# AN OUTLINE OF THE HISTORY OF ENGLISH

# ИСТОРИЯ АНГЛИЙСКОГО ЯЗЫКА

Краткий курс лекций

*Рекомендовано*
*Учебно-методическим объединением по специальностям педагогического образования*
*в качестве учебного пособия для студентов высших учебных заведений,*
*обучающихся по специальности 050303 (033200) — иностранный язык*

**Нижневартовск**
**2009**

**ББК 81.2Англ-03**
**И 90**

Печатается по решению Редакционно-издательского совета
Нижневартовского государственного гуманитарного университета

*Рецензенты:*
*Швайко В.Д.* — доцент, кандидат филологических наук,
Башкирский государственный педагогический университет;
*Thomas H. Davis* — BA (with Honours), Postgraduate Certificate of Education,
Certificate in TEFL

**И 90** **История английского языка (Краткий курс лекций) = An Outline of the History of English** / Сост. Н.М.Перельгут. — Нижневартовск: Изд-во Нижневарт. гуманит. ун-та, 2009. — 94 с.

**ISBN 978–5–89988–653–6**

Пособие содержит краткое изложение истории английского языка, хрестоматию с выдержками из работ известных современных лингвистов с вопросами для обсуждения, библиографию по основным разделам и терминологический словарь.

Для студентов вузов или факультетов гуманитарного профиля, углубленно изучающих английский язык.

**ББК 81.2Англ-03**

Изд. лиц. ЛР № 020742. Подписано в печать 26.10.2009
Формат 60×84/8. Бумага для множительных аппаратов
Гарнитура Times. Усл. печ. листов 11,75
Тираж 500 экз. Заказ 960

*Отпечатано в Издательстве*
*Нижневартовского государственного гуманитарного университета*
*628615, Тюменская область, г.Нижневартовск, ул.Дзержинского, 11*
*Тел./факс: (3466) 43-75-73, E-mail: izdatelstvo@nggu.ru*

**ISBN 978–5–89988–653–6**

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*To the memory of Tatyana Adrianovna Rastorgueva*

# PREFACE

The History of English is a well-researched and well-described field of study. However, despite a dazzling array of various textbooks both abroad and in Russia, there seems to be a need for a brief reader-friendly book which would feature general trends and the most essential events in the language evolution. The above mentioned fact became the impetus for creating the present textbook, which is a brief outline of the major changes in phonetics, spelling, morphology and lexis, without referring to syntax. This book is addressed to those who do not major in English, but study the language as a second major, or for special purposes. Nevertheless, when used by students majoring in foreign languages, the book can serve as a bridge to a more specific and specialized study which is generally required of these students to undertake. It is intended not to supplant the more academically oriented and detailed publications but to provide support and lay the foundation for a more serious study.

This Outline of the History of English is based on the textbook written by professor T.A.Rastorgueva and her lectures delivered over the period of 1977–1979 in the Moscow State Pedagogical Institute of Foreign Languages after Maurice Thorez (now Moscow State Linguistic University). The book is designed by analogy with the Oxford Introductions to Language Study series edited by H.G.Widdowson and contains four parts: Survey, Readings, References, and Glossary.

SURVEY gives an overview of the major changes in the history of English from the Pre-Written Period to Early New English, highlights the relatedness of the language to the Indo-European Family and Germanic Group, as well as explores the period of normalization. It can be used as a preliminary reading for a more detailed study. If the reader needs illustrative examples or would wish to research the topic more thoroughly, the summary Survey directs you to other sources.

READINGS provide excerpts from the popular and academic specialist literature by modern prominent scholars, whose books may not be always easily accessible. The texts extracted from such literature aim to draw students' attention to some essential aspects, thereby encouraging them into careful critical reading. Some of the topics included into this section are not covered in the Survey, therefore Readings appear as a supplement in regard to the Survey problem coverage (e.g., word order). The texts are provided with questions to direct students' thought to points under discussion and compare them with the issues offered in the Survey.

REFERENCES contain the resources used by the author, as well as required and recommended literature (printed and electronic) and other visual materials.

GLOSSARY includes terms related to the evolution of English. These concepts and terms highly relevant to the language history facilitate understanding of the content of the Survey and Readings.

# SECTION 1

# SURVEY

## 1. POSITION OF ENGLISH AMONG OTHER LANGUAGES

### DIFFERENT ASPECTS OF LANGUAGE STUDY

Language is the subject to change like all other aspects of the universe. Proceeding from this, there are two aspects of language study: synchronic and diachronic. *Synchronic* ("together with time") linguistics concerns itself with the state of language at a given time, as fixed, i.e. in disregard of the processes of language development over time, taking no account of the origin of present day features or their tendencies to change. The synchronic approach is contrasted to *diachronic,* the study or development of language "through time". When considered diachronically, every linguistic fact is interpreted as a stage or step in the never ending evolution of language. In describing the language evolution we can present it as a series of synchronic stages (cross-sections), e.g. the language of the age of Chaucer ($14^{th}$ century) or the age of Shakespeare ($16^{th}$–$17^{th}$ centuries).

It's important to know not only *what* changed in the course of time, but also *how* and *why* these changes occurred. The evolution of language includes the *internal* or structural development of language system (in its different levels – phonetic or phonological, morphological, syntactic and lexical). Accordingly, the history of language can be subdivided into historical phonetics or phonology, historical morphology, historical syntax and historical lexicology).

Language evolution also includes many facts which refer to its functioning in the language speaking community, i.e. *external* history of the language (history of people speaking the language, contacts with other languages, social structure of the society, economic, political events, the growth of culture and literature, etc.).

### SUBJECT AND AIMS OF THE COURSE. ITS INTERDISCIPLINARY CHARACTER

The *subject* of the History of English comprises

1. the history of its *sounds* and *spelling*,
2. the evolution of its *grammatical system* (changes in the structure of words and their morphological categories, and changes in syntax),
3. the growth of *the vocabulary,*
4. and also the changing *historical conditions* of English speaking communities relevant to language history.

The course *aims* to:

1) *describe* the main facts in the history of English on the basis of existing written data,

2) provide *a historical explanation* for the main peculiarities of Present-Day English (PDE), since every fact of Modern English is a result of its past developments: e.g., consonant gradation in dea*th*-dea*d*, or why Present tense is used in clauses of time and condition, or verbs are grouped into standard/non-standard, etc.).

The History of English can offer explanations for the language of today at different levels, for example:

a) *Phonetic level*: the difficulties of reading and spelling (the written form of the English word is conventional rather than phonetic – the value of Latin letters as used in English differ greatly from their respective values in other languages. Cf.:

*bit* [bit] – three letters / three sounds – full correspondence;

*bite* [bait] – four letters / three sounds no correspondence between the vowels and their graphic representation ("e" is mute showing that "i" has its alphabetic value which is [ai], not "i" as in other languages);

*knight* [nait] – six letters / three sounds (*k* and *gh* do not stand for any sound, *gh* showing that "i" stands for [ai]).

(Explanation – in the history of the language: when Latin characters were first used in Britain (7th c.) writing was phonetic – the letters stood for the same sounds as in Latin, but with the introduction of printing in the 15th century the written form became fixed, while the sounds continued to change. This resulted in growing discrepancy between letter and sound form. Many modern spellings show how the words were pronounced some four or five hundred years ago, e.g. knight [knix't], root [ro:t], tale [ta:lə] ).

b) *Lexical level*: to discover the origin and development of the vocabulary.

| English | Other Germanic languages | Romance languages |
|---|---|---|
| give | G *geben,* Sw *giva* | – |
| *peace* (OE *frið*) | G *Frieden*<br>Sw *fred*<br>Dutch *vrede* | Fr *paix*<br>L *pace*<br>It *pace*<br>Sp *paz* |
| *army*<br>(OE *here*) | G *Heer*<br>Sw *här* | Fr *armée*<br>It *armata* |

*c) Grammatical level:* history of the language can explain why English has so few inflections (endings), how its "analytical" structure arose, fixed word-order, why modal verbs don't take '*s*' in the 3d person, sing., present, indicative; why some nouns add -*en* or change the root vowel to build their plural form e.g. *foot – feet* etc.

3) show *the position of English* among other languages and its historical *connections with other languages* which account for the similarities and dissimilarities of English with them;

4) show *the nature of linguistic changes* (their relative rate and chronology, their *external* and *internal* causes).

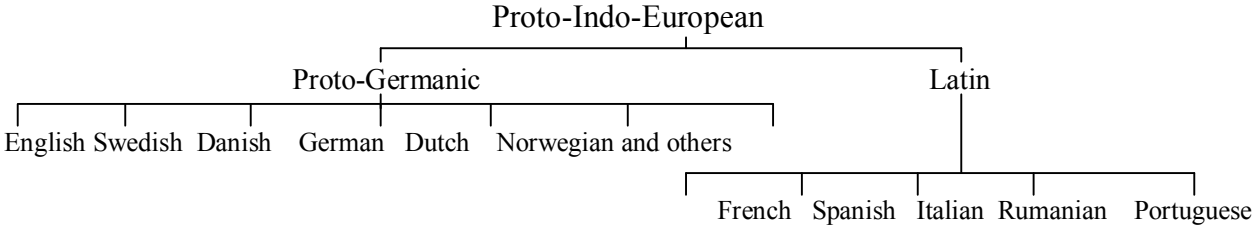
Thus, the history of language *is linked up* with other subjects both *theoretical and practical*: general linguistics, history and geography of Great Britain and the U.S., history of literature, grammar, phonetics, other foreign languages, Latin.

## THE GERMANIC LANGUAGE GROUP

*Morphological* classification of languages vs. *Genealogical*. Genealogical or genetic classification of languages is based on their common origin and inherited likeness.

The Indo-European (IE) family of languages is a vast family which includes among other (12) linguistic groups: Germanic or Teutonic, Italic, particularly Latin giving rise to Romance languages, Slavic languages, etc.

**Germanic and Romance branches of the Indo-European family**



*Modern Germanic Languages:*

**English** – in Great Britain, Ireland, the U.S.A., Canada, Australia, New Zealand, the South African Republic, and many other former British colonies and dominions;

**German** – in Germany, Austria, Luxemburg, Liechtenstein, part of Switzerland;

**Netherlandish** – in the Netherlands and Flanders (Belgium), known also as Dutch and Flemish (which until recently were named as separate languages);

**Afrikaans** – in the South African Republic;

**Danish** – in Denmark;

**Swedish** – in Sweden and Finland;

**Norwegian** – in Norway;

**Icelandic** – in Iceland;

**Frisian** – in some regions of the Netherlands and Germany;

**Faroese** – in the Faroe Islands (the last two are often referred to as dialects, since they are spoken over small politically independent areas);

**Yiddish** – in Israel and other countries.

The total number of people speaking Germanic languages – over 559 million.

The estimates for English – about 400 million people who have it as their mother tongue. In over 53 countries English is used as an official language (by bilingual people). Modern English is sometimes described as the global *lingua franca*.

All the Germanic languages are related through their *common origin and joint development* at the early stages of history.

The linguistic ancestor or the parent language of the Germanic group is *Proto-Germanic* (PG), (also termed Common Germanic or Primitive Germanic, Primitive Teutonic or simply Germanic). It is supposed to have split from related IE tongues sometime between the 15$^{th}$ and 10$^{th}$ centuries BC. (The would-be Germanic tribes belonged to the western division of the IE speech community).

*External (or outer) history of the Germanic languages:*

FIRST STAGE: **Common Germanic or Proto-Germanic** (also Primitive Teutonic) parent language, spoken by ancient Germanic tribes. Mention of ancient Germans or Teutons in Greek and Latin sources: Pitheas – a Greek historian and geographer of the 4$^{th}$ century BC in an account of a sea voyage to the Baltic sea; Julius Caesar – in the 1$^{st}$ century BC in his Commentaries on the Gallic War while describing some militant (ready for fighting) Germanic tribes; Pliny the Elder – a prominent Roman scientist and writer in "Natural History" made a list of Germanic tribes, grouping them under six headings; Tacitus, a Roman historian, compiled a detailed description of the life and customs of the ancient Teutons, reproducing Pliny's classification of the Germanic tribes; also Fridrich Angels' classification.

Toward the beginning of the first century AD the Common Germanic period came to an end. The Teutons had extended over a larger territory and the PG language broke into subgroups. In the early Middle Ages PG split into three branches: *East Germanic*, *North Germanic* and *West Germanic*. (In due course these branches split into separate Germanic Languages).

SECOND STAGE: **Old Germanic Languages**.

**Germanic languages**

| | **East Germanic** | **North Germanic** | **West Germanic** |
|---|---|---|---|
| Old Germanic languages (with dates of the earliest records) | Gothic (4$^{th}$ c.)<br>Vandalic<br>Burgundian | Old Norse or Old Scandinavian (2$^{nd}$-3d c.)<br>Old Icelandic (12$^{th}$ c.)<br>Old Norwegian (13$^{th}$ c.)<br>Old Danish (13$^{th}$ c.)<br>Old Swedish (13$^{th}$ c.) | Anglian, Frisian, Jutish, Saxon, Franconian, High German (Alemanic, Thűringian, Swavian, Bavarian)<br>Old English (7$^{th}$ c.)<br>Old Saxon (9$^{th}$ c.) |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | | Old High German (8th c.)<br>Old Dutch (12th c.) |
| Modern Germanic Languages | No living languages | Icelandic<br>Norwegian<br>Danish<br>Swedish<br>Faroese | English<br>German<br>Netherlandish (Dutch, Flemish)<br>Afrikaans<br>Yiddish<br>Frisian |

The earliest migration of Germanic tribes was from the lower valley of the Elbe to the North, to the Scandinavian Peninsula, a few hundred years before this. It led to the linguistic division of PG into the northern and southern branches first, but then some of the tribes returned to the mainland eastward. It is only from this stage that the Germanic languages can be described under three headings (see the table above).

The *East Germanic* subgroup was formed by the tribes who returned from Scandinavia at the beginning of our era. The most powerful and numerous of them were the *Goths.* They were the first to become Christians. The Gothic language, now dead (represents a form close to PG and therefore illuminates the prewritten history of all languages of the Germanic group), has been preserved in written records of the 4th–6th centuries. In the 4th century Ulfilas, a West Gothic Bishop, made a translation of the Gospels from Greek into Gothic using a modified form of the Greek Alphabet (200 pages in gold and silver letters, now kept in Uppsala, Sweden, called SILVER CODEX. It is one of the earliest texts in the languages of the Germanic group).

*North Germanic* subgroup was made up of the Teutons who stayed in Scandinavia, on the southern coast and in Northern Denmark, after the departure of the Goths. Their language – Old Norse or Old Scandinavian has come down to us in *Runic inscriptions* dated from the 3d to the 9th century (Runes were used by North and West Germanic tribes; the runic alphabet is a specific Germanic feature). The disintegration of Old Norse into dialects and languages began after the 9th century, when the Scandinavians started out on their sea voyages. The famous *Viking Age*, from about 800 to about 1042 AD, is the legendary age of Scandinavian raids and expansion overseas. Beginning with the 8th century the Scandinavian sea-raiders and merchants (Northmen) settled in different places, also in Normandy (named after them, in Northern France). Crossing the Baltic Sea they came to Russia – the "varyagi" of Russian Chronicles. Crossing the North Sea they made terrible attacks on English coastal towns and eventually occupied a large part of England – the Danes of the English Chronicles.

The principle linguistic differentiation in Scandinavia corresponded to the political division into *Sweden*, *Denmark* and *Norway*. Three kingdoms fought for dominance and the relative position of the three languages altered, as one or another of the powers prevailed over its neighbours. Denmark being the most powerful, embraced large territories including the greater part of the British Isles.

*West Germanic* tribes dwelt between the Oder and the Elbe. The West Germans included several tribes: *Low German group* – Franconians (or Franks), Saxons; Anglo-Frisian group: Frisians, Angles and Jutes. (*High German group*: Bavarians, Alemanians, Swevians and others).

At the stage of great migration period – in the 5th century a group of West Germanic tribes started out on their invasion of the British Isles. The invaders came from the lowlands near the North Sea: the **Angles**, part of the **Saxons** and **Jutes**, and, probably, the **Frisians**. Their dialects in the British Isles, specifically in the region they dominated, Angle-Land (England) developed into the English Language.

## COMMON FEATURES OF GERMANIC LANGUAGES

Apart from *external* history all the Germanic languages of the past and present have common *linguistic* features.

