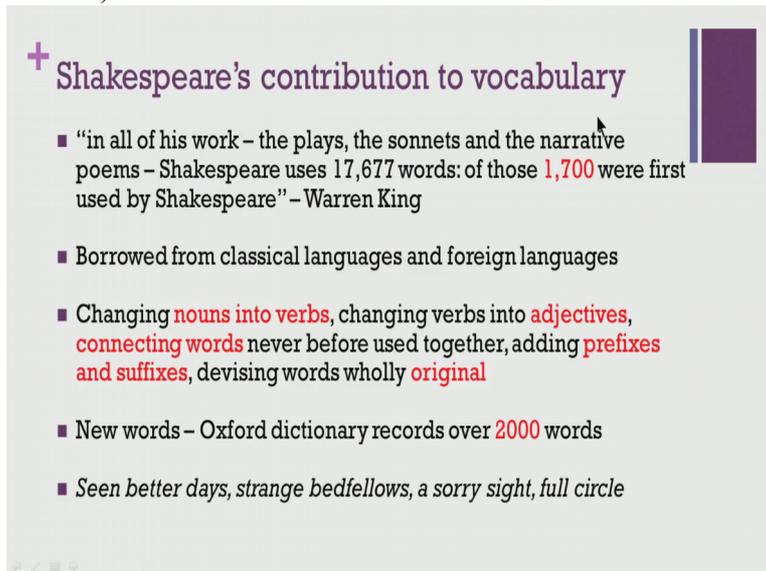
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plays. And some of the techniques that he used were changing nouns into verbs, changing verbs into adjectives or even connecting words never before used together. Or even adding prefixes and suffixes and devising words which are wholly original and were entirely invented by him. Some of the examples which we will also take a look at soon.

And Oxford dictionary also now records that almost 2000 words were entirely contributed by Shakespeare himself to English language. And some of the expressions include seen better days, strange bedfellows, a sorry sight, full circle, so there are number of words which we even continue using without knowing that they were actually coined by Shakespeare and also that there was no such word or expression available before the time of Shakespeare.

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- All that glitters is not gold (from The Merchant of Venice)
- All's well that ends well (from All's Well that Ends Well)
- As good luck would have it (from The Merry Wives of Windsor)
- Bated breath (from The Merchant of Venice)
- Be all and end all (from Macbeth)
- Brave new world (from Brave New World)
- Break the ice (from The Taming of the Shrew)
- Budge an inch (from The Taming of the Shrew)
- A dog will have its day (from Hamlet)
- Elbow room (from King John)
- Faint-hearted (from I Henry VI)
- Hoist with his own petard (from Hamlet)
- Forever and a day (from As You Like It)
- Jealousy is the green-eyed monster (from Othello)
- It was Greek to me (from Julius Caesar)
- Tower of Strength (from Richard III)
- Naked truth (from Love's Labours Lost)
- One fell swoop (from Macbeth)
- Wild-goose chase (from Romeo and Juliet)

For example we have all these set of sayings and expressions from Shakespeare which now has become quite an integral part of English language and this also shows from which play some of these expressions have been taken from, such as all that glitters is not gold, all's well that ends well, even expressions such as break the ice, elbow room, the faint-hearted, jealousy as a green-eyed monster, and the expression it was Greek to me, and even expression such as wild-goose chase, so there is a whole range of not just new words but even set of new expressions with an entirely set of, with an entirely new set of meanings which were made available through by Shakespeare and his plays.