**1)** in *Phonetics* (word stress, vowels and consonants);

**2)** in *Grammar* (form-building means, verbs – strong and weak, word structure);

**3)** in *Lexis* (word-building patterns, vocabulary layers).

1) Peculiarities of PHONETICS of the Germanic group are seen in (a) *word accentuation*;

b) *vowel system* (independent vowel changes, Vowel Mutation) and (c) *consonant system* (1st Consonant Shift – Grimm's Law, voicing of fricatives – Verner's Law).

a) It is known that in ancient IE languages (prior to the separation of Germanic languages), there existed two ways of WORD ACCENTUATION: *musical pitch* and *force* stress. The position of the stress was *free*, i.e. it could fall on any part of a word: a root morpheme, affix or ending; and it was *flexible,* i.e. could shift in form-building and word-building (cf. R до́мом, дома́, домовни́чать, до́ма).

Both these properties of the word accent were changed in PG: *force stress* (expiratory or dynamic and breath stress) became the only type of stress, and its position became more stabilized by Late PG: it was fixed on the *first syllable*, usually *the root* of the word or sometimes the prefix (mostly in nouns and some adjectives). The stress could no longer move in either form-building or word-building, e.g. NE word of Germanic origin: become, becoming, overcome; lover, loving, beloved.

G: Liebe, lieben, liebte, géliebt, lieberhaft, Liebling.

(Cf. these native words with those of foreign origin which move the stress in derivation, though never in form building: éxhibit – v, exhíbition – n).

Unstressed (unaccented) suffixes and endings became less distinct and were phonetically weakened. Many endings merged (became one) with the suffixes, were weakened and eventually dropped. Cf., e.g. the reconstructed PG word 'fish' with its descendants in Old Germanic languages: PG *fiskaz**, Gt *fisks*, OE *fisc*. (The asterisk * means a reconstructed, hypothetical form).

b) *VOWELS* in PG underwent great changes (alterations) as compared with Common IE:

*qualitative* [o > a] and *quantitative* [i > i:],

*dependent* (positional, assimilative or combinative, i.e. restricted to certain positions or phonetic conditions, for instance, under the influence of the neighbouring sounds) and *independent* (spontaneous, or irregular, or non-assimilative, i.e. irrespective of phonetic conditions, affecting a certain sound in all positions).

**Independent vowel changes in Proto-Germanic**

| PIE | PG | Non-Germanic | Germanic | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | Old | Modern |
| o | a | R ночь | Gt nahts | G Nacht |
| | | R могу, мочь | Gt magan | NE may |
| a: | o: | L mater, R мать | OE mōdor | Sw moder, NE mother |

**Mutation of vowels in Late PG**

| Vowel change illustrated | | Non-Germanic | Germanic | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | Old | Modern |
| PIE | PG | | | |
| | i | L ventus, R ветер | Gt winds, OE wind | Sw vind, NE wind |
| e | | | | |
| | e | L edit, R ест | OE iteþ, | NE eats, |
| | | L edere, R есть | OE etan | G essen, NE eat |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| u | u | R сын | OE sunu | Sw son, NE son |
| | o | Celt hurnan | OE horn | Sw horn, NE horn |

After the changes, in Late PG, the vowel system contained the following sounds:

Short vowels: i, e, a, o, u

Long vowels: i:, e:, a:, o:, u:

It is believed that in PG there was also a set of diphthongs, made up of more open nuclei and closer glides: [ei], [ai], [eu], [au], [iu]. Some scholars, however, interpret them as sequences of two independent monophthongs.

c) Comparison with other languages within the IE family reveals regular correspondences between Germanic and Non-Germanic *CONSONANTS* (e.g. we find *f* in G and *þ* in other IE: e.g. *full* in E and *полный* in R) etc. The changes of consonants in PG were first formulated in terms of a phonetic law by Jacob Grimm in the early 19th century and are often called Grimm's Law (it is also known as the *1st or Proto-Germanic Consonant Shift*, to be distinguished from the 2nd shift which took place in the 9th century).

**Consonant Shift in Proto-Germanic (Grimm's Law)**

| PIE | PG | Non Germanic | Germanic | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | Old | Modern |
| **ACT I** | | | | |
| p | f | L pes | Gt fōtus, OE fōt | SW fot, NE foot |
| t | θ | L tres, R три | Gt Þreis, OE Þrēo | NE three |
| k | x | L cordis | Gt hairto, OE heort | G Herz, NE heart |
| **ACT II** | | | | |
| b | p | R болото | OE pōl | NE pool |
| d | t | R десять | GT taihun, OE tien | NE ten |
| g | k | L genu | OE cnēo | NE knee, G Knie |
| **ACT III*** | | | | |
| bh | v/b | O Ind bhrata | Gt broþar | NE brother |
| dh | ð/d | O Ind rudhira | OE rēad | NE red |
| gh | γ/g | L hostis, R гость | Gt gasts, OE giest | NE guest |

*IE aspirated plosives corresponding to G non-aspirated.

Another important change of consonants PG was discovered in late 19th c. by a Danish scholar Carl Verner (and is known as Verner's Law or voicing of fricatives). According to it all the early PG *voiceless* fricatives [f, θ, x] and also [s] became *voiced* between vowels if the preceding vowel was unstressed , i.e. [v, ð, γ] and [z], e.g.

PIE – pater > Early PG faθar > faðar > Late PG faðar.

2) Common features of Germanic languages in GRAMMAR: like other IE languages Germanic languages were *inflectional* and originally *synthetic,* all, especially English, developing analytical means of form-building and word connection in later history.

In PG period the grammatical forms were built in the synthetic way: by means of a) *inflections* (the principle means of form building), b) *sound interchanges* and c) *suppletion*, the latter being inherited from ancient IE and restricted to a few adjectives, verbs and personal pronouns:

**Suppletive forms of personal pronouns**

| L | Gt | OE | NE |
|---|---|---|---|
| ego | ik | ic | I |
| mei | meina | min | my, mine |
| mihi | mis | mē | me |

Vowel interchanges in PG period is called *vowel gradation or ablaut* (it is independent sound change), it was used as a special device to differentiate between words and grammatical forms built from the same root, mostly in the so called *strong* verbs. (Ablaut was inherited from IE languages, it could be *qualitative* like [o-e] in нести – ноша, or *quantitative* (in case of alternations of short and long vowels or with a zero, i.e. lack of vowel).

e.g. Inf. – reisan, Past sg. – rais, Past pl. risum, P II – risans (NE – rise).

VERBS in PG language fall into *strong* and *weak* (Jacob Grimm's term) according to the way they built their principal forms (the Present tense, the Past tense and P II). The *strong* verbs (called so because of richness of their forms if contrasted to weak verbs lacking such variety of form) built their forms with the help root *vowel interchange* plus *grammatical endings.*

The *weak* verbs are a specifically Germanic innovation, for the device used in building their principal forms is not found outside the Germanic group (they built the Past tense and Participle II by inserting a special suffix between the root and the ending – ð, which is referred as dental, being an interdental fricative consonant):

Gt Inf. – *domijan*, Past tense – *domida* [ð], P II – *domiþs* (NE deem, deemed – believe, consider).

A poor *Tense* system (in Old Germanic languages and PG) – two tenses (Past and Present); later the verb system was gradually enriched by analytical forms and new grammatical categories. Alongside the category of tense there were three more: person, number and mood.

Like other IE languages Germanic languages had a *complicated* system of NOUN *declensions* based on the division according to stem-suffixes (a-stem, u-stem, etc.). Alongside cases the noun had two more grammatical categories: number and gender.

The declension of ADJECTIVES was made up of two types – *weak* and *strong* which was later lost (originally a specifically Germanic feature). The form of the adjective depended on the form of the noun it modified.

SYNTACTICALLY the languages were characterized by free arrangement of words. Although Proto-Indo-European has been reconstructed as an originally rather consistent OV (Object – Verb) language by way of comparative reconstruction, in the oldest Germanic texts, there were found occasional OV patterns. Thus, in the PG language they were replaced by VO patterns.

3) The LEXIS of PG and Old Germanic languages was made up of:

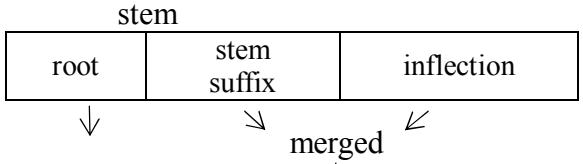
a) the most *ancient IE layer* shared by most IE languages (semantic spheres: natural phenomena, plants and animals, terms of kinship, verbs denoting basic activities of man, some pronouns and numerals; besides, word-building affixes and grammatical inflections or endings); *specifically Germanic* words which occur only in Germanic languages and have no parallels outside the group. They also belong to basic spheres of life: nature, sea, home life; it includes not only roots but also affixes and word-building patterns (Gt – hús, OE – hūs, G – Haus, NE – house).

*Both* etymological *layers* of the vocabulary – the IE and specifically G – are *native words*.

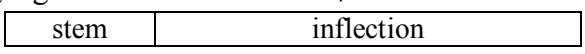
b) In addition to native words there were some *borrowings* made from other languages, e.g. from Celtic – *iron* in Late PG: cf. Celt *isarno*, Gt *eisarn*, OE *īsen*, *īren.* (The Teutons may have learnt the processing of iron from the Celts). A large number of words must have been borrowed from Latin prior to the migration of the Germanic tribes to Britain (they mostly refer to trade, and warfare; e.g. L *pondō*, Gt *pund*, OE *pund*, NE *pound;* L *strata, via*, OE *stræt*, NE *street*).

WORD STRUCTURE. Originally, in early PG the word consisted of three main components (like in PIE): the root, the stem suffix and the grammatical ending. In Late PG the stem-suffix lost its derivational force and merged with other components of the word, usually with endings.

IE and PG:




Old Germanic languages:




e.g. PG *mak-ōj-an** OE *mac-ian,* Past Tense *mac-ode* (NE make, made)

## 2. A Short Survey of the Periods in the History of English

### The Framework for Dating the Periods in the History of English

Traditionally the history of English is divided into three major periods: Old English (OE, sometimes referred to as Anglo-Saxon), Middle English (ME), New or Modern English (NE). The last period is sometimes further divided into two to give Early Modern/New English (ENE) and Late Modern English or Present-Day English (PDE). Although language history is a slow evolutionary continuous and uninterrupted process, some ages witnessed more intensive changes, which enables us to regard them as transitions between more stable periods and to fix dividing lines roughly corresponding to events of *external history* (affecting language development). The main distinguishing features between the periods are to be found in *a) external conditions* or historical background and *b)* language (*internal*) peculiarities: *phonetics* (and *spelling*), *grammar, and vocabulary*.

### A Short Survey of the Periods

The Old English Period (OE, also known as the Old English language) begins with the settlement of West Germanic tribes in the British Isles (5$^{th}$century) where they founded a number of "barbarian" kingdoms. Social and economic system, tribal, slave-owning, gradually passing into feudal towards the close of the period (11$^{th}$century). *Tribal dialects* accordingly changed into *local* or *regional dialects*, with one or another dialect prevailing owing to political and economic supremacy. Introduction of Christianity (late 6$^{th}$ century in Kent) and Scandinavian invasions (beginning in late 8$^{th}$ century). Geographically OE covers what is called England proper. Earliest records in the Northumbrian dialect (in Runic and Latin script), later, especially 9$^{th}$–10$^{th}$ century manuscripts are in the West Saxon dialect (kingdom of Wessex), also Latin. Genres: poetry, religious works, chronicles, charters (legal documents). Authors: King Alfred the Great, Ælfric or unknown. Linguistically OE was a genuine Old Germanic language close to Proto Germanic and to related old Germanic tongues.

*Phonetic structure* is close to Proto Germanic and other Old Germanic languages with obvious consequences of the 1$^{st}$ Consonant Shift and Verner's Law, with Germanic word stress. The most significant OE innovations are to be found in the vowel system – enriched by specifically OE sounds largely due to assimilative changes in vowel quality (both new diphthongs and monophthongs); spelling (Latin script and some Runes) reflected accurately the phonetic (sometimes phonemic) structure.

*Grammatically OE* was a purely Germanic language practically without innovations since the Proto-Germanic stage: inflected language with a rich morphological system of nouns, adjectives, pronouns, twofold declension of adjectives, numerous declensions of nouns (stems), and a poor verb system (two tenses), strong verbs subdivided into the usual Old Germanic seven classes according to vowel gradation and weak verbs using a dental suffix. Most obvious specific OE features are not shared by all OG languages: dual number in pronouns, three classes of weak verbs (instead of four). Period of *'full endings'*.

The vocabulary, etymologically, was almost purely Germanic with layers from IE and Proto Germanic, and borrowings of the OE time: a few from the Celtic tongues in Britain and a great number from Latin through the British Celts Romanized during the Roman occupation, or due to the dominance of Latin as the language of the Church, learning and writing (due to the introduction of Christianity).

Middle English, 1100–1500, is traditionally considered to have started after 1066 (the Norman Conquest). Local dialects remain disunited, with no common national language. Dialectal differences are further emphasized by the Scandinavian influence in the North-East (due the

Scandinavian invasion) and French, in the South and in the higher social ranks owing to the Norman Conquest. The Norman period in history is a period of French as an official and literary language. There is gap in written records, ME records in local dialects with the London dialect (based on the Southern and East Midland dialects) emerging as literary language in Late ME (14th century). Flourishing of writing in the 'Age of Chaucer'. Geographically English spreads to cover the entire British Isles.

*Phonetics*. The Germanic system of word stress is partly obliterated due to the addition of numerous French borrowings with a different system of word stress and due to stress shifts in the course of their assimilation. Vowels undergo positional changes in quantity, which undermine the contrast of short and long phonemes. Some OE consonants give rise to a new set of sibilants and affricates (previously lacking), some consonants together with preceding vowels, form new diphthongs. ME spelling reflected some of the changes and was influenced by French spelling (mainly seen in the introduction of digraphs).

*Grammar* in ME is considerably simplified. The inflections, which had begun to break down towards the end of the OE period, become gradually reduced, and it is consequently known as the period of reduced or *'leveled endings'*. Noun declensions were practically lost, the four case system reduced to two cases, adjectives retained but slight traces of declension. Simplification as yet slightly affected the verb conjugation. Great changes are underway in the system of verbal grammatical categories as analytical forms appeared in ME (e.g., the Passive Voice, Perfect Forms).

The *vocabulary* suffers the greatest change in its etymological composition. The Scandinavian element and the French element accounted for by historical conditions; additions and replacement in the vocabulary (heaven – sky; æhte – tresur, NE treasure) hence loss of its 'purely Germanic' character and its Romanisation.

THE MODERN OR NEW ENGLISH PERIOD begins in the late 15th century. The traditionally accepted starting point is 1476 (the date of the introduction of printing by William Caxton), or 1485 (when the Tudors (Lancastrians) replaced the Plantagenets (Yorkists) after the battle of Bosworth). Politically and economically, the years 1500–1700 witnessed the growth of capitalism, the *political* unification of England, the age of great discoveries; the Renaissance, cultural and industrial development and the growth of the English nation and the national English language on the basis of the London dialect as a super-dialectal form absorbing various dialectal features. Up to 1660 the period is known as EARLY NEW (MODERN) ENGLISH, with the unprecedented flourishing of literature in the age of Shakespeare and the Literary Renaissance – the codification/fixation of literary norms; first grammars and dictionaries throughout the Elizabethan age to the late 17th / early 18th century, the expansion of English overseas and the establishment of colonies later to become the British Empire.

Shifts in word stress continue in borrowed words, consequently the Germanic system is greatly disguised. Great changes, especially the Great Vowel Shift, affect the vowels and not being reflected in spelling result in a *gap between the written and the spoken word*. Hence the traditional or conservative principles of modern spelling. Consonant changes (losses and vocalisations) produced similar results.

Few changes in the nominal system: adjective loses the last traces of declensions, the former functions of the cases are regularly performed by analytical means (word order and prepositions). Simplification affects the verbs: personal endings, division into classes. Analytical forms continue to grow, embrace both finite and non-finite forms and make up new grammatical categories. Period of *'lost endings'*.

The vocabulary grows both due to borrowings (from classical and contemporary languages) and through word formation, derivational means of native and foreign origin growing productive. Simplification of the grammatical system favours conversion and facilitates assimilation of borrowings.

# 3. OLD ENGLISH PERIOD

## OE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND. "PREHISTORIC" BRITAIN. ROMAN INVASION

The earliest occupants of the country who came from the Continent and whose language is known as belonging to a certain linguistic group are the Gallic-Britannic Celtic tribes, hence Britain, the British Isles and Brittany (in France); Welsh and Cornish (in Wales and Cornwall); and the Gaellic branch – Irish, Scottish, Erse and Manx. They had lived there from about 750 BC and their earliest mention is by Pitheas (4th century BC). In 55 BC Britain was first attacked by Caesar's legions and in 43 AD by Claudius and soon made a Roman-province. Roman civilization led to fortifications, roads, towns, villas, camps, castles (Lat. 'castra'), trade, building and agricultural techniques. As a result of all this, the Celts became Rominised (the beginning of London/Londinium).

The Roman occupation ended in 410 AD when Rome was attacked by the Visigoths. The Germanic invasions of the British Isles started in the middle of the 5th century and lasted into the 6th century. The West Germanic tribes came from modern Denmark, West Germany and the Northern Netherlands as settlers in tribes and tribal groupings, driving the Celts into the Northern and Western parts of the British Isles: **Jutes** and/or **Frisians** settled in Kent; **Saxons** – in the Thames valley and **Angles** – to the north of them up to the border with modern Scotland. They spoke different varieties of their language even if the varieties were mutually intelligible. They founded several kingdoms (heptarchy), intermixed and differentiated into four *regional dialectal groups*: *Kentish* (Jutish or Frisian) in Kent, which was a powerful kingdom before the age of written records; *Mercian* and *Northumbrian* (from the Angles), the latter region becoming the centre of culture in the 6th–7th centuries (especially in the island of Lindisfarne); and *West Saxon* which became the main written language in the 9th–10th centuries. Tribal dialects thus changed into local or regional. Christianity was brought from Rome to Kent by St. Augustine's mission and also from Ireland through Northumbria during its period of cultural supremacy. Monastic learning flourished; Northumbrian monks were the first to use Latin letters to record English words.

In the late 8th century Scandinavian raids began with the notorious destruction of Lindisfarne in 787. Supremacy shifted to Wessex (the West Saxons) especially in the late 9th century under King Alfred (Alfred the Great). His successful war against the Danes led to the Wedmore Treaty and the division of England into Anglo-Saxon lands under Wessex and 'Danelaw' under the Danes (878). Alfred was also famous for his cultural activities and for encouraging learning, schools and literature. The Scandinavian attacks were renewed in the late 10th century and soon England fell under political dominance of the powerful Danish Empire (under Canute), although their economic and cultural ties were weak.

Traces of Celtic, Roman (Latin) and Germanic influences can be found in place names and the consequences of this mix of linguistic development led to the beginning of a separate history for this group of West Germanic spoken dialects which were closely related and separated from all other related languages. In the transition from tribal to feudal structure they grow closer on a single territory but developed new differences in the feudal disunited state. Foreign contacts resulted in borrowings from Celtic (from the native Celts), Latin from the Romanised Celts and through the Church (due to Christianization) and in late OE – through contacts with Old Scandinavian.

## WRITING AND WRITTEN RECORDS IN OLD ENGLISH

The group of spoken dialects in Britain since the mid 5th century was recorded in writing from the 7th century (the proceeding period may be called *Pre-Written* OE). The ***Runic*** and ***Latin*** alphabets were used. The runes were never as widely used in Britain as in Scandinavia but examples

exist such as *Frank's Casket* in the British Museum which has texts in both the Runic and Latin alphabets and in both OE and Latin, and in the poem on the *Ruthwell Cross*. There are also inscriptions on coins, rings, amulets, weapons and many runic insertions in manuscripts (MS), and sometimes separate letters (Runes) used together with the Latin characters, e.g. þ (thorn).

MS on parchment are written in the Latin script with some *modifications* introduced by British scribes to record specifically English sounds. Records exist in the four main dialects: *Kentish, Mercian, Northumbrian, West Saxon*. There is a word for word OE 'gloss' of the Lindisfarne (***Northumbrian***) Gospels. The "Church History of England" written by the Northumbrian monk Bede in Latin was later translated into *West Saxon* as was Caedmon's Hymn. There are also religious lyrical and heroic poems, Beowulf being the most famous. ***Mercian*** records are few (some hymns written in Latin have glossaries) and there are some charters in ***Kentish***. There are more ***West Saxon*** records than those in all the other OE dialects put together. There are "corrected" copies of Northumbrian poetry, the Anglo-Saxon Chronicles, and translations by *Alfred the Great* and his circle of scholars and *Ælfric's works* which include a Latin grammar and a Latin-OE vocabulary in his history of the saints. West Saxon (WS) manuscripts are the main source of our knowledge of OE. OE texts began to be studied and read in the l7th century together with Gothic texts and were published with commentary and translations in the 19th century and later used by compilers of dictionaries including the New English Dictionary (NED).

## OLD ENGLISH ALPHABET

OE scribes used two kinds of letters: *the Runes* and letters of the *Latin alphabet* (first used by Northumbrian scribes to write in English, with some modifications and additions to indicate OE sounds). The variety of the Latin alphabet used in Britain is known as Irish, or insular, minuscule.

In the OE variety **i** and **j** were not distinguished, nor were **u** and **v,** the letters **k, q, x** and **w** were not used until many years later.

A new letter was devised by putting a stroke through **d** – **đ** or **ð** (to indicate a voiceless or voiced interdental [**θ**] and [**ð**]).

The letter **a** was used either alone or as a part of a ligature made up of **a** and **e** – **æ,** there was also **œ (o** plus **e),** replaced later by **e**.

The most interesting peculiarity of OE – *runic* characters: **þ** 'thorn' (it was employed alongside **đ** and **ð** to indicate [**θ**] and [**ð**]) and **Þ** 'wynn' for the sound [w]. Some runes were used as symbols for words.

OE writing was based on the *phonetic principle*: every letter indicated a separate sound.

**OE alphabet**

| | |
|---|---|
| **a** | **n** [n], [ŋ] |
| **æ** | **o** |
| **b** | **p** |
| **c** [k] or [k'] | **r** |
| **d** | **s** [s] or [z] |
| **e** | **t** |
| **f** [f] or [v] | ***þ, ð*** [ð] or [θ] |
| **ʒ** [g], [g'], [γ] or [j] | **u** |
| **h** [x], [x'], or [h] | **w** |
| ***i*** | **x** |
| ***l*** | **y** (a front labialized vowel like that in French *plume*) |
| ***m*** | |

## OLD ENGLISH PHONETICS AND PRONUNCIATION

WORD ACCENT (stress) in OE is Germanic, hence heavy (force), dynamic, and *fixed* (on the first syllable or root-morpheme, remained on the same syllable in different grammatical forms). Polysyllabic words (compounds) had two stresses, the main being fixed on the root morpheme. The gradual weakening of vowels in unstressed position since the Common Germanic period had resulted in OE in a smaller number of vowels occurring in unstressed syllables (than in stressed ones) – only a few short vowels occur unstressed. Vowels were different in quantity (their length) and quality.

VOWEL SYSTEM. In stressed position – 21 vowels; in unstressed – smaller number of vowels Vowels were different in quantity (their length) and quality.

| | MONOPHTHONGS | DIPHTHONGS |
|---|---|---|
| LONG | ī ē æ ā ō ū ӯ | ēa eo ie |
| SHORT | i e æ å a o u y | ea eo ie |

Two almost symmetrical sets – long and short (opposed through quantity) with various qualitative differences within each set – close open, monophthongs, diphthongs, etc. (all the diphthongs – 'opening' i.e. with an open glide). The sounds of both rows occur in stressed position and only part of the lefthand bottom row occur in an unstressed position.

The vowels had changed since PG due to OE specific developments seen from comparing OE words with words of other Old Germanic languages (parallels), where those changes were lacking or less varied. The main Early (prewritten) OE changes that account for the differences of OE vowels from those of other Germanic languages: *splitting* of G short *a* (IE a and o) and WG long ā; development of Germanic (normal) diphthongs into OE ēa, ēo, ā (illustrated, wherever possible, in the text ).

Other innovations in OE are *changes of quality* by assimilation (dependent changes):

*breaking* (or fructure) – before l, h, r + other consonant, accounts mainly for the short diphthongs (especially, eo – G [e] > [eo] in OE *deorc* (NE dark): Gt alls > WS eall (NE all), Gt ahtau > WS eaht (NE eight), Gt hardus > WS heard (NE hard);

*diphthongisation* – after sk' or k', e.g., OHG skild > WS scield (NE shield);

*palatal mutation* – i / j in the next syllable, later lost, direction of the change – narrowing and fronting of vowels: Gt *mats* – OE *mete* (NE meat). In OE palatal mutation accounts for the appearance of y, ӯ , and the diphthongs ie, ie and for closer and more front vowels in place of more open back vowels: Gt fullian > OE fyllan (NE full, fill).

(The phonologisation of alophones or of vowel sequences which results in the rise of new phonemes, and thus in the increased number of vowel phonemes: PG [a+i] > OE [a:], e.g. Gt stains > OE stān (NE stone).

CONSONANTS were inherited from Proto-Germanic with few changes or innovations. Results of Grimm' s and Verner' s laws are practically the same as in other Old Germanic languages except that **ð** had changed into **d** – *hardening*, e.g. Gt wasiđa > OE werede (NE wore, Past of wear); the 'dental suffix'), and [**z**] due to Verner' s law had changed into [**r**] – *rhotacism*, e.g. Gt wasjan > OE werian (NE wear); recall NE was – were. Other changes:

*voicing* and *devoicing* – the fricatives ð/Þ , s/z and f/v were positional variants (allophones), they became voiced or voiceless in Early OE depending on position (intervocal or not);

*palatalisation* and *splitting of velar consonants*: lingual plosives and fricatives split into [g] and [g'] (soft), [k] and [k'] (soft) also [sk'], [ʃ] and [ j ], [x] and [x'], which later gave rise to new sibilants, affricates; some of them were vocalised and lost;

*loss of consonants* in some positions – nasal sonorants before fricatives, e.g. Gt *fimf* > OE *fif* (NE five);

*gemination* or doubling of consonants – they were lengthened after a short vowel before [j] (*fulian > OE fyllan, NE fill).

OE consonant peculiarities: no sibilants or affricates.

**Rules of reading for letters indicating more than one sound**

| | OE | | NE |
|---|---|---|---|
| **f** | [v] | ofer [ˊover] | over |
| | | selfa ['selva] | self |
| | [f] | feohtan ['feohtan] | fight |
| | | oft ['oft] | often |
| **s** | [z] | risan ['ri:zan] | rise |
| | [s] | ras [ra:s] | rose |
| **þ / ð** | [ð] | ōðer [ˊo:ðer] | other |
| | | wyrþe [ˊwyrðe] | worthy |
| | [θ] | ðæt [θæt] | that |
| | | lēoþ [leo:θ] | song |
| **ȝ** | [g] | ȝræs, ȝlǣm, ȝān, ȝōd, *ȝy*ltiȝ | go |
| | [j] | dæȝ, ȝear, dæȝes | day, year, days |
| | [γ] | daȝas, daȝum, fy**l**ȝan, beo**r**ȝ | days |
| | [g'] | secgan | say |
| **h** | [x] | feohtan | fight |
| | [x'] | hē | he |
| **n** | [n] | niht | night |
| | [ŋ] | sinȝan | sing |

***f, s,*** and ***þ, ð*** – are voiced between vowels and also between a vowel and a voiced consonant; otherwise they indicate voiceless fricatives.

**ȝ** stands for [g] before consonants, initially before back vowels, and before front vowel resulting from umlaut (ȝ**y**ltiȝ); for [j] before or between front vowels and finally after a front vowel; for [γ] (a voiced velar fricative) between back vowels or after [l] or [r]; and [g'] when preceded by ***c***.

***h*** – [x] between a back vowel and a consonant, or initially before consonants; and [x'] – before front vowels.

***n*** – [n] in all positions, but when followed by [k] or [g] was pronounced [ŋ].

## OLD ENGLISH GRAMMAR. NOMINAL SYSTEM: NOUNS. ADJECTIVES. PRONOUNS

Like other Old Germanic Languages and PG, OE was an inflected, synthetic language. The form-building means:

*1)* numerous *inflections* or endings (period of 'full endings' as compared to later periods), grammatical prefixes are few, the prefix **ȝe-** irregularly marking Participle II;

*2) sound interchanges* (alternations);

*3) suppletive* sets of forms.

There were no analytical forms.

The grammatical categories of the NOMINAL PARTS OF SPEECH (with the number of forms): *Number, Case and Gender* in Nouns, Pronouns and Adjectives. (Note: the *dual number* in some *pronouns*; the *Instrumental case in adjectives*; the weak and strong forms of adjectives – a sort of 'category' of 'definiteness / indefiniteness'). All parts of speech used as attributes or predicatives *agree* in case, number, gender with the noun modified.

NOUN declensions are termed *stems*, as they show the grouping of nouns according to the "stem-suffix" (the morphological structure of the word had been simplified since Common Germanic from "*root + stem-suffix + ending*" into "root or stem + new ending", usually the stem-suffix and former ending fused and nouns were grouped into types of declension or "stems" with a specific set of endings for each type (e.g. **a-** and **n-stems**). Some stems are more numerous and influential than others, especially **a**-stems, **ō** –stems (strong, vocalic stems), and **n**-stems (weak, consonantal stems); note also root-stems (no stem-suffix hence root vowel interchanges due to palatal mutation in some forms). There are four cases: *Nominative, Genitive, Dative* and *Accusative*. Many case-forms are *homonymous* in the same paradigm, especially *Nominative* and *Accusative*, some endings are the same for all declensions (e.g. 'nama', or 'mūs').

Nouns had two *Numbers* – singular and plural and three *Genders.* In OE gender was primarily a grammatical distinction; Masculine, Feminine, and Neuter nouns could have different forms, even if they belonged to the same stem (type of declension).

Traces of the OE noun declension in Modern English (case and number forms coming from ME and NE a-stems, n-stems, root-stems: wolf – wolves (descendant of a-stem), foot – feet (descendant of root-stem).

PERSONAL PRONOUNS had a dual number alongside singular and plural, also suppletive forms, e.g. *ic* (sg.), *wit* (dual), *wē* (pl.). In the beginning of OE, the use of second person is as follows: *thou* and its other case forms *thee, thy, thine* are used in talking to one person; *you* and its forms *ye*, *your*, *yours* are used in talking to more than one person; *thou* and *ye* are used as the subject, while thee and you as the object of a sentence. (Things began to change during ME). *Demonstrative pronouns* – the source of the definite article. They were declined like adjectives according to a five-case system: Nominative, Genitive, Dative, Accusative and Instrumental, the latter having a special form only in the Masc. and Neut., singular. Other classes of pronouns: interrogative, indefinite (the latter with the negative particle *ne* could create a negative pronoun). Personal and demonstrative pronouns could be used as connectives in a relative function.

ADJECTIVES. OE adjective has the largest number of categories: case, number, gender, degrees of comparison, definiteness / indefiniteness. All categories (except degrees of comparison) are syntactically dependent. Two declensions correspond formally to noun declensions but function differently, adjectives do not belong to declensions, one and the same adjective being declined in two ways depending on syntactic conditions – "*weak"* forms when preceded by *demonstrative* pronouns to point to "definite" objects, and "strong" (pronominal) forms used without demonstrative pronouns to point to "indefinite" objects, or used predicatively. Weak forms are easy to identify (similar to n-stem noun declension), strong forms make use of noun and pronoun endings.

## OLD ENGLISH VERB. GRAMMATICAL CATEGORIES AND FORMS

THE FINITE VERB in OE had four categories: of *Mood, Tense, Number and Person*. The **three moods** – Indicative, Imperative and Subjunctive – had roughly the same meaning as in PDE, except that Subjunctive was also used in indirect speech, and several subordinate clauses where it is not found today. The Indicative and the Subjunctive moods distinguished **two tenses**: Past and Present; the present and the past tenses of the Indicative mood (the Present and Past Indefinite in modem terms) had a wider meaning and application than their descendents today; the Past expressing any action prior to the present moment; the Present, besides expressing all kinds of actions in the present, regularly denoted future actions (also indicated by the context, e.g. adverbial modifiers of time – traces of the latter usage can be illustrated in NE with clauses of time and condition, etc.). **Number** was distinguished in the forms of the Indicative and Subjunctive, in both tenses and in the Imperative mood (Singular and Plural); **Person** – 1-st, 2-nd, 3-rd was distinguished only in the Singular of the Indicative Mood. (Table showing part of the verb paradigm).

THE NON-FINITE FORMS, the Infinitive and two Participles (Participle I, "present", and Participle II, "past") had no verbal categories, except that the two participles differed in the meaning of time ("tense") and activity/passivity ("voice") like their modern counterparts. They had nominal and adjectival features, the **Participles** being verbal adjectives, the **Infinitive** – a sort of verbal noun. The Participle was declined to show agreement with the noun in *number, case and gender*; it also distinguished between *"strong" and "weak"* forms like the adjective. The Infinitive had two forms – the *uninflected* form (the "Nominative" case) and the *inflected form* with the preposition *to* ("Dative" case) used in *the meaning of purpose* or direction. The Infinitive without 'to' is used after modal verbs.