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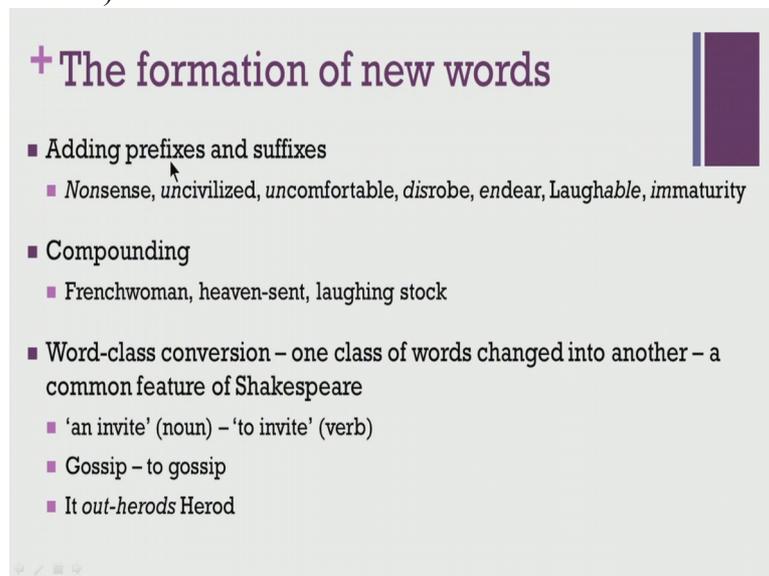
So these are some of the ways through which he tried to form new words by adding prefixes and suffixes. For example, from the word sense he made the word nonsense, uncivilized from civilized by adding un, again to un, to comfortable he made it uncomfortable, disrobe, endear, laughable and immaturity.

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+ The formation of new words

- Adding prefixes and suffixes
    - *Non*sense, *un*civilized, *un*comfortable, *dis*robe, *en*dear, Laugh*able*, *im*maturity

- Compounding
    - Frenchwoman, heaven-sent, laughing stock

- Word-class conversion – one class of words changed into another – a common feature of Shakespeare
    - 'an invite' (noun) – 'to invite' (verb)
    - Gossip – to gossip
    - It *out-herods* Herod

We also find that with the addition of a suffix or a prefix, the meaning also changes entirely and it also sometimes becomes a contrast of meaning from that of the original root word. There were also certain compounding expressions that used, which were not used until that point of time, that is combining two existing words in order to give a

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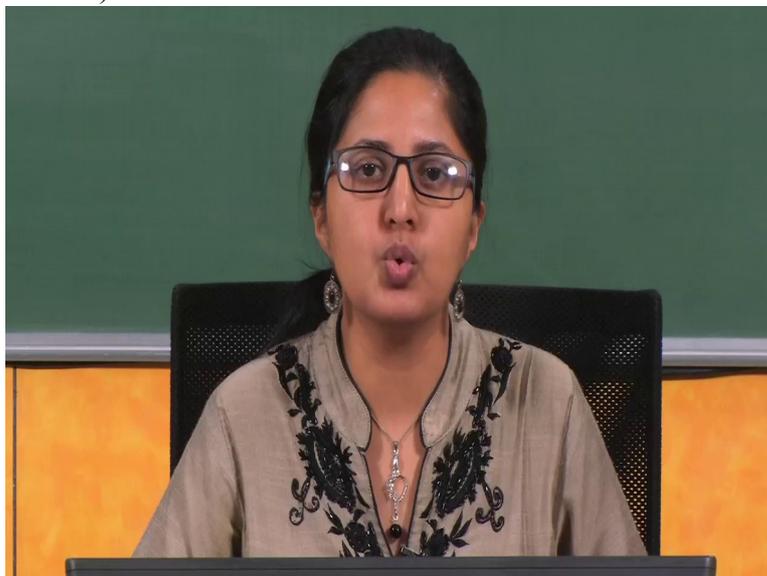
new, in order to provide a different meaning

Altogether, term such as a Frenchwoman, heaven-sent and laughing stock. Many more similar words are available. However we are not talking of about all of those in this session.

There was also a certain word class conversion that Shakespeare used, that is changing one class of words into another, from one form of speech to another form of speech. For example the word such as invite, an invite is a noun but he could also make it a verb by adding to to it, to invite.

And gossip was originally used only as a noun but he makes it a verb by using to gossip. We also

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find that Shakespeare used certain new forms of verbs, coined a new set of verbs from the existing nouns. For example the term to out-herod is an expression that Shakespeare first used and