All the verb forms, finite and non-finite, were built from the three or four principal forms or stems: 1) the *Infinitive or Present tense* stem (for all the present forms), 2) *the Past tense* stem (or stems) and 3) *Participle II*. All Old English verbs fall into three subdivisions differing in the way of building principal forms: **strong, weak and anomalous**.

*Strong verbs* are marked by vowel *gradation* (ablaut) sometimes also by consonant interchanges, they had four principal forms (two for the Past tense); they had *no ending* in the second principal form (Past 1-st and 3-rd person sg.) and *-en* in Particile II. There were about 300 strong verbs grouped into *seven classes*, the same as in other Old Germanic languages. The first and the third were the most numerous. The classes differed in the series of vowel gradation.

*Weak verbs* built the Past and Participle II by adding the dental suffix (OE *d* or *t*); they had the ending -e in the Past stem and -d,-t for Participle II. They fell into *three classes*; the second being the most numerous and regular. Division into classes rested upon stem-suffixes employed in early ("prewritten") periods in the derivation of these verbs.

Mention should be made of the *anomalous verbs* (suppletive 'be' and the preterite-present, e.g. forms of cån).

**Morphological classification of OE verbs**

| Strong | Weak | Minor groups |
|---|---|---|
| *Seven* classes with different gradation series | *Three* classes with different stem-suffixes | Preterite-present<br>Suppletive<br>Anomalous |
| (I) Inf. *wrītan* (Past sing. -wrāt, Past pl. – writon, P II – writen)<br>NE – write | (I)-an/-ian (Inf.) – *styrian*<br>-de/-ede/-te (Past tense)<br>styrede<br>-ed/-d/-t (P II)<br>styred<br>NE – stir | *Preterite-present* – (6 have survived in NE )<br>*cann* (canst, cann, cunnon, Past – cūðe, cūðest, etc.)<br>*sceal* (l) (scealt, sculon, Past – sceolde, sceoldest, sceoldon)<br>*maȝan*, mæȝ, PI – maȝende<br>NE – may |
| (II) *cēosan* (cēas, curon, coren)<br>NE – choose | (II) Inf. '-ian' – *locian*<br>Past t. '-ode' – locode<br>P II '-od' – locod<br>NE – look | *Suppletive* – ȝān – eōde –<br>ȝe- ȝān (NE – go)<br>*beon* – 1st p. sg. – eom, bēo, 2nd p. – eart, bist (NE – be) |
| (III–VII) | (III) Inf. '-an' – *libban*<br>Past t. '-de' – lifde<br>P II '-d'– lifd<br>NE – live | *Anomalous* (with irregular forms) – *willan* (willað, Past – wolde) NE will, would;<br>*dōn* – dyde – ȝe-dōn (NE do) |

## OLD ENGLISH LEXIS

The lexis can be described regarding origin or *etymology*, the *morphological structure* of words, *word building*, *stylistic reference* or *register*.

ETYMOLOGICALLY the OE vocabulary contained native words and a small proportion of borrowings (over 400). *Native* words belong to different etymological layers reflecting different pre-written stages: words of the ancient Indo-European layer, words of the specifically Germanic (Proto-Germanic) layer, and Old English formations with native roots. *Borrowed* words reflect contacts with other languages at different stages: Celtic borrowings are few; they were made on the continent prior to the Germanic invasion of the British Isles and in Britain, especially place names. Latin borrowings can be subdivided into: a) borrowings made by ancient Teutons on the mainland prior to the migrations (hence shared by many Germanic languages); b) borrowings in Britain, made through the Romanised Celts, there being no direct contacts between the West Germanic tribes and the Romans in Britain; c) borrowings made owing to the introduction of Christianity. She first two layers must have been oral borrowings, the latter adopted through translating Latin texts into OE. The three layers show the nature of contacts with the Romans and Roman culture – trade and war with the Romans, the Roman occupation of Britain which had left traces in building, agriculture, everyday life; the dominance of Latin can be observed in the sphere of religion, learning and writing, and place names with Latin components. Examples of all the layers are found as surviving Modern words.

Besides loan-words mention should be made of "translation-loans": e.g., names of week-days. Translation-loans and the relatively small number of borrowings in OE generally bear out the resistance of OE to borrowing (reluctance to adopting foreign words)

As for MORPHOLOGICAL STRUCTURE, OE words were *simple*, *derived* or *compound*, the WORD BUILDING means being *derivation* and *word-composition*. Derivation was achieved by prefixation, especially in verbs, and suffixation, especially in nouns and adjectives; suffixation was sometimes accompanied by sound interchanges. Few prefixes but quite a number of suffixes survived in later ages, also some sound interchanges. The ancient stem-suffixes had long been dead by the time of OE. New suffixes had developed in the Pre-Written Periods and were still appearing in OE – hence there were words of intermediate status – between compound and derived. The source of new suffixes are the second root-morphemes of compound words -dom, -scip, -had (the process of morphological simplification). Compound words were either formed by combining stems or resulted from word groups connected originally by the usual grammatical means of connection used in the word phrases (e.g., case-endings in the first of the two nouns, modifying the second noun) which had fused into single words (eg., mid +niht – NE midnight, sunnan + daʒ – NE Sunday).

The total number of words in OE is not known, the data being limited to the evidence of written records and on the assumptions based on the evidence of other Old Germanic languages or later ME records. The estimate of approximately 30 000 words has been proposed by some scholars.

STYLISTICALLY the OE words occurring in the texts are usually subdivided into *neutral*, *learned* and *poetic*.

### OE word formation

(Main means)

| **Derivation** | | **Word Composition** |
|---|---|---|
| **Prefixation** | **Suffixation** | |
| Verbs (Nouns, Adjectives) | Nouns, Adjectives | Nouns, Adjectives |
| for-ʒietan (un-riht n, a) | ʒōd-nis (NE good- ness) | hām-cyme, cīld-ʒeonʒ |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| NE forget, 'wrong, lit. 'not right" | ʒræd-iʒ (NE greedy) | (NE home-coming, young as a child)<br>wīd-sæ (lit.'wide sea' = ocean)<br>mid+niht, sunn*an*+dæʒ<br>(NE midnight, Sunday) |
| | wīs-dom, frēond-lēas,<br>(NE wisdom, friendliness)<br>suffixation ← composition (morphological simplification), e.g. -dom, -scip | |

**OE word formation**

(Minor means)

| **Sound interchange** | **Word Stress** (accentuation) |
|---|---|
| rīdan (v) – rād (n) (NE ride, raid)<br>sinʒan (v) – sonʒ (n) (NE sing, song)<br>sprecan (v) – spræce (n) (NE speak, speech);<br><br>many vowel interchanges appeared as a result of palatal mutation:<br>dōm – dēman, NE doom (n) – deem (v)<br>fōd – fēdan, NE food – feed<br>lonʒ – lenʒþu, NE long – length<br><br>risan – ræran, NE rise, rear (*Verner's Law, rhotacism*)<br>dēaþ – dēad, NE death, dead (*hardening*)<br>talu – tellan, NE tale, tell (*gemination*)<br>spræc [k'] – sprecan [k], NE speech – speak (*splitting of velar consonants*) | The verb had an unaccented prefixes, but nouns had stressed prefixes:<br><br>ond -′swarian (v) – ′ond-swaru (n) NE answer for – ′weorþan (v) – ′forwyrd (n) destruction, perish<br><br>In some nouns, however, the prefix was as un-accented as in the verbs. |

**Etymological layers of the OE lexis**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Native Words** | **Common IE** (the oldest part) | natural phenomena, plants, animals, agriculture, human body, kinship, colour |
| | **Common Germanic** | hand, sant, erda, sinʒan, findan |
| | **West Germanic** | handus, earþa, etc. |
| | **Specifically OE** | clipian (NE call), brid (NE bird), wīfman (made up of OG roots), hlāford (NE lord) |
| **Borrowings** (Loan words) | **Celtic** | iron, few place names – Kent, Deira, Thames, Avon, Dover;<br>*Celtic+Latin*: Win-chester, Man-chester, Glou-cester;<br>*Celtic+Germanic*: York-shire, Corn-wall, Salis-bury, Devon-shire, Canter-bury |
| | **Latin** | appr. 500 (oral borrowings): a) on the Continent, b) through Romanised Celts – trade, military affairs, place names,<br>c) due to Christianity (6$^{th}$ c.) through translation of written texts – *scōl (school),* māʒister (master), *fers (verse)* |

# 4. MIDDLE ENGLISH PERIOD

## MIDDLE ENGLISH HISTORICAL BACKGROUND. DIALECTS AND WRITTEN RECORDS

The language from 1100 to 1500 is known as Middle English. The beginning of the ME period (late 11th century) is marked by new foreign invasions. The country remained disunited, landlords being semi-independent, and economic and social intercourse being hindered by internal regulations and hostilities. Consequently, the differences between the regional dialects grew, especially in Early ME. Dialectal differentiation was made sharper due to foreign influences and the position of English in the country, restricted to the sphere of oral communication of lower and middle classes.

The earlier of the ME foreign influences goes back to Old English. The Scandinavian invasions began in the 8th and lasted into the 11th century. By the Wedmore Peace Treaty concluded under Alfred (878) England was divided into Danish territory (Danelaw) and the Anglo-Saxon territories under Wessex. Scandinavian (Danish) settlers came to live in Danelaw, intermixed with the English; and ultimately became part of the population in Northern England. Danelaw was gradually reconquered under Alfred's successors, but in the later 10th century Danish attacks were renewed under Sweyn and Canute, kings of Denmark and Norway (early 11th century). The English paid regular taxes to the Danes (Danegeld) for the temporary withdrawals of Danish troops. London offered the most stubborn resistance (of all regions) and participated only in the last payments. Canute's vast Empire broke up on his death and the Anglo-Saxon line was restored. Edward the Confessor returned from exile in Normandy accompanied by Norman monks and nobles, which aroused discontent and the struggle against Norman influence began before the Norman conquest.

The Norman Conquest of England began in 1066 when, following Edward's death William, Duke of Normandy (William the Conqueror), with Norman nobles and an army of hired soldiers landed on the South Coast of England. At Hastings in October 1066 he defeated King Harold elected by Anglo-Saxon Lords (who had himself just routed the Vikings at the battle of Stanford Bridge), surrounded London and on Christmas was crowned in Westminster. Within a few years England was laid waste and fell under Norman rule. Wales and Scotland remained unconquered.

Under Norman kings and the early Plantagenets French (or "Anglo-Norman") prevailed over English in many spheres: at the King's court, in the law courts, the church and learning (together with Latin); in higher social ranks and in the growing towns especially in the south-east. In the later 13th century English began to be used alongside French and Latin in official papers and in the late 14th century it was restored as the language of literature, schools, parliamentary debates and (partly) court proceedings.

Middle English dialects developed from respective Old English dialects; *Kentish* is known as Kentish all through ME and later. In the Southern group OE Saxon dialects survived as *South Western* corresponding to OE West Saxon (Wessex) and the London dialects, which came originally from the East Saxon (Essex) branch. The Anglian dialects – Northumbrian and Anglian – are known as *Midland* (or Central) dialects, which are further subdivided into *West Midland* and *East Midland*, and into a still more minute subdivision by the names of the counties Norfolk, Suffolk, etc.; and also into *Northern* dialects with Scottish as the main variety. Dialectal boundaries date back to feudalism which favoured dialect differentiation, modern dialects thus being feudal heritage. During the 14th century the dialectal basis of the London dialect shifted (for economic and demographic reasons). In the 12th–13th centuries the London dialect was Southern and East Saxon, but the later London dialect, which became the main source of Standard English, descends from East Midland, rather than from the Southern group.

In the 12th – 13th centuries there was as yet no prevailing literary form of dialect, written records being few and representing regional dialects of equal status. The 12th century is practically

devoid of records (due to the Norman conquest, which among other things led to the spread of Anglo-Norman literature and of French as the language of writing), the Peterborough Chronicle being the only important text. 13th century records include Layamon's Brut (West Midland), the London Proclamation of 1258 and the biblical commentary Ormulum (East Midland). Literature flourished in the late 14th century in the London dialect, the most important authors being Chaucer, Gower, Langland, Wycliff. The early 15th century produced imitators of Chaucer, and chroniclers. Middle English manuscripts are by far more numerous and varied as to dialect and genre than OE ones. The London dialect gained prestige over other varieties as the form of English to be used in writing although in ME it was not the country wide standard.

## MIDDLE ENGLISH CHANGES IN SPELLING

SPELLING innovations in ME manuscripts are mainly due to French influence. The written word in ME is very much like Modern, although it sounded different. Overall, the changes were as follows:

the runic letters passed out of use: *þ* and *đ, ð* were substituted by the diagraph *th* (with retained sound value) [θ] and [ð];

"wynn" *Ƿ* was displaced by "double u" – w;

æ and œ fell into disuse.

(Digraphs) *ou, ie* and *ch* were adopted from French and regularly used in Anglo-Norman as new ways of indicating the sounds [u:], [e:], [tʃ], e.g. ME *double* [ˈduble] from French, and ME *out* [u:t] from OE ūt.

The letters *j, k, v* and *q* appeared as an imitation of French manuscripts.

The two-fold use of *g* and *c* [dʒ] and [s] before front vowels, and [g] and [k] before back vowels owes its origin to French.

*sh* (also *ssh*, *sch*) used to indicate the new sibilant [ʃ];

OE *hw* → ME *wh*;

dg [dʒ] alongside *j, g* is used before front vowels;

o was employed to indicate [o] and [u] together with *u* (when *u* was between *m* or *n* or *v* to avoid confusion): e.g.

OE *munuc* → ME *monk* [muŋk], OE *lufu* → ME *love* [ˈluv∂]

y stands for [j] at the beginning of words, otherwise it is an equivalent to the letter *i:* e.g. *yet* [jet], but knyght / *knight* [knix't].

**Peculiarities of ME spelling**

| Letters indicating vowels | Letters indicating consonants |
|---|---|
| *Single letters* | |
| *ɑ* [a]<br>*y*, as well as *i* [i]<br>*o* [o] or [u] | *c* [s] or [k]<br>*f* [f]<br>*g* [dʒ] or [g]<br>*j* [dʒ]<br>*k* [k]<br>*s* [s] or [z]<br>*v* (often spelt as u) [v]<br>*y* [j] |
| *Digraphs* | |
| *ee* [e:] or [ɛ:]<br>*ie* [e:] | *ch, tch* [tʃ]<br>*dg* [dʒ] |

| | |
|---|---|
| *oo* [o:] or [ɔ:]<br>*ou* [u:] or [ou]<br>*ow* [u:] or [ou] | *gh* [x] or [x’]<br>*qu* [kw]<br>*th* [θ]or [ð]<br>*sh, sch, ssh* [ʃ]<br>*wh* [hw] |

## PHONETIC CHANGES IN MIDDLE ENGLISH AND EARLY NEW ENGLISH

PHONETIC CHANGES in ME included *word stress*, *vowels*, *consonants*. The Germanic system of WORD STRESS used in OE was altered due to the adoption of hundreds of French borrowings with the ultimate or (final), penultimate (second to last) stresses. In the course of phonetic assimilation stress was shifted in different ways: to the immediately preceding unstressed syllable (*recessive* tendency), to the third syllable from the end as a secondary stress thus alternating stressed and unstressed syllables (*rhythmical* tendency). With native words retaining original stress and all those changes proceeding we arrive at the modern varied position stresses, which differs from the Germanic system; yet the stressed and unstressed syllables typical of Germanic is retained (Cf. recent borrowings without shifts, e.g. fatigue).

VOWELS underwent multiple changes: unstressed vowels, esp. in final syllables were generally reduced to the neutral [ ə ] in ME and lost in NE, though, due to shifting of stresses and other changes other unstressed vowels appeared and were retained to the present day (e.g. reader [ə]). Stressed vowels in the transition to ME were subjected to a number of important *quantitative* changes which made vowel quantity largely (though, not entirely) dependent on phonetic condition: lengthening before sequences of two consonants (sonorant + plosive), shortening before other sequences of two or more consonants (examples surviving in Modern English with different vowels due to Early ME quantitative changes – behind, hindrance, etc.). More open vowels / o, e, a / were lengthened in open syllables. (In ENE changes of vowel quantity are combined with consonant changes or appear as shortenings or lengthenings before some sounds).

Changes of quality in stressed vowels are of lesser importance in Early ME but of the greatest consequence later. All OE diphthongs were contracted to monophthongs and thus shared their further development. Some Early ME changes display dialectal variation (e.g. *y* short and long, *a* before nasals, long *a*), long vowels gradually becoming closer. The Great Vowel Shift (involving the entire vowel system) began in Late ME and across the 15-16$^{th}$ centuries or more. All long vowels were narrowed and some were diphthongized, e.g. ME i: → NE ai, e.g. ME *time* [ti:mə] → NE *time* [taim].