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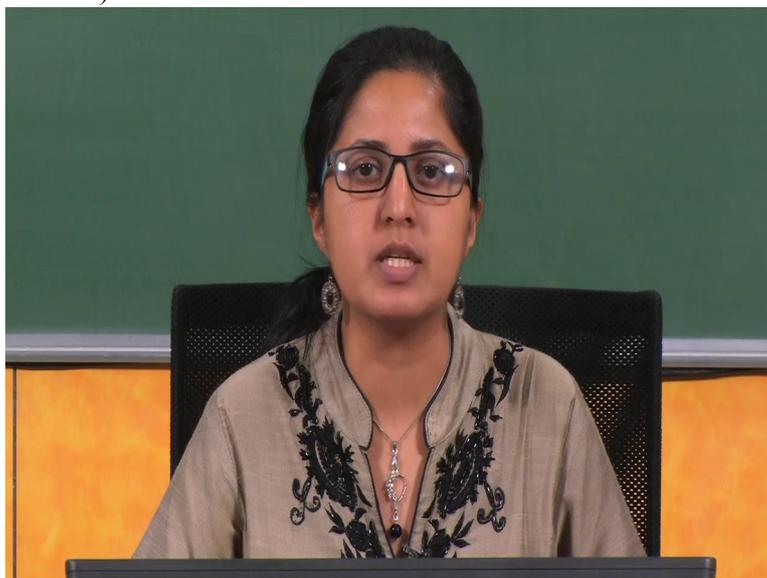
now it has become part of English vocabulary and English drammatical structure.

Moving on from Shakespeare, it is also important also to realize how vocabulary continues to expand. These are some of the basic principles which were also been noted as the possible reasons for the expansion of vocabulary throughout. Especially from the Renaissance times onwards we find that there is a way in which language continues to be evolved. There is of course certain standardization that takes place but at the same time, the, there is also room for

further expansion. We also find that not just English, all languages continued to evolve in particular ways due to various sorts of external reasons.
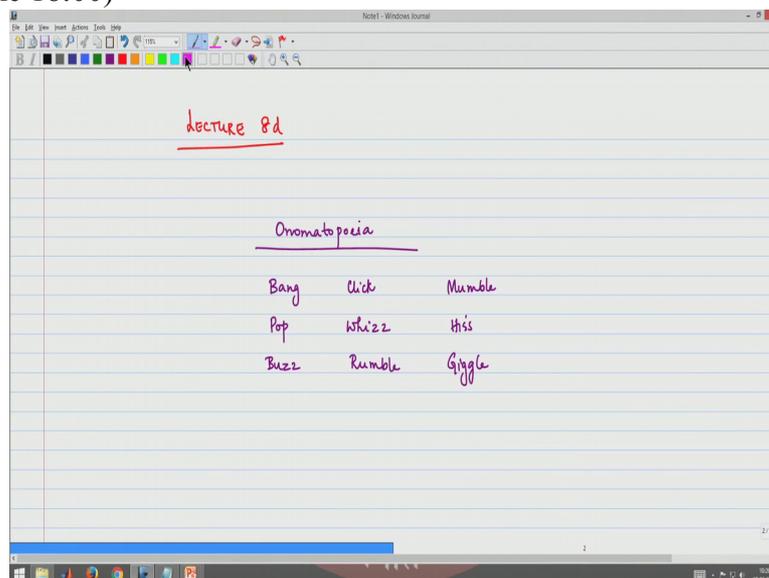
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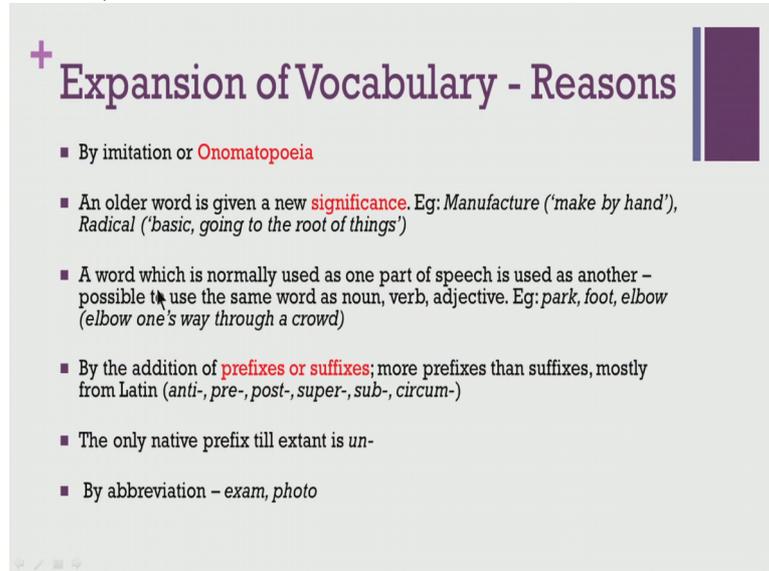
In this context it is also important to take a look at some of the possible reasons that could have led to the emergence of newer words and new vocabulary. One of the most important reasons is that by imitation or onomatopoeia. Onomatopoeia is a, is the emergence of the set of words, the sound of which itself conveys the meaning.
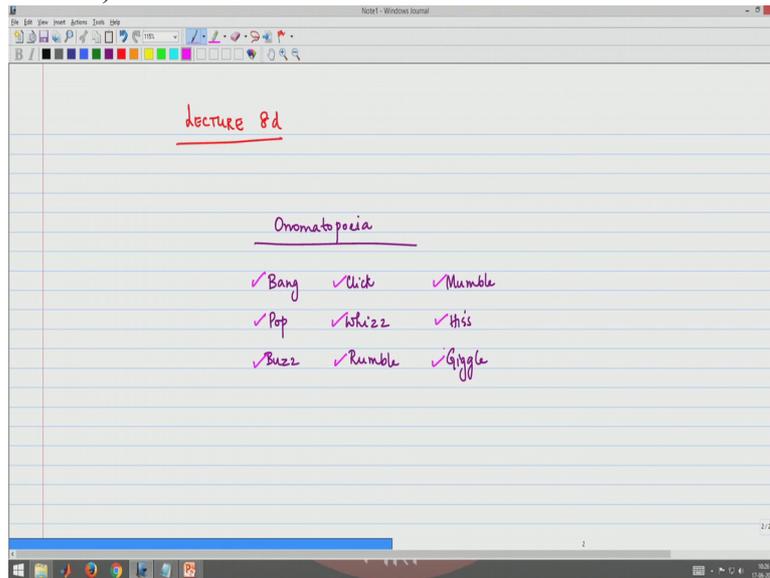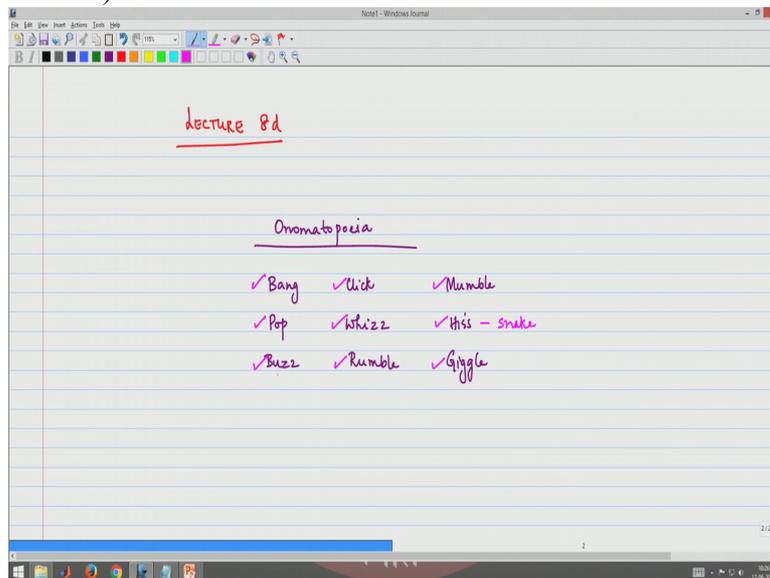
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For example here we have a certain set of words such as bang, pop, buzz, click, whizz, rumble, mumble, hiss and giggle.
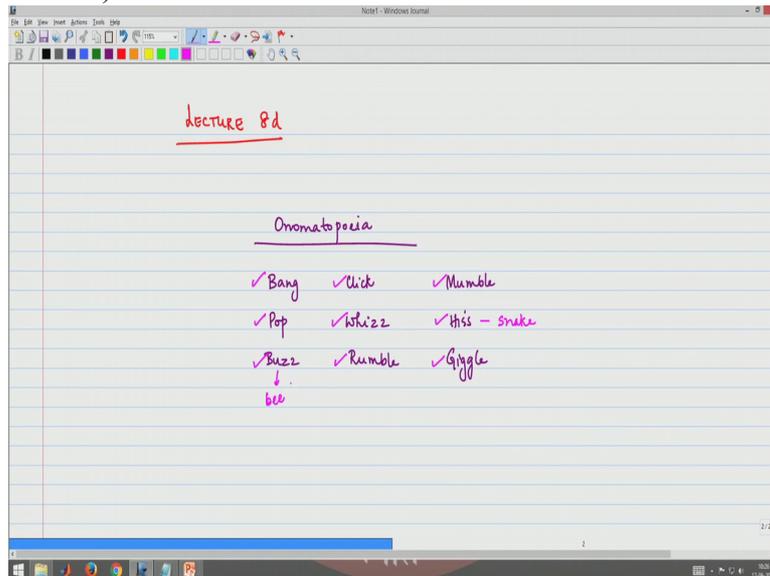
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If we look at the meaning of these words it is possible to note that these words in fact suggest certain sounds which possibly, certain animals make or certain objects make. For example, hiss is considered as a sound of a snake.