It is noteworthy that the written form of the word remained unchanged during the shift, thus still showing the pronunciation before the shift. Consequently modern spellings can be used to reconstruct the phonetic history of words and, therefore, provide ample evidence for the shift. Changes of short vowels are relatively few and show but an indistinct opposite tendency, i.e., towards greater opening /a, u/. Note that the Great Vowel Shift and other NE sound changes occurred after fixing of the written form of the word (due to the introduction of printing) and thus account for the gap or new relations between pronunciation and spelling in Modern English.

CONSONANT CHANGES FROM OE TO NE associated with changes of vowels. Consonants were generally more stable than vowels; the main changes during all periods were instances of *assimilation* and *simplification* of consonant clusters difficult to pronounce, *vocalisations* and the *changed treatment of fricatives*. These processes, among other things, account for the disappearance of OE and ME [ *x* ], [ *x’* ], [ *k'* ], [*g'*], etc., growth of new phonemes – *sibilants*, *affricates*, *fricatives* and the appearance of many diphthongs. In the transition from Old to Middle English the continued assimilation of palatal plosives (softening next to front vowels) resulted in the growth of [tʃ] and [dʒ] and [ʃ] shown in ME by new digraphs of the French tradition – *ch, tch, dg, g, sh,*

*sch, ssh...*, e.g. OE *cild* → NE *child,* OE *bricʒe* → NE *bridge,* OE *fisc* → NE *fish*. In the transition from ME to NE the same sounds appeared in assimilated French borrowings, where with the shifting of word stress *t*, *d*, *s*, *z* fused with the following *j*, to [ tʃ ], [ dʒ ], [ʃ], [ʒ].

Simplification of "difficult" consonant clusters are illustrated by OE/ME instances with corresponding alteration of spelling (*hl*) and by later losses of consonants without spelling adjustments which account for "mute" letters (as in *know*, *gnat*, *listen*, *climb*, *subtle*, *hour*, etc.) which in Modem English are merely spelling peculiarities, e.g. aspirated *h* in ME *honour* [ho′nu:r] → NE honour, ME [kn], [gn] → ENE [n], e.g. ME *knowen* [′knowən] → ENE *know*, ME *climb* [mb] lost its final [b].

Historical changes in the treatment of voiced and voiceless fricatives in the Middle and New period resulted in their changed phonological status: from positional variants of phonemes (*allophones*) the voiced and voiceless pairs turned into phonemes: [f] and [v], [θ] and [ð], [s] and [z]. This new treatment is seen from the changed – and far less strict – conditions of voicing as compared with the respective OE conditions. In ME new words appeared with the initial voiced fricative /*v*/, e.g. *veyne*. In the transition to NE fricatives were voiced after an unstressed vowel and before a stressed one in the same or following word (cf. to Verner's Law in Proto-Germanic). This voicing affected numerous endings and form words. These voicings were not strictly regular and some of the OE conditions of voicing partly survived; consequently the voiced and voiceless fricatives occur in similar phonetic conditions in NE and thus should be regarded as phonemes (cf. *eyes – ice*, *thy – thigh*), i.e., *s → z, f → v, θ → ð, ks → gz, tʃ → dʒ*, e.g. ME *resemblen* [rə′semblə] → NE *resemble,* ME *Greenwich* [′gre:nwitʃ] → NE *Greenwich* [′gri:nidʒ].

Vocalisation of fricatives after vowels produced glides and gave rise to new ME "closing" diphthongs with *i* – and *u*-glides (OE "opening" diphthongs having by that time fallen together with monophthongs). Vocalisations of [ *x*, *x'* ], took place some time later, e.g. *night*.

Vocalisation of [γ] and the sonorant [*r*] occurred during and after the Great Vowel Shift, e.g. ME *yeer* → ENE *year*; *car, torn*. /*r*/ was vocalised finally and before consonants after short vowels – *for*, *thorn*, and long vowels – *shire* [ʃi:rə], *beer* [be:r], producing new long vowels [ə:], e.g. *girl*, or diphthongs in [ə], e.g. [uə], [iə], and many [ə]-inflections.

As a result of the phonetic changes the ME spelling became more conventional.

## GRAMMATICAL CHANGES IN ME AND ENE: NOUNS. ADJECTIVES. PRONOUNS

The means of building grammatical forms in English underwent radical changes since the OE period: the proportion of *synthetic* forms fell as new, *analytical* (or compound) forms developed. The main changes in the synthetic means of form-building were: the *reduction* or *levelling* of most OE inflections in ME and the loss of most of them, especially vowel endings in NE; greater restrictions of the use of sound interchanges, although a few new instances appeared in irregular verbs; loss of grammatical prefix *ʒe* – (sporadically used with Participle II in OE with some traces still found in ME). Analytical forms arose in the verb system (also in the adjective) largely during the transition to ME or later, from free syntactic groups (verb phrases), the first component gradually losing its lexical meaning and acquiring a grammatical function.

The NOMINAL grammatical categories suffered great changes in Early ME and already by the 15th–16th century acquired their modern characteristics; the gender of nouns (and accordingly – adjectives) ceased to be distinguished in Early ME – in later ME texts personal pronouns of the 3-rd person were used as noun substitutes like in PDE (*he*, *she* – to show sex of animate beings, *it* – for inanimate things). The singular and plural were distinguished by nouns and some pronouns through all historical periods, while in adjectives number distinctions were lost by the end of ME (dual forms in personal pronouns disappeared in Early ME). The number of cases was reduced in

nouns from four in OE to three in the transition to ME (Dative still distinguished) to two in ME: *Common* and *Genitive*, the former case relations being expressed by prepositional phrases or the common case alone (and by the position of the word in the sentence).

The OE noun declensions broke up in Early ME, the more influential types spreading their endings to other nouns. In Early ME Masculine and Neuter nouns formed one declension (the former a-stems) while Feminine nouns followed the o-stem pattern, but the difference was lost, with the disappearance of gender. Dialectal differences were to be seen in the preference of n-endings in the South. By the age of Chaucer forms descending from the a-stems (dominating in the North and Midland) were employed with the bulk of nouns (to be shown as descending from the OE paradigms with reduction and analogy at work and traced up to present day markers of number and case). Plural forms descending from other stems make exceptions (the type foot – feet, deer – deer, also wife – wives, and the variants [z], [s], [iz].

No case distinctions were preserved in ADJECTIVES in ME. The category of "definiteness/indefiniteness" (shown by the twofold declension of adjectives in OE) was still indicated by some adjectives in the 14th century as well as number and was then lost, the only category preserved being degrees of comparison. Adjectives lost all their dependent categories of agreement: first, gender; then case and towards the close of ME, the last endings *-e* irregularly showing plural and weak "definite" forms. Analytical forms of the degrees of comparison grew from word groups with "*more*", "*most*", though, no strict rules of usage existed yet in the 18th century Interchanges in "*elder*", "*further*" are traces of the use of vowel interchanges in OE originating from palatal mutation.

PERSONAL PRONOUNS also reduced their case system from four to two cases, though in a different way than nouns: the Genitive case split from the pronoun paradigms to form a new set of pronouns-possessive: the Dative and Accusative fell together into the objective case (to be shown in "*I*" or "*he*"). Further syncretism affected "*you*" (used as a singular form, in ENE *ye* and *thou* having polite/less polite distinction) and "*it*" but was not completed in other pronouns. Absolute forms of Possessive pronouns arose in Early NE by analogy with the Genitive case of nouns. Demonstrative pronouns lost their five-case system in ME, retaining only number distinctions. The undeclinable "*the*" (from the demonstrative pronouns) developed into the definite article already in Late OE while in Early ME "*a*", "*an*" grew as its counterpart from the numeral and an indefinite pronoun *ān*.

## GRAMMATICAL CHANGES IN ME AND ENE: VERB

Unlike the noun, the adjective and the pronoun, the morphology of the verb was not only *simplified*, but on the whole grew more *complicated*, as new compound (or analytical) forms arose.

The simplifying changes affected the old synthetic forms of the verb and resulted in the growing homonymy of forms and the loss of many formal distinctions. The paradigm of the FINITE FORMS in OE showed the distinction between three moods, two tenses, two numbers and three persons (in the Present and Past tense Singular of the Indicative mood). In ME due to the phonetic reduction and levelling of endings (grammatical analogy) and the mixture of dialectal forms in the literary (London) variety of the language the formal difference between the Indicative and Subjunctive practically disappeared and only person distinctions survived (the Present Singular Indicative distinguished three persons as long as "*thou*" (for 2nd person, sing.) continued to be used, up to the 17th–18th centuries with *-(e)est*, *-(e)th* inflections, the latter ending interchangeable with *–s* in Early NE). The endings of the plural both in the Indicative and Subjunctive were levelled to *-en* in ME and then lost (the Present Plural and first Person Singular thus coinciding with the Infinitive); *-s*, – originally the ending of the plural in the Northern dialects ultimately replaced *-th*.

The morphological classes of verbs (differing in the way of building the principal forms) underwent drastic changes in the transition to ME and even more so in the transition to NE.

WEAK VERBS, although historically "younger" than strong ones (as the dental suffix was a Germanic innovation) proved to be far productive than all the other divisions. The simple and regular way of building the Past tense stem and Participle II, especially in Class II easily spread to other verbs, originally strong, or borrowed, or new formations. The brief history of the classes: weak verbs of Classes I and II preserved some slight differences during the ME period, then, with the loss of *-e-* in final syllables the differences were lost (ME *-de* and *-ede* became the NE [*d*], *[t*] and [*id*] of standard verbs). Part of the verbs of Class I due to phonetic developments survived as non-standard Modern verbs (the type *keep*, *set*, *tell*).

STRONG VERBS and the device they used in building the stems (vowel gradation) proved to be non-productive. Many strong verbs passed into weak (began to build weak Past tense and Participle II forms), some died out. Thus from a total of appr. 300 strong verbs in OE only 66 standard verbs are their direct descendents with vowel interchange (in fact, no new instances of strong verbs were added).

The principal forms reflect all the phonetic processes in all the periods and thus the original (OE) series of root vowel interchanges were changed. The differences between the principal forms were also obliterated as all endings *-an*, *-on*, and *-en* became *-en* in ME and later were lost in all forms except Participle II of some verbs; (OE consonant interchanges disappeared already in ME, excepting *was – were*). In the transition to NE the distinction between the 2nd and 3rd principle forms was lost in favour of one of the forms (in Shakespeare's time there was also a tendency to do away with the distinction between Past and Participle II). In the course of history the Classes of strong verbs were not preserved: there were mixtures and transfers from one class to another; the more numerous of the classes have given rise to certain groups of modern non-standard verbs (the type "*write*", "*drink*", "*find*").

MINOR GROUPS of verbs underwent different changes which are hard to group under general headings; the suppletive verbs (*be*, *go*) have retained the principle of form building from different roots although the verb "*go*" acquired new suppletive forms from a different verb (*wend*). Preterite – present verbs survived as defective modal verbs, retaining their specific peculiarities; being Past tense forms by origin, their Present forms have no Person distinctions (no -s); their Past tenses, if any, are weak, some verbs (*ought*, *should*) went through the "shift" of tense-reference twice (they are Past tenses of OE preterite – presents).

Simplifying changes affected also the NON-FINITE forms: the Infinitive lost its "inflected" form, retaining the preposition "*to*" as a particle in ME (often "for to") and in NE. The two Participles lost the same categories as the adjectives (syntactically dependent categories: case, number, gender). Participle I and the OE verbal noun having ME endings *-ande*, *-ende*, *-inge* fell together in *-ing* and gave rise to a new verbal in ME – the *gerund*.

### GROWTH OF ANALYTICAL FORMS AND NEW MORPHOLOGICAL CATEGORIES

Over the period of ME and ENE the paradigm of the English verb had evolved and expanded: the analytical forms were either included in the existing verbal grammatical categories as new members or together with the old synthetic forms made up new grammatical categories. Analytical forms developed from free word groups consisting of a finite form (modal verb, link-verb, notional verb), which turned into an auxiliary verb losing their lexical meaning, and of a non-finite form (Infinitive, Participle I, Participle II) which retained the lexical meaning and acquired a new grammatical function as part of a verb-form. The growth of each form had its own peculiarities and time limits. There were two types of changes in verb forms: (1) growth of compound forms as new members within the existing categories and (2) growth of compound forms making up new categories.

In OE and all through ME future happenings could be indicated by present tense forms of notional verbs and by modal verbs with infinitives (OE *sceal*, *willan*, *maȝan*, etc. plus infinitive). In ME *shall* and *will* predominated. The difference in meaning between shall and will in this function was slight, and in the 17th century contemporary grammars mention these verbs as equivalents interchanging for Person. The Past forms of the same words came to be used to denote a Future action viewed from the Past. Restrictions on the use of Future forms in Modern English are traces of OE usage (clauses of time and conditions). Thus the category of Tense was enriched by new forms (Future Tense, and also by Future in the Past).

The category of Mood, namely the Subjunctive mood, acquired new forms from the same sources: phrases with modal verbs in the Past Subjunctive form plus simple (and later also perfect) Infinitive. In ME and ENE they were used indiscriminately with the old synthetic forms, the latter being often homonymous with Indicative forms. The modern distribution of synthetic and analytical forms was standardized as late as the 18th century, but the status of the forms (different moods as forms of the same mood) is still a mood problem in English grammars.

The forms with "do" for the interrogative and negative constructions appeared in Late ME and were freely used in Shakespeare's time alongside simple forms (in affirmative constructions as well); later they came to be used as markers of the Interrogative and Negative constructions alone, probably, to conform to the pattern of these constructions with other analytical forms (note also the fixed word order established by that time).

A new morphological category, that of VOICE, appeared in the verb system towards ME as passive forms developed from phrases consisting of *beon/weorðan* and Participle II of transitive verbs. As a single auxiliary "*beon*" was standardized and the phrase began to denote actions, which means that it had turned from a compound predicate with a link-verb into a verb-form with an auxiliary. Gradually, during ME there sprang up passive constructions with intransitive verbs (with the subject corresponding to the indirect and prepositional objects of the active construction, specifically English feature).

The category of TIME-RELATION (order or phase) appeared as a result of the development of perfect forms. They sprang from two sources: the link-verb "*beon*" and Participle II of intransitive verbs and the predicative construction with OE "*habban*" plus object plus Participle II of transitive verbs used as an attribute; the shifting of the place and relations between the components of the latter transformed it into a verb form (*have* plus Participle II making an analytical form plus the object). Perfect forms were synonymous with non-perfect in Chaucer's time, but later their semantic differentiation and contrast gave rise to the new Category. (Traces of the ME forms "*habban*" + object + Participle II in NE "to have sth done"– construction).

ASPECT was the last of the new categories to develop: it arose as a new verbal category in the New English period (in OE aspect was expressed by prefix *ȝe-* ). The growth of Continuous forms out of OE *beon*, ME *ben* plus Participle I or plus preposition and a verbal noun was a slow, uneven process. The amalgamation of the two phrases accounts also for the growth of the gerund. The Continuous forms were at first synonymous to non-Continuous, later they differentiated in meaning making up the opposition of the new category.

Gradually the new types of forms embraced the entire verb system as similar types were built by analogy in other parts of the verb system: thus there appeared the Perfect and Continuous Passive forms, Perfect Continuous forms, compound forms of the verbals, (largely in 16–l7th century). (Note that the VERBALS (non-finite forms) lost many of their nominal categories in the course of history and acquired *verbal* features, i.e. categories of Time-relation, Voice and the Infinitive – the category of Aspect in addition).

## MIDDLE ENGLISH VOCABULARY CHANGES: SCANDINAVIAN AND FRENCH INFLUENCES

ME lexis grows by using its *own resources*: word formation and semantic changes. However, most of the vocabulary changes were due to *foreign influence*: the effect of the contacts with Old Scandinavian and with the French language.