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Buzz is that of a bee.

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So the sound itself, the sound of these words itself convey the meaning in particular words. Or words such as click, it even when we articulate the word the meaning is quite inherent within that. So the sound and the meaning are quite connected in

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onomatopoeic words. So it is possible to come up with newer forms of words and newer forms of coinages in this sense, having also known that many of the words in English also has an onomatopoeic origin.

Another important thing that we notice that many of the times a new word is coined when older word
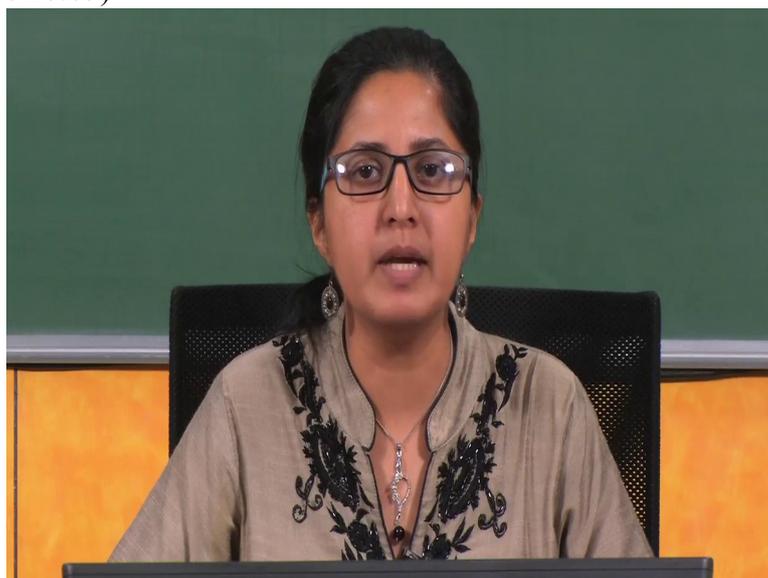
+ Expansion of Vocabulary - Reasons

- By imitation or Onomatopoeia

- An older word is given a new significance. Eg: *Manufacture ('make by hand')*, *Radical ('basic, going to the root of things')*

- A word which is normally used as one part of speech is used as another – possible to use the same word as noun, verb, adjective. Eg: *park, foot, elbow (elbow one's way through a crowd)*

- By the addition of prefixes or suffixes; more prefixes than suffixes, mostly from Latin (*anti-, pre-, post-, super-, sub-, circum-*)

- The only native prefix till extant is *un-*

- By abbreviation – *exam, photo*

is given a newer significance. For example the word manufacture, now we know what it means in the contemporary. But at one point of time, the word, the term manufacture meant make by hand. But now we know that manufacture is far from it. Nobody uses the term manufacture to talk about something which is made by hand; manufacture is for more factory-based non-manual kind of production. Also the term radical had an entirely different, almost a contrastive meaning in the earlier centuries. It meant basic or going to the root of things. Now we know that radical has an entirely opposite meaning from the original word. So in these ways we find that there is, so in these ways we find that even the root word, even when it loses its original
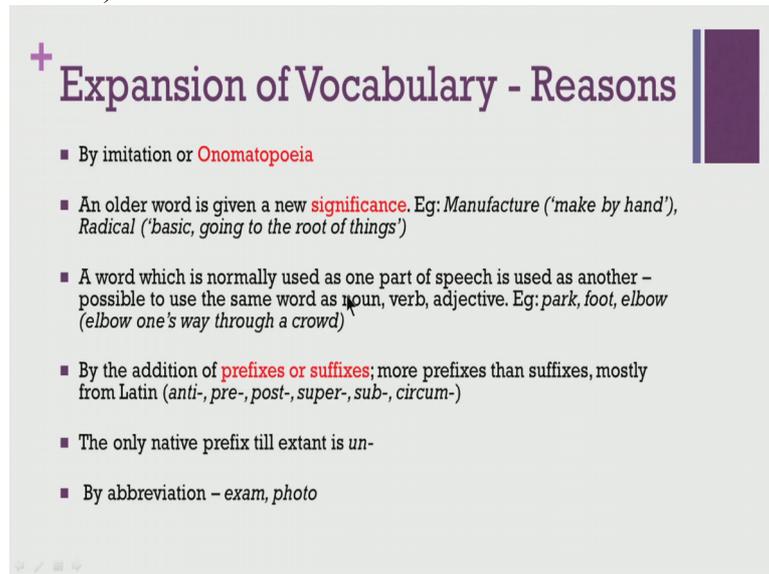
meaning, a new word comes to, a new meaning comes to occupy its older place.
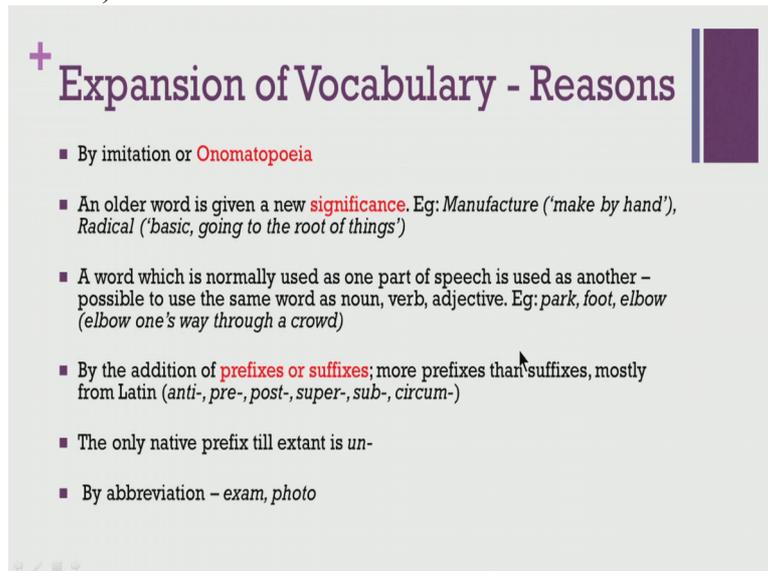
Thirdly we find that there is

a way in which a word which is normally used as one part of speech is used as another. Shakespeare used to use this particular technique quite immensely but even later on we find that this contributed much to the

evolution and the emergence of newer words and newer vocabulary. So in that sense, even
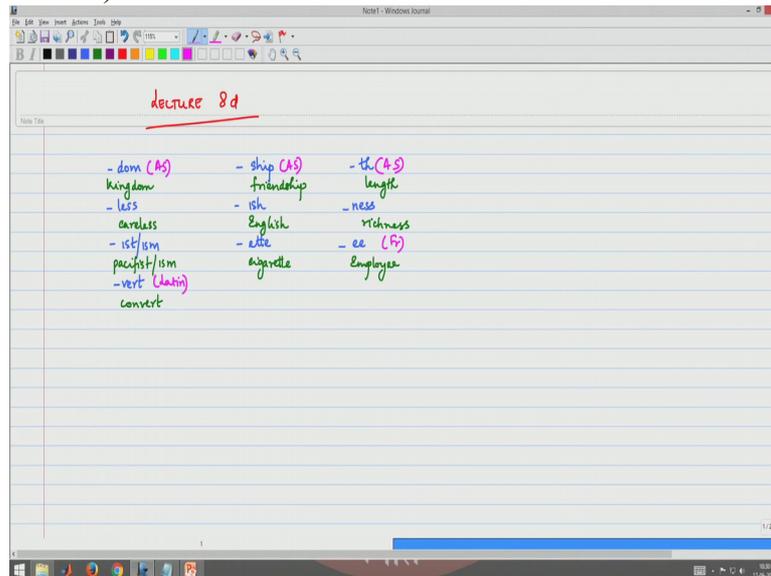
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today we can note that in English language it is possible to use the same word as noun, verb or adjective. For example certain words such as park, foot, elbow these could be used both as verbs and as nouns. For example the word elbow it is a noun. But you can use it as a verb when we use it in this expression elbow one's way through a crowd. So there are many more words which lent itself to the sort of flexible usage. And as we noted before it is also possible to add prefixes and suffixes to the word and make it into an entirely new word.