THE SCANDINAVIAN ELEMENT, passing through the North-Eastern dialects into Literary English amounts to over 660 words in PDE (in the Northern dialects, as well as in ME their number was greater). The loan-words cannot be arranged into semantic spheres; they belong to everyday spoken language, and were adopted through oral communication in the regions with a mixed population. They include nouns – *feolaʒa* (fellow), *hūsbonda* (husband), verbs – *tacan* (take), adverbs – *to and fro*, conjunctions – *though* and pronouns – *both, they*, *their*. Adoption was easy, as English and Scandinavian were very much alike (genealogically related), the grammatical structure and lexis having many common features. Sometimes the Scandinavian meaning of the word or its pronunciation. prevailed ultimately over the English and thus the words were changed, although no borrowing occurred, e.g. *dream*, *sister*, *give*, etc. Borrowing of words having parallels of the same root in English led to the appearance of "etymological doublets" (*skirt – shirt*, etc.). Borrowing of words having identical meaning with native words led to the differentiation of synonyms or substitution of one for the other (e.g. *sky – heaven*, *starve – kill*). Scandinavian borrowings are hard to identify in NE without special dictionaries, yet some criteria have been suggested: the sequence /*sk*/, especially initially, which in native English words had changed into /ʃ/ already in late OE and early ME, and less regularly /*g*/ and /*k*/ before front vowels, which in native words had developed into / ʤ / and /tʃ/, e.g. *sky, give, kill*. However, the same sounds may occur in borrowings from other sources (*school*, *guitar*) or might be due to phonetic influence upon native roots (*give*, *see*, *above*), hence the criteria are not always reliable. Scandinavian loan-words have been wholly assimilated.

THE FRENCH ELEMENT in the English vocabulary is larger than any other foreign element, though most counts are inaccurate as French borrowings are sometimes difficult to distinguish from Latin or "Latin through French". Estimates like "two thirds of the English vocabulary comes from Romance language" are popular, but unreliable. French borrowings are easily grouped into semantic spheres reflecting the role of the Normans in Britain and the position of their language (government, administration of the country, titles and ranks, ranks in the army and the organisation of the army; legal matters and the law courts; Church matters, religions; way of life of the King's court and higher nobility, hence clothes, dishes, entertainments, etc.; town trades; bookish words, but also many everyday words). Even the dissimilarity of the two languages did not hinder borrowing, for French dominated in social and cultural spheres. Loan-words were adopted in the course of *oral* communication with the French-speaking rulers, and town-dwellers in Late ME; through *writing* – in written translations from French. During the assimilation of French words many features were lost or modified; nasal vowels peculiar to French words were lost, word stress was shifted from the final syllables; French grammatical forms gave way to English forms. Criteria for identification of French words: certain semantic spheres. French word-building elements in the morphological structure of words (mainly suffixes *-ment*, *able*, etc.). Yet even the most obvious marks are to be considered with care, for already in late ME, and especially in ENE, some French word-building devices became productive and were applied to native roots as well as foreign, whereas native derivational means came to be used with foreign stems. Hybrids can be traced to different etymological sources but are to be interpreted as English words proper, if they were first built in England – even though the components may not be native. Late French borrowings, like later Latin and Greek borrowings usually – though not necessarily – belong to bookish rather than spoken styles and are often part of the international stock of roots. When synonyms to native words were adopted the fate of the synonyms was the

same as in the case of Scandinavian borrowings – either loss of some units with identical meanings or preservation of differences and further differentiation in meaning and style.

Alongside foreign sources of the growth of the vocabulary *native means* continued to be used – *derivation* and *word composition*. However, many native words (up to 80% of the OE lexis) had gone out of use, for ME borrowings are not only names of new notions but, to a great extent, replacements of native words, that is new names of existing notions.

The Scandinavian and French influences differ in the number of loans, the genealogical and social relation of the languages with English, the spheres of borrowing, etc. There were also influences of other kind outside the vocabulary: spelling innovations in ME and grammatical changes.

## 5. STANDARDIZATION OF ENGLISH. GROWTH OF THE LEXIS

### THE FORMATION OF THE NATIONAL LANGUAGE

STANDARD languages arise in different ways. They can evolve over a long period of time associated with a particular language of religious or literary writing. Or an official body can be created (e.g. an Academy) which 'institutionalizes' a language by organizing the compilation of dictionaries, grammars, and manuals of style. The first way results in the formation of a nation-wide language ('standardized' variety, like variety of London English). The second results in the formation of 'standard' and is associated with the language codification, i.e. clear-cut distinctions between 'correct' and 'incorrect', which did not exist in late ME – that was an 18th century development.

The 15th–16th centuries witnessed the formation of the national language in Britain. The growth of capitalism did away with the regional barriers between the counties and called for greater unity of the country (economic, social and political). Under the Tudors Britain was an absolute monarchy and the English Reformation strengthened the power of the Crown. Social and political unity required linguistic uniformity.

The ground for a nation-wide literary language was prepared by the emergence of the London dialect as the model literary tongue since the late 14th c. The London written form of English spread to other parts of the country in the 15th and 16th centuries, being imitated in local texts and at the same time absorbing local (dialectal) features. The national form of the literary language developed as a super dialectal form embracing traits of different dialects and recognised as the "best" form of language. It was of a kind of mixture, but by far the most dominant influence was the dialect of the East Midlands, since the East Midland area was the largest of the dialect areas with more of the population, besides it contained London, the main social and political center, and also Cambridge and Oxford, the main seats of learning.

A most important role in spreading the London pattern and also in fixing the written form of the word was played by the introduction of printing in 1476 (and the setting up of the printing press in London by William Caxton) and by the activity of the first printers. In spite of considerable variation and instability of spelling in the early printed books the written form of the word on the whole became fixed and has not altered much since Caxton's time.

All the events mentioned above are dated in the Age of the Renaissance and are connected with the movements of that Age – opposition to the Medieval Church, flourishing of culture, industrial development, foreign contacts, wider interests in the past history of mankind, especially the ancient cultural heritage and in the contemporary world beyond the commonly known borders. Humanistic ideas and interest in classical ancient art reached England (from Italy) in the 16th century and, among other things, is apparent in the literature of the "'Elizabethan Age". The works of poets, playwrights, philosophers, phoneticians, grammarians and lexicographers, legal

documents, letters and diaries throughout the 15th–18th centuries provide ample information about the language.

In the 17th century we find the sound changes almost completed (the Modern stage practically reached by the 18th century); most of the Modern grammatical forms already existing, although some of them used differently, greater freedom of grammatical construction and the norms of the literary language being gradually established during the 17th and l8th centuries ("period of normalization" or "standardization"). The vocabulary grew, reflecting the events in all spheres of life (social, economic, political, cultural).

The sources for the GROWTH OF THE LEXIS in the NE period are as follows: a) *external* sources due to wider language contacts, which comprise a far greater number of languages than before: ancient (Latin, Greek) as well as contemporary (French, Italian, Spanish, German, Russian, native languages in the new areas of the expansion of English, e.g. Australia, New Zealand, North America, colonies, etc.). As a result, there are etymological doublets from Latin and French; b) *internal* sources provide new lexical units with the help of word-formation and semantic development. In *derivation* native productive affixes (*-er*, *-ness*, *-ly*, *-ful*, etc.) were supplemented by foreign ones: *-ment*, *-able*, *-ity* etc.), their application to a variety of roots accounts for hybrids. *Conversion* and *word-compounding* were widespread in Shakespeare's time and later (the rise of conversion was made possible owing to the loss of many endings which distinguished the parts of speech of OE *lufian* (v) – *lufu* (n) and ENE *love* (v) – *love* (n) ).

## STANDARDIZATION OF ENGLISH

The 17th and 18th centuries witnessed the normalizing tendencies in English aimed to reduce its overall variation characteristic of Late ME and ENE. The language was consciously changed by official institutions (the English Academy, later the Royal Society) and influential groups (J.Dryden, D.Defoe, H.Swift) as a result of political and economic centralization, also reflecting the spirit of scientific rationalism in philosophy. The efforts to standardize, refine and fix the language could be observed in all language spheres: phonetics and spelling, in grammar (morphology and syntax), and lexis. The attempts were made (1) to reduce the language to rule and set up a standard of correct usage; (2) to refine it, i.e. to remove supposed defects and introduce certain improvements; and (3) to fix it in the desired form in pronouncing and explanatory dictionaries, grammar reference books, etc, that is, to codify the principles of the language.

First, most of the writers and scholars' energy was devoted to developing a uniform SPELLING system, the main arguments being centered on whether the system should reflect etymology or current pronunciation. In PHONETICS Johnson's Dictionary, 1755, exhibited the English vocabulary much more fully than had ever been done before, and offered a spelling, fixed, that could be accepted as standard. The result was a unified spelling system, though absolute consistency was not established – and indeed has not even been achieved today.

The suggestions in GRAMMAR were to change all strong verbs to weak, the formation of plurals of nouns by means of *-s* or *-es*, the comparison of adjectives only with *more* and *most* (Thomas Cooke, in 1729 "Proposals for Perfecting the English Language"). Prescriptive grammars: Robert Lowth's *Short Introduction to English Grammar* (1762), *The British Grammar* by James Buchanan (1762), and others. They regulated the use of *do* in interrogative and negative sentences, the use of *shall* and *will, which* / *that, who* / *what* as relative pronouns introducing clauses; fixed word order; forbade double negation, double comparison, etc.

Attempts to reform the VOCABULARY: some efforts to forbid 'flat' adverbs like *quick* (adj.) – *quick* (adv.); to regulate the use of *toward* / *towards*, *forward* / *forwards*; *I'd rather*, *you'd better*; *different from* (rather than *different than* or *to*), etc.; there were also objections to foreign borrowings – the concern expressed for the purity of the language (D. Defoe in his *Review*, Oct. 10, 1708).

The results: some of the rules have since been set aside; others are of doubtful validity, although still find a place in present-day handbooks. Anyway, the codification of usage reduced or in some cases ultimately removed the variation in the language. Many disputed points were settled and have since become established.

# SECTION 2

# READINGS

## CHAPTER 1
## POSITION OF ENGLISH AMONG OTHER LANGUAGES

### THOMAS, L., & TCHUDI, S. A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE. CHAPTER 5

*In:* The English language: An owner's manual. Boston: Allyn & Bacon, 1999. Pp. 140–142.

**English as a changing tongue**

Often obscured when we try to describe the history of the English language through the traditional ideas is the notion that we had languages known as Old English, then Middle English, and today Modern English. These characterizations of the language and their time periods seem to suggest that languages somehow change abruptly; as if speakers went to bed on the night of December 31, 1099 speaking Old English and woke up on January 1, 1100 suddenly speaking Middle English. It also suggests that every speaker speaks the same dialect, which is quite contrary to what we know about languages. The important realization here is that language change is actually very gradual, sometimes affecting first only the language spoken by some segments of a population in various ways. A change in one subsystem of language, say a sound change, may begin in one region and gradually move through the population and into other geographic regions. An older generation may hold onto one language structure while the younger speakers change to a new one. A high prestige group may distinguish itself from a lower prestige population by maintaining a particular register choice, as in "I'm not going" as opposed to "I ain't goin." As we describe for you characteristics of the English language at certain points in history, remember that we are making generalizations in an attempt to show trends in the evolution of English. We are presenting what are known as synchronic language analyses; that is, we are showing snapshots of the language at certain points in time, and this doesn't capture the true dynamics of a living language, as would be revealed in a diachronic or linear approach.

Linguists have debated whether this synchronic view is more useful than taking a truly historical view of individual words and their development. The most famous linguist to argue for the synchronic approach was Ferdinand de Saussure. In his book *Ferdinand de Saussure,* Jonathon Culler describes what Saussure thought about this. Saussure was revolutionary for his time in the early 1900s for his view of the value of seeing language synchronically and not just tracing words or sounds back through their historical changes. He saw the word as a **sign**, an **arbitrary** sign. That is, there is no real reason why *dog* is the sign for what we know as a dog; in German it is a *Hund* and in French a *chien.* There is nothing intrinsic about the sounds that relate to the object, dog. On the nature of the sign, Saussure lectured that because the signs are arbitrary, they are subject to history, but they also require an ahistorical analysis. This statement is not as paradoxical as it might seem. Because the sign doesn't stay the same over time, it must be defined in its relations to other signs at a particular time. A language, Saussure said, "is a system of pure values which are determined by nothing except the momentary arrangement of its terms." In short he established the view we are using in our explanation; we will use Saussure's approach to look at snapshots of the English language at certain time periods in its history.

Why do languages change? Linguists propose a number of hypotheses even though they readily admit that the answer to this question is finally unanswerable; we simply don't know why

some changes have occurred or are currently occurring. Some changes seem to be more tacitly motivated, such as when a new term is borrowed for something new in the environment (as was *kangaroo* in Australia). But many changes we can't explain with certainty. And it is quite impossible to predict the exact changes that the future may hold in store for a language. What we *can* determine are some general observable tendencies that explain some forces for language change.

One principle is that of least effort, which seems to explain reductions, as in *want to* becoming *wanna* or *goodnight* being represented by *night* or some rendition thereof *(nighty-nite).* To reduce effort, *refrigerator* becomes *fridge* and *emergency room* becomes *ER.* Of course this principle still doesn't help us explain why some words and phrases become simplified and others don't.

**Analogy** can be very productive as an explanation for change. If a language already possesses a way of doing something (for example, marking the past tense with *-ed),* then why not extend it to the odd words which are "out of line"? For example, the Old English verb for *creep* (like babies like to do) was *creopon* with the past form being *creap.* Over time people lost the idea of giving an irregular past ending to the verb and made it follow the regular pattern of the *-ed* sound, making today's past form *crept.* Old English included more than twice the number of irregular verbs as today's Modem English, as in *drive, drove, driven* (not drived!). Over time speakers slowly molded many of those wily irregular verbs into the regular pattern by analogy. Indeed in its present state English only reluctantly adds any irregular verbs; apparently what we now have is about what we'll ever have of irregular verbs. The odd exceptions do exist, though. We often now hear "snuck" as the past form of "sneak". Yet, by and large, analogy rules. The concept of analogy is a particularly effective explanation because it also can be seen in the case of individual children learning their first language. Have you ever heard a child overgeneralize, forming the utterance "We *goed* to the store" instead of the still existing irregular past form went? Further, when we borrow words from other languages, we often make them fit into already existing patterns by analogy. Such occurrences seem to suggest that humans just naturally work through analogy in language development, evolution, and everyday use.

### *Questions to think about*

1. What is the difference between synchronic and diachronic language analysis?
2. What hypotheses do linguists propose to explain language change?
3. What is the least-effort-principle?
4. What is the principle of analogy?

## SCHENDL, H. ATTITUDES TO LANGUAGE CHANGE

*In:* Historical Linguistics. Oxford introductions to language study. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003. P. 8–9.

[…] Contemporary linguists in general hold a neutral or even positive attitude towards change. On the positive side it has been claimed that changes are a necessary development to make languages more communicatively effective as they become attuned to changing social needs. This also applies to the promotion of conscious linguistic changes to achieve this goal, such as language planning and measures to make language 'politically correct'. Furthermore, changes have been viewed as necessary therapeutic measures to restore the balance and symmetry of the linguistic system, or as moves towards the simplification of the grammar. In such a view, the change of language over periods of time is a function of influences operating at any given time. In this respect, the study of history (of language or of anything else) depends on an understanding of the present, just as the present is to be understood by reference to the past.

### Language state and process

Nevertheless, in much modern linguistics past and present have been separated into different areas of enquiry. It has been a common assumption that synchronic linguistics, which concerns itself with the state of languages at a given time, in particular the present, is most conveniently carried out in disregard of the findings of historical or diachronic linguistics about the processes of language development over time, However, this strict division is based on a misunderstanding of the relationship between these two aspects of the study of language. On the one hand, the synchronic study of linguistic systems can provide insights that can be used in reconstructing their past. On the other hand, we should also recognize that the implied assumption that synchronic linguistic systems are completely systematic, static, and homogeneous, is a fiction. All of them are in some respects *un*systematic: the numerous irregular relics of earlier systems (the 'exceptions' to the rule), which are simply inexplicable in synchronic terms, can only be explained by reference to past states and developments. The unstable state of a language at any given point of time is the consequence of historical processes, and its very instability is evidence that these processes continue to operate in the present.

Equally, there is a close interrelationship between synchronic linguistic variation, i.e. the coexistence of more or less equivalent variants at a given time, and diachronic linguistic change. The growing awareness of these facts over the past thirty years has led to a major reorientation in the discipline, with historical linguistics again taking its rightful place in the field of language study.

### *Questions to think about*

1. Why do languages change?
2. What is relationship between the two aspects of the study of language?
3. What is synchronic linguistic variation and how is it interrelated with diachronic linguistic change?

## THOMAS, L., & TCHUDI, S. A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE. CHAPTER 5

*In:* The English language: An owner's manual. Boston: Allyn & Bacon, 1999. Pp. 139–140.

[…] indeed all languages are constantly changing. (The exception here is a dead language like Latin; it has no native speakers and is thus not subject to change.) In order to understand something of the history of the English language, it is important to understand the dynamics of language change.