In English language, we note that we have more prefixes than suffixes and most of these, and most of these prefixes and suffixes are also from the Latin origin. For example, any word which begins with anti or pre, post, super, sub, circum they all have certain Latin origin in place and the only extent native prefix which was of native English origin is perhaps un from which we have words such as uncommon, uncanny etc. And if we take a look at some more of these prefixes and suffixes we will also note that, if

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we take a look at some more of these suffixes and prefixes we can also note that they, they do

have a number of words which are derived from a particular suffix or a prefix.
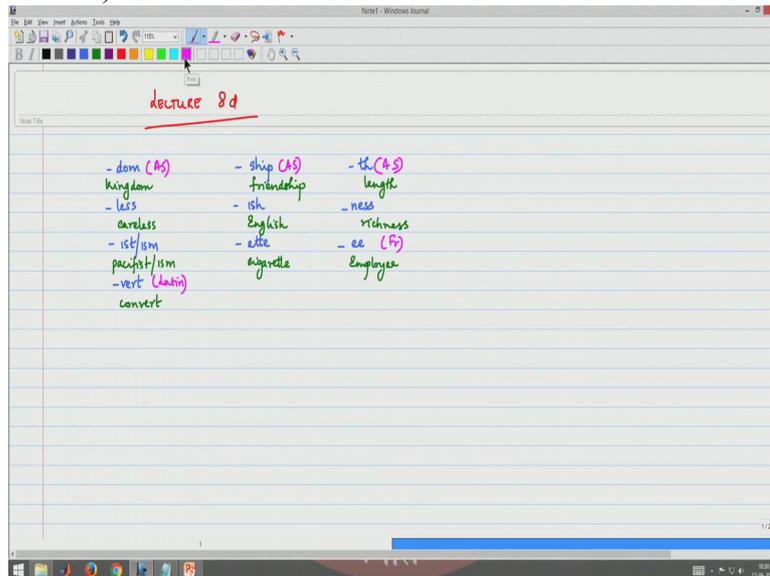
And also it is possible to derive

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unlimited number of words from a single

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prefix or suffix itself. For example, for example some of the popular forms of suffixes include dom, ship, th, less, ish, ness, ist or ism, ette, ee and vert. And here we have given just one example but we also note that multiple and infinite number of words could be derived from this. For example from dom, we have kingdom. There could also be martyrdom and word such as that, and from ship words such as friendship or worship. And from th, this incidentally is a more archaic form of expression because we do not find newer words getting coined from this but nevertheless from words such as long, we have length, from strong strength, from word such as long, we have length, and from strong strength, so on and so forth. But however
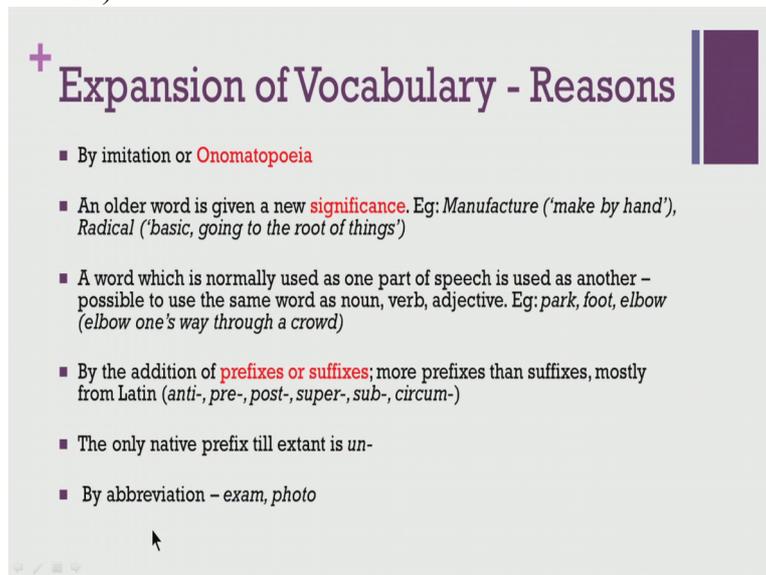
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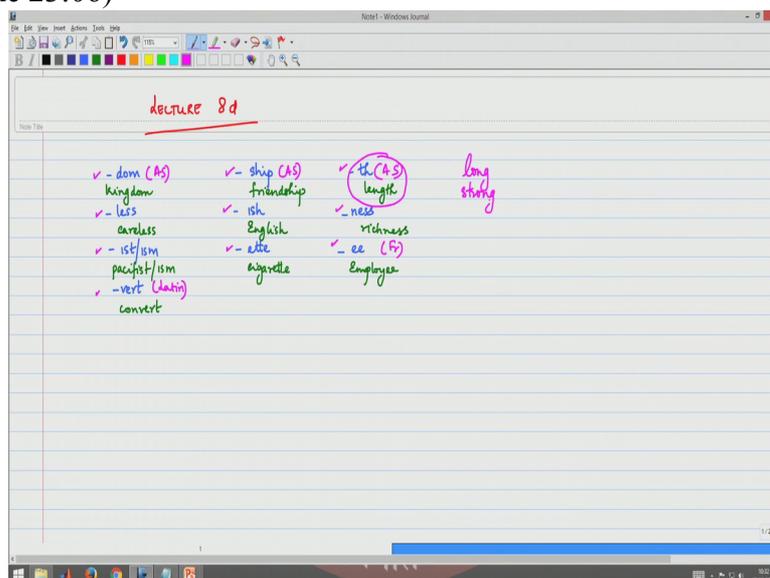
this, since these words such as dom, ship and th, they are mostly of Anglo-Saxon origin and we do not find them leading to newer words and newer coinages in the contemporary.

And there are also certain words such as less which leads to terms such as careless, ish to words such as English, ness richness, goodness, wellness one could go on and also ist or ism such as pacifist or pacifism, socialist or socialism, and ette, from cigar we have the term cigarette, and also this is of the French origin, the double ee at the end of particular noun, so from this we have employee, refugee, payee etc. And there are lot; there are also number of Latin, number of suffixes which are of Latin origin including vert which also has led to certain terms such as convert, introvert, extrovert so on and so forth.

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And finally even through abbreviated forms newer words could be coined. For example we have words such as exam from examination or photo from photograph. So these are the various ways through which newer forms are getting built into a language.

And in terms of English language it is very important to note that, through the various socio-political, economic and religious changes English language continued to evolve and develop right from the medieval times through the modern era.

And with the, and in the modern era with the effects of Renaissance, Reformation, printing press and also the major forms of writers who contributed to the standardization of English language, we find that English language also had become closer to the form in which we read and know it today. So this is in stark comparison with that of the old English and middle English forms which even look quite distant from modern English and it also takes some kind of a translate, some kind of a help of a translation to even understand and appreciate the text of those times.

But later on, from especially from Shakespeare's times onwards in the sixteenth, seventeenth century and in the later times we find that English is, English begins to take a more modern form not just in its speech and its variety but also in the ways in which the grammatical structure is formed, in its spelling and so on and so forth. So in this course as we have noted in the beginning, as it is important for us to take a look at the history of language alongside the history of literature, we also begin to note that history of language definitely shapes the ways in which writings, spellings, particular styles of forming words, forming expressions, vocabulary, they were all intermittently connected with each other.

Also in terms of spelling if we have noticed in their Middle English period and also in the earlier periods of the modern era, we find that a single writer used to use different kinds of spelling. Even in the same era we had different forms of spellings in place. But later on we find all of this getting standardized and it is useful to remember that even Shakespeare, his own name was spelt in about 80 different ways during this time. So some of these aspects

which we now take for granted did go through a historical process of evolution and historical process of standardization and it is important for us to know as students of language and literature to know that all of this together had contributed to the varied and multi-faceted history that English literature is comprised of.

So on this note we come to an end of this session and in one of the later sessions again we shall come back and take a look at the various ways in which English language continued to evolve and develop alongside the various forces, various literary and non-literary forces that shaped and redefined them. So that's all we have for today. We look forward to see you in the next session, thank you.