The simplest way to conceive of language change is as a loss, gain, or variation of any component of the language system. Adding new words to describe the evolving nature of the world around us such as *modem* or *laptop* represents lexical change. In some regions of the United States, speakers are losing the [ɛ] and [ i] vowel distinction in the words *pen* and *pin,* pronouncing both with [i]. In the Southwest, a shift in the stress in the word *rodeo* from *ródeo* to *rodéo* is beginning to occur, most likely due to Spanish influence. A syntactic change we have seen in the development of English involved the loss of inflectional endings on words that referenced basically "who did what to whom" in the sentence. Inflections, the endings on words, can show their function in the sentence. For instance the Old English word for *stone* [stān], would take no ending if it were the subject of the sentence, but it would take *-e* on the end [stāne] if it were the object. These kinds of inflectional endings showed the relationship of words and their functions, such as subject or object. When these endings were lost, the language developed a more rigid subject-verb-object word order to establish the meaning lost with the inflectional endings. Now "loss" in language is

seldom tragic and certainly signals neither language decay nor the loss of civilization. Remember that languages are *conventional,* that the losses (and additions) are essentially done by *implicit* community consent to meet perceived needs. Language change is *normal,* not good or evil.

### *Questions to think about*

1. What is the simplest way to conceive of language change?
2. With what examples do the authors illustrate the changes?
3. What is the authors' attitude to language change?

## MILLWARD, C.M. INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL PRESSURES FOR CHANGE

*In:* A Biography of the English Language. (2nd ed.). N.Y., L.: Harcourt Brace college publishers, 1996. P. 13–14.

In discussing the history of a language, it is often useful to distinguish **outer history** (or **external history)** from **inner history** (or **internal history).** The outer history is the events that have happened to the speakers of the language leading to changes in the language. For example, the Norman invasion brought French-speaking conquerors to England and made French the official language of England for about three hundred years. As a result, the English language was profoundly affected. The inner history of a language is the changes that occur within the language itself, changes that cannot be attributed directly to external forces. For instance, many words that were pronounced as late as the ninth century with a long *a* sound similar to that of *father* are today pronounced with a long *o:* Old English *ham, gat, halig,* and *sar* correspond to modern *home, goat, holy,* and *sore*. There is no evidence of an external cause for this change, and we can only assume that it resulted from pressures within the language system itself.

Among external pressures for language change, foreign contacts are the most obvious. They may be instigated by outright military invasion, by commercial relations, by immigration, or by the social prestige of a foreign language. The Viking invasions of England during the ninth and tenth centuries added, not surprisingly, many new lexical items to English. Less obviously, they contributed to (though were not the sole cause of) the loss of inflections in English because, although Norse and English were similar in many ways, their inflectional endings were quite different. One way of facilitating communication between speakers of the two languages would have been to drop the inflectional endings entirely. (Exactly the same process can be observed today when a speaker of Icelandic talks to a speaker of Swedish.) An example of the effects of the prestige of another language would be the spread of /ž/ (the sound of *s* in *usual)* in French loanwords to environments where it had not previously appeared in English; examples include *garage*, *beige,* and *genre.*

Foreign pressures may also take the form of contact between different dialects of the same language. The changes cited above in my own speech resulting from contact with a new dialect exemplify this kind of influence. Here again, sociological factors may play a role. The reemergence of preconsonantal and final /r/ (as in *harm* and *far*) in Eastern Seaboard and Southern American dialects certainly has been encouraged by the sociological facts that *r*-lessness is frequently ridiculed in other areas of the country, that it is often associated with Black English, and that the prestige of American English vis-à-vis British English has increased in the past thirty years.

Internal pressures for language change most often appear when changes in one system of the language impinge on another system. For example, phonological changes caused the **reflexes** (the "descendants" that have undergone change) of OE *lǣtan* 'to allow' and OE *lettan* 'to hinder' to fall together as *let.* The resulting homonymy was unacceptable because the two verbs, opposite in

meaning, often occurred in identical contexts, leading to ambiguity and a breakdown in communication. Consequently, the *let* that meant "hinder" has been all but lost in modern English, surviving only in such set phrases as *let ball* and the legal term *without let or hindrance.* On the morphological level, the verb *wear,* a weak verb in OE, has become a strong verb in modern English, despite the fact that the trend has been overwhelmingly in the opposite direction. This change can be explained by the rhyme analogy of *wear* with strong verbs like *bear; tear;* and *swear* and also, perhaps, by the semantic association of *wear* and *tear.*

Still other changes fall on the borderline between internal and external. British English still uses *stone* as a unit of weight for human beings and large animals, although the weight of other commodities is normally expressed in pounds. American English uses the pound as a measure for both large animals and other items. One of the reasons why *stone* has remained in British English may be that *pound* is semantically "overloaded" by being both a unit of weight and the national monetary unit. Similarly, in some parts of Great Britain, at least, a small storage room – the American English *closet* – is referred to as a *cupboard.* The avoidance of the term *closet* is probably explained by the fact that what speakers in the United States refer to as a *toilet or john* is called a *W.C.* (for *water closet*) in Britain. The mild taboo associated with the term *water closet,* even in its euphemistic abbreviated form, has led to its avoidance in other contexts.

### *Questions to think about*

1. What causes of language change does the author refer to as external?
2. What pressures for language change are considered internal?
3. What changes, according to the author, are brought about by both internal and external factors?

## THOMAS, L., & TCHUDI, S. A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE. CHAPTER 5

*In:* The English language: An owner's manual. Boston: Allyn & Bacon, 1999. Pp. 143–144.

### *Internal and External Change*

It is helpful when considering language change to distinguish between *language-internal* and *language-external* events. We can look at the language itself, […] when focusing on how words change in form or sound. […] Internal factors directly affect the component parts of the language system. In short, language internal changes are what we hear or see on the written page, the stuff language appears to be made of. It is also very interesting to investigate the social, political, and economic events that can affect, and perhaps explain in some ways, language change. Because these are outside the language system itself, we call these factors external. Due to the fact that language is a system of closely intertwined relationships, one internal change to the language often causes others. For example, as inflectional endings of Old English (or the English of over 800 years ago) were lost over time, as we demonstrated with the noun stone [stān], word order became more rigid to make up for that loss; something was needed to co-occur internally to maintain the meaning that had been in the endings concerning "who was doing what to whom". By establishing that the subject would generally be at the beginning of the sentence and the object after the verb, it was possible to let go of the inflectional endings that earlier had shown this information.

Another example of language internal changes involves pronunciation. If a set of vowels begins to take on a new sound, a domino effect may begin. Shakespeare's *clean* used to rhyme with our word *lane;* the [e] changed to [i]. If a vowel sound shifts in many words in a systematic way, the change may cause a change in the pronunciation of other vowels so that the difference in the meaning of words can be distinguished. About 300 hundred years ago, just such a major pronunciation shift took place […]. An internal language change in pronunciation can be difficult to

interpret if the writing system has already established how words are spelled; will the spellings change to reflect the new pronunciations? Given that we have such difficulty in English with our spelling-sound correlation, you might take a guess at this before we discuss what is known as The Great Vowel Shift.

Internal changes such as these cannot necessarily be linked with external events; we can't always say that some historical event directly caused a specific language change, but in certain instances we can. The Norman Conquest of 1066 and the ensuing influence of the French language in Britain over the following 300 years clearly led to a profound change in the English language, primarily through the borrowing of lexical items. Today, thousands of words in English can be traced to French origin. We can find many examples of words in English that came into our language from French – *forest, judge, beast, charge, journey, gentle, majesty, chamber, police, reward, wasp, wait* – and on and on it goes. As the British Empire grew, through colonization of the New World, Africa, and Australia, words native to the indigenous cultures were borrowed into English: *Moccasin, raccoon, tomahawk,* and *opossum* all came from contact with Native Americans in what was to become the United States. While internal language change is observed, it is often useful to explore the external historical events for possible relationships to language change. […].

### *Questions to think about*

1. How can the interdependence of internal changes be illustrated?
2. Are internal changes always linked with external events?
3. What internal changes in English were obviously brought about by external historical events?

## TRASK, R. L. WHERE DID ENGLISH COME FROM?

*In:* Language and linguistics in context: Readings and applications for teachers / H.Luria, D.M.Seymour, T.Y.Smoke (Eds.). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, 2006. P. 143–147.

When the Anglo-Saxons first settled in England around 1,500 years ago, there were already, of course, some regional differences in their speech, though these were not dramatic. With the passage of time, however, further differences began to accumulate. We have seen that an innovation that occurs in one area may spread to a larger area, but that it doesn't necessarily spread to the whole area occupied by the language. After some centuries, every area of England had undergone some changes in grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation, but failed to undergo other changes that had affected different areas. Consequently, the English-speaking area gradually broke up into a number of regions all distinguished by an ever-greater number of differences. By about the year 1500, (a thousand years after the settlement), it was clear that speakers from different regions were often finding it very difficult to understand one another.

These regional differences are still with us, and they are very familiar. Not long ago, there was a striking example of the extent to which English has diverged: a television company put out a program filmed in the English city of Newcastle, where the local variety of English is famously divergent and difficult, and the televised version was accompanied by *English subtitles!* The producers were afraid that other speakers would be quite unable to understand the "Geordie" speech of the performers. This ruffled quite a few feathers in Newcastle, but the producers had a point: I recall that, the first time I met a Geordie speaker, it was some days before I could understand a single word he was saying.

As we shall see, the combination of language change with geographical separation is a powerful one and, in the case of English, the degree of separation was greatly increased by the settlement by English-speakers of North America in the seventeenth century and of Australia and New Zealand in the nineteenth. Already the speech of North America is noticeably different from anything heard in Britain, and the English of, say, Mississippi or North Carolina can be exceedingly difficult for a Briton to understand. Indeed, it is reported that, when American films with soundtracks were first shown in Britain in the 1930s, British audiences, having had almost no previous exposure to American speech often found them very difficult to understand.

If nothing were to intervene, what do you suppose the result of this growing divergence would be? Easy: Eventually the regional varieties of English would diverge so far as to become mutually incomprehensible and we would be forced to speak not of dialects but of separate languages.

It is possible that this will not happen now, thanks to the dramatic advances in transport and communications we have seen in the twentieth century, but it would have happened otherwise. And, there is no doubt at all that such breaking up of a single language into several quite different languages has happened unaccountably many times before. Indeed, that's exactly how English came into existence in the first place.

More than 1,500 years ago, when most of Britain was still occupied by people who spoke the language that would eventually develop into Welsh and Cornish, the ancestor of English was spoken on the North Sea coast of the European continent, in areas that are now part of the Netherlands, Germany, and Denmark. If the speakers of that language had given it a name, it had not survived. For convenience, we call it Ingvaeonic. And, it was some of the Ingvaeonic-speaking tribes, including the Angles and the Saxons, who moved across the North Sea into Britain 1,500 years ago. But not *all* of them emigrated; many of them stayed behind in Europe. So what happened to *their* Ingvaeonic? It certainly didn't turn into English.

Of course not, but it did turn into something else, or rather several something elses. The Angles and Saxons took to Britain the same Ingvaeonic speech they were leaving behind, but the North Sea proved to be a formidable barrier to further contact. Ingvaeonic continued to change, but change occurring on one side of the sea almost never crossed over to the other side, and within a few centuries the insular varieties that we now call English were already sharply different from the continental varieties. And, whereas England gradually came to be united under a single political authority (a factor which to some extent helped to slow the fragmentation of English), the stay-at-homes on the Continent found their territory criss-crossed by political boundaries. Eventually, continental Ingvaeonic broke up into several regional varieties which were not even comprehensible to one another, let alone with English. Today, linguists recognize three continental languages derived from Ingvaeonic: Dutch, Frisian, and Low German (in fact, only some dialects of Dutch and of Low German derive from Ingvaeonic — the linguistic position was really somewhat complicated in this part of the world).

[…] But the Ingvaeonic languages are far from being the only relatives that English has. A number of other European languages are also transparently related to English, if not quite so closely. German sentences like *Mein Haus ist alt* and *Dies Wein ist gut* are not so different from English, and even Swedish *Nils har en penna och en bok* you may be able to recognize as meaning "Nick has a pen and a book". Icelandic is far more difficult, but, if I tell you that *Folkid segir, ad hun se lik Anna* means "People say that she is like Anna," you will spot the resemblance. Also in this group are Danish, Norwegian, Faeroese (spoken in the Faeroe Islands), Norn (formerly spoken in the Shetland and Orkney Islands north of Scotland), Yiddish (a distinctive offshoot of German), and Gothic (an extinct language spoken by many of the barbarian invaders who overthrew the western Roman Empire).

These languages are called the Germanic languages, and they all started off millennia ago as nothing more than dialects of a single language, which we call *Proto-Germanic*. […] Who spoke Proto-Germanic, and where and when? This is not a simple question, since the Proto-Germanic

speakers were illiterate and left no written texts behind. But the consensus of scholars is that the language was probably spoken in southern Scandinavia around 500 B.C., and that groups of Germanic speakers spread from there into northern, eastern, and southern Europe, and finally, a thousand years later, into Britain. The dialects spoken by these groups have diverged into a number of distinct languages, but the relatedness of these languages is still easy to see.

And Proto-Germanic is not the end of the story, or rather it is not the beginning. Two hundred years of careful research has demonstrated beyond any doubt that Proto-Germanic itself began life as a dialect of a still more ancient language, and that the Germanic languages are thus related to a vast family of languages spoken over most of Europe and much of Asia. This enormous family includes the Celtic languages like Irish and Welsh, the Romance languages like French, Spanish, and Italian, the Slavic languages like Russian, Polish, and Serbo-Croatian, the Baltic languages like Lithuanian, several rather isolated languages like Greek, Albanian, and Armenian, the Iranian languages like Persian and Kurdish, the north Indian languages like Hindi, Punjabi, Bengali, and Gujarati, and a number of now extinct languages formerly spoken in the Balkans, in modern Turkey, and in central Asia. We call it the Indo-European family, and the Indo-European languages are, of course, descended from a remote ancestor called Proto-Indo-European, or PIE. We think PIE was spoken around 6,000 years ago, probably somewhere in eastern Europe, possibly in southern Russia, by a group of people who rode horses and had wheeled vehicles, agriculture, and domesticated animals. We know this because such PIE words as those for "horse", "wheel", "axle", "grain", "cow", "sheep" and "dog" have survived in a number of daughter languages. For example, we're confident that the PIE word for "sheep" was **owis* (the asterisk marks an unattested form reconstructed by linguists) because of the existence of Sanskrit (an ancient language of India) *avis,* Latin *ovis,* Greek *ois,* Lithuanian *avis,* Old Irish *oi,* all meaning "sheep", and English *ewe*[1].

Naturally, PIE must itself have been descended from a still earlier ancestor, and so on, all the way back to the origins of human language perhaps 100,000 years or more ago, bus it is exceedingly difficult to trace things back further into the past: eventually the weight of accumulated changes in languages becomes so great that we can no longer identify an ancient common origin with confidence — although a number of linguists are working very hard on this problem, and some of them are beginning to think that we might be able to derive the Indo-European and other families from a very remote ancestor which they call Proto-Nostratic and which they think was spoken perhaps 15,000 years ago. But this idea is still deeply controversial.

Nonetheless, we have succeeded in tracing the origins of English back to an unidentified, illiterate people living somewhere in eastern Europe around 6.000 years ago. These people gradually spread out over much of Asia and Europe, and one group moved first into Scandinavia, then south into much of Europe. Some of them eventually crossed the North Sea into Britain, where their Germanic language, eventually called English, became in turn the national language of England, the language of the British Empire and, finally, the most influential and widely used language in the world.

### *Questions to think about*

1. How does Trask demonstrate the relationship between language change and geographical separation? What are some of the examples he uses? What is the eventual outcome of the geographical separation of different dialects? What happens to dialects?

2. How would you describe the language called by Trask *Ingvaeonic?* To what language might it refer? Into which languages did this ancestor language eventually evolve? Where are / were these languages spoken?

[1] *ewe* [ju:] a female sheep.

3. Who spoke Proto-Germanic? Where and when were they spoken, according to Trask? Into what linguistic branches did Proto-Germanic split off? Which languages look to be the closest relatives of English?

4. *Extending your understanding:* Why do you think the history of the English language is important as a subject of study? How might it enlighten both your understanding of historical events and of language and how it develops? Form small groups in your class and discuss these questions. As you are having your discussion, compose a list of ways in which the subject of the history of English might aid in the learning and teaching of history, grammar, vocabulary, spelling, sociology, and geography.

### *Terms to define*

Define the following words and phrases as they are presented within the context of the leading. Comment on your understanding of the significance of each one.

Regional dialect
Proto-Germanic
Frisian
Flemish
Dutch Afrikaans
Sanskrit

## FINEGAN, E. WHERE DOES ENGLISH COME FROM?

*In:* Language: Its structure and use. 4th ed. Boston: Thomson Wadsworth, 2005. P. 502–503.

Where does English come from, and for how long has it been spoken in England? What are its principal ancestors and its closest relatives?

Before the beginning of the modern era, Britain was inhabited by Celtic-speaking peoples, ancestors of today's Irish, Scots, and Welsh. In 55 B.C., Britain was invaded by Julius Caesar, but his attempt to colonize it failed, and the Romans conquered Britain only in A.D. 43. When, subsequently, the Roman legions withdrew in 410, the Celts, who had long been accustomed to Roman protection, were at the mercy of the Picts and the Scots from the north of Britain. In a profoundly important development for the English language, Vortigern, king of the Romanized Celts in Britain, sought help from three Germanic tribes. In 449 these tribes set sail from what is today northern Germany and southern Denmark. When they landed in Britain they decided to settle, leaving the Celts only the remote corners – Scotland, Wales, and Cornwall.

The invaders spoke closely related varieties of West Germanic, the dialects that were to become English. The word *England* derives from the name of one of the tribes, the Angles: thus England, originally *Englaland,* is the 'land of the Angles'. The Old English language used by the early Germanic inhabitants of England and their offspring up to about A.D. 1100 is often called Anglo-Saxon, after two of the tribes (the third tribe was named Jutes). We have no written records of early Anglo-Saxon. The oldest surviving English-language materials come from the end of the seventh century, with an increasing quantity after that, giving rise to an impressive literature, including *Beowulf.*

Once the Anglo-Saxon peoples had settled in Britain, there were additional onslaughts from other Germanic groups starting in 787. In the year 850, a fleet of 350 Danish ships arrived. In 867, Vikings captured York. Danes and Norwegians settled in much of eastern and northern England and from there launched attacks into the kingdom of Wessex in the southwest. In 878, after losing a major battle to King Alfred the Great of Wessex, the Danes agreed by the Treaty of Wedmore to become Christian and to remain outside Wessex in a large section of eastern and

northern England that became known as the Danelaw because it was subject to Danish law. After the treaty, Danes and Norwegians were assimilated to Anglo-Saxon life, so much so that 1400 English place names are Scandinavian, including those ending in *-by* 'farm, town' *(Derby, Rugby), -thorp* 'village' *(Althorp), -thwaite* 'isolated piece of land' *(Applethwaite),* and *-toft* 'piece of ground' *(Brimtoft, Eastoft).*

Attacks from the Scandinavians continued throughout the Viking Age (roughly 750–1050) until finally King Svein of Denmark was crowned king of England and was succeeded almost immediately by his son Cnut in 1016. England was then ruled by Danish kings until 1042, when Edward the Confessor regained the throne lost to the Danes by his father Æthelred. The intermingling between the Anglo-Saxon invaders and the subsequent Scandinavian settlers created a mix of Germanic dialects in England that molded the character of the English language and distinguishes it from its cousins. (You can visit an Anglo-Saxon map of England at http://www.georgetown.edu/cball/oe/oe-map.html)

***Questions to think about***

1. Who are the ancestors of the Celtic-speaking peoples in Britain?
2. What does the word *England* mean?
3. What people are known as Vikings?
4. What English place names are of Scandinavian origin? In what part of Britain are they? Why? (Search the map).

## CHAPTER 2
## A SHORT SURVEY OF THE PERIODS IN THE HISTORY OF ENGLISH

### BLAKE, N.F. WHAT IS A HISTORY OF ENGLISH?

*In:* A History of the English Language. L.: MacMillan Press, 1996. P. 6–7.

The usual division of the history of the language into three major periods – Old, Middle and Modern – was first proposed by Henry Sweet in a lecture on the history of sounds to the Philological Society in 1873. In the written version he wrote:

> I propose, therefore, to start with the three main divisions of *Old, Middle* and *Modern,* based mainly on the inflectional characteristics of each stage. Old English is the period *of full* inflections *(nama, gifan, caru),* Middle English of *levelled* inflections *(naame, given, caare),* and Modern English of *lost* inflections *(naam, giv, caar).*

Although Sweet's article was concerned with the history of sound, his division into these three periods seemed so acceptable that they were taken over by other scholars without more ado. After all, we write about Anglo-Saxon history and we teach courses on Anglo-Saxon (or Old English) language and literature. Similarly there are courses on Middle English language and literature in universities and other institutions. To most people this division into three periods seemed natural and right. Sweet's argument is based on a morphological feature, namely the levelling and fall of inflections, where the former involves different inflectional endings being levelled under a single form and the latter the total disappearance of the inflections. This is why Sweet in his examples has all the Middle English unstressed vowels as *e* (the levelled form of *-a/u)* and has no unstressed vowels in the Modern English forms he has invented in a pseudo-phonetic

representation. A moment's reflection will make clear that this principle of division is flawed. Today it may be true that most inflections have fallen, but some still exist. The plural of most nouns is formed by adding -s, so the plural of *stone* is *stones.* The third-person singular of the present indicative of most verbs also ends in -s so that there is a distinction between I *come* and *he comes,* just as the preterite of many verbs is formed by adding the inflection *-(e)d* so that there is a distinction between *I walk* and *I walked.* In the Old English period there are many examples of the levelling of inflections in some of the extant texts, just as in Middle English certain texts show the fall of most inflections. The position is not unlike that outlined in the previous paragraph in that various changes are adopted by writers at different times and so there appear to be long periods in which the available evidence could be used to justify either the retention or the levelling of inflections at the presumed change-over from Old to Middle English, and either the levelling or the fall of inflections in the change-over from Middle to Modern English. Whatever linguistic phenomenon is chosen the same problem will recur. Changes in the language cannot be dated so specifically that we can use them to provide precise dates for the end of one period and the beginning of another. The levelling of inflections has been dated anywhere between approximately 900 and 1200. It all depends on what data are used and which texts are selected to provide the evidence. There is also the further problem of what particular linguistic feature should be chosen to provide the framework for dating the periods. Sweet chose the development of inflections, but other scholars have chosen other phenomena. Various features in the language undergo changes at different times and at different rates, and it is difficult to justify choosing one feature to the exclusion of others. In the change-over from Middle to Modern, English, for instance, is the fall of inflections a more significant feature of the language than, for instance, the Great Vowel Shift?

Although we have courses in universities devoted to Old English language and literature and Middle English language and literature, it does not follow that this is the appropriate division to follow in a history of English. If a history of the English language should confine itself principally to the history of the standard language, we need to adopt an alternative division which reflects changes in and attitudes towards the standard. In this respect we need to distinguish between a 'standard' language and a 'standardised' language. The difference is largely political and educational. A standard language will develop into a 'standardised' language, but the reverse is not true. By 'standardised' I mean a language which has achieved a reasonable measure of regularity in its written form. In earlier periods this may well mean that a teacher or master of a scriptorium imposed a set of preferred writing forms on those who were subject to his authority so that they wrote manuscripts using those forms fairly consistently.

### *Questions to think about*

1. On what criteria is Sweet’s division of the history of English based?
2. Does Blake believe that the linguistic features are justifiable for dating the periods in the history of language?
3. What is the difference between a 'standard' language and 'standardised' language in the author’s opinion?

## CRYSTAL, D. THE STANDARD STORY

*In:* The Stories of English. L.: Penguin Books, 2005. Pp. 3–4.

The standard history of the English language usually goes something like this.

- In the year 449 Germanic tribes arrived in Britain from the European mainland, and displaced the native British (Celtic) population, eventually establishing a single language which was Anglo-Saxon in character.
- Most writings of the period are shown to be preserved in the West Saxon dialect, the language of King Alfred, spoken in the politically and culturally dominant region of southern England around Winchester. Descriptions of the language, known as Anglo-Saxon or Old English, therefore reflect this dominance.
- Fundamental changes began to affect Old English grammar during the later Anglo-Saxon period, and these, along with changes in pronunciation, innovative spelling conventions, and a huge influx of new words after the Norman Conquest, led to the language evolving a fresh character, known as Middle English.
- During the Middle English period, the literary language began to evolve, culminating in the compositions of Chaucer, and we see the first signs of a Standard English emerging in the work of the Chancery scribes in London.
- The introduction of printing by Caxton in 1476 brought an enormous expansion in the written resources of the language, and was the major influence on the development of a standardized writing system. Spelling began to stabilize, and thus became less of a guide to pronunciation, which continued to change.
- Further changes in pronunciation and grammar, and another enormous increase in vocabulary stimulated by the Renaissance, led to the emergence of an Early Modern English. Its character was much influenced by Elizabethan literature, notably by Shakespeare, and by the texts of many Bibles, especially those of Tyndale (1525) and King James (1611).
- The unprecedented increase in the language's range and creativity brought a reaction, in the form of a climate of concern about the unwelcome pace and character of language change. This led to the writing of the first English dictionaries, grammars, and manuals of pronunciation, in an attempt to bring the language under some measure of control.
- As a result, there emerged a sharpened sense of correctness in relation to a standard form of English, and this came to be encountered worldwide, as speakers of educated British English gained global influence throughout the British Empire. At the same time, the question of standards became more complex, with the arrival of American English as an alternative global presence.
- By the end of the eighteenth century, the standard language had become so close to that of the present-day, at least in grammar, pronunciation, and spelling, that it is safely described as Modern English. But there continued to be massive increases in vocabulary, chiefly as a consequence of the industrial and scientific revolutions, and of the ongoing globalization of the language – a process which would continue throughout the twentieth century and into the twenty-first.

Just one story is being told here. It is predominantly the story of what happened to English in England, and moreover to just one kind of English in England – the kind of English which we associate with the written language, with literary expression, and with speaking and writing in a formal, educated way. It is a story, in short, of the rise of Standard English.

### *Questions to think about*

1. What periods in the history of English does the author distinguish? Does he mention the criteria the classification is based on?

2. The history of what kind of English does he believe it is?
3. What is Standard English?

## MILLWARD, C.M. DEMARCATING THE HISTORY OF ENGLISH

*In:* A Biography of the English Language. (2nd ed.). N.Y., L.: Harcourt Brace college publishers, 1996. P. 16–17.

Although linguistic change is a slow but unceasing process, like a slow-motion movie, so to speak, it is impracticable to try to describe the changes in this way. Instead, we must present them as a series of still photographs, noting what has changed in the interval between one photograph and the next. This procedure fails to capture the real dynamism of linguistic change, but it does have the advantage of allowing us to examine particular aspects in detail and at a leisurely pace before they disappear. The history of the English language is normally presented in four such still photographs – Old English, Middle English, Early Modern English, and Present-Day English. […]

The dividing lines between one period of English and the next are not sharp and dramatic: the English people did not go to bed on December 31, 1099, speaking Old English and wake up on January I, 1100, speaking Middle English. Nevertheless, the changes that had accumulated by the year 1100 were sufficiently great to justify a different designation for the language after that date.

Old English (OE) is that stage of the language used between A.D. 450 and A.D. 1100. The period from 1100 to 1500 is Middle English (ME), the period between 1500 and 1800 is Early Modern English (EMnE), and the period since 1800 is Present-Day English (PDE). For those familiar with English history, these dates may look suspiciously close to dates of important political and social events in England. The beginning of ME is just a few years after the Norman Conquest, the beginning of EMnE parallels the English Renaissance and the introduction of printing into England, and the starting date for Present-Day English is on the heels of the American Revolution.

These parallels are neither accidental nor arbitrary. All of these political events are important in the outer history of English. The Norman Conquest had a cataclysmic effect on English because it brought thousands of Norman French speakers to England and because French subsequently became the official and prestigious language of the nation for three centuries. The introduction of printing, among other effects, led to a great increase in literacy, a standard written language, concepts of correctness, and the brake on linguistic change that always accompanies widespread literacy. The American Revolution represents the beginning of the division of English into national dialects that would develop more or less independently and that would come to have their own standards.

Linguistically, these demarcation points of 450, 1100, 1500, and 1800 are also meaningful. The date 450 is that of the separation of the "English" speakers from their Continental relatives; it marks the beginning of English as a language, although the earliest surviving examples of written English date only from the seventh century. By 1100, English had lost so many of its inflections that it could no longer properly be called an inflecting language. By 1500, English had absorbed so many French loans that its vocabulary looked more like that of a Romance language than that of a Germanic language. Further, the very rhythms of the spoken language had changed under the influence of the differing stress patterns of these French loans. By 1800, the vast numbers of Latinate loans brought in by the English Renaissance had been absorbed, along with hundreds of exotic, often non-Indo-European words introduced through English exploration and colonization. Also, the grammar of English had, in most important respects, become that of the present day.

***Questions to think about***

1. What factors does the author take into account when dividing the history of English?
2. What century do the earliest surviving examples of written English date from?

# CHAPTER 3
# OLD ENGLISH PERIOD

## THOMAS, L., & TCHUDI, S. A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE. CHAPTER 5

*In:* The English language: An owner's manual. Boston: Allyn & Bacon, 1999. Pp. 150–156.

### Old English (449–1100 A.D.)

Scholars often describe the years 449–1100 A.D. as the time Old English (OE) was spoken and was evolving. Remember that OE was never a single rigid language with ail speakers using exactly the same forms, beginning in one year and abruptly changing in exactly 1100 A.D. The dates agreed on for OE are based on historical events, which allow us to imagine a time period in which a people remained together speaking generally the same evolving language.

We know that the Celts were already living in what is now known as the British Isles before 55 B.C., when the Isles were first invaded by the Romans. The Romans established a highly civilized society and sophisticated infrastructure. They also defended the territory from outside invaders. The Romans withdrew from the British Isles to defend other regions of the crumbling Roman Empire in 410 A.D., leaving the native population of Celts, Picts, and Scots in a vulnerable position. They had been fighting among themselves, and with the Romans gone, they were open to outside invaders. The Venerable Bede, one of the earliest English historians, wrote in his book *The Ecclesiastical History of the English Nation* that the arrival of shiploads of Germanic warriors, Jutes, Saxons, Frisians, and Angles from Western Europe began in Britain in 449 A.D. This period of invasions populated the British Isles with the initial waves of Germanic tribes who would evolve to become the English people. The Angles became the group after which the developing England was named, from the prehistoric *Angli* to *Engle* and then to the naming of the people we know as the English. The term Anglo-Saxon also comes from this period and refers not only to the people, but also to the language. […]

To get a sense of Old English, linguists draw heavily on early religious writings. The earliest scribes were educated largely within monasteries that were established earlier as outposts of Rome in an effort to bring Christianity to England. Even though much of their work remained in Latin, we have some texts appearing in the **vernacular**, meaning the language of the common people, or English. Figure 5.4 of "Moses and the Red Sea" presents an OE translation of the Christian Bible text by Abbot Ælfric (c. 955–1012 – by the way, the "c." stands for the word *circa,* meaning "approximately" – we don't have exact birth and death records for some important people in history.) Ælfric is recognized as one of the greatest prose writers of the Old English period.

Entire books are written describing Old English, but we will summarize just a few of the important internal features of the language. OE retained a very close similarity in its lexicon to its Germanic roots. One feature which differentiates today's English so drastically from OE is the very extensive borrowing of foreign vocabulary in periods following OE. Today we have lost approximately 85% of the original OE vocabulary, although those items that remain are what we may call the "glue" of the language, the words used very often. These include prepositions,

conjunctions, auxiliary verbs, and pronouns, as well as words for fundamental concepts such as *cild* (child), *hūs* (house), *wīf* (wife), *libban* (live), *etan* (eat), and *drincan* (drink), to name a few.

One feature Old English used in new word formation and one we continue to use today is that of compounding, putting two words together to form a new one. If we analyze the number of root words in Old English, we may come away thinking it was a bit impoverished. Yet the language could form words like *woroldcyning,* 'world-king' for an earthly king, and *dægred,* 'day-red' for dawn. This primarily Germanic word formation strategy persists today as the most common way to form new words in English.

The sound system of OE must be pieced together from various evidence (if only we had had tape recorders then!). Yet we cannot be certain of the exact quality of the sounds of OE. We have chosen only several features here that demonstrate departures from Modern English. For example, vowel length was phonemic in OE; that is, if the sound represented by æ [æ] appears with what is called the macron diacritic, meaning a line over it, as in ǣ, it would be held longer in time than an æ without a macron *and* it would have a different meaning. For example, vowel length in OE distinguishes two separate word meanings in *æt* 'at' and *ǣt* 'ate.'

The consonant system included the *Þ,* called the thorn, pronounced [θ] or [ð], and we can see *sc* and *cg* as in *disc* [diš] 'dish' and *hrycg* [hryj] 'ridge'. The diacritic represents palatalized sounds, as in the *ć* (of the *ch*-sound in English) seen in *ćēosan* [će:ozon] 'to choose'.

The word order in Old English was beginning to change in the direction of what we see in Modern English, yet it was still less fixed than today. In declarative sentences especially we see the subject-verb-complement order that is common today, as in *Hē wæs swīðe spēdig man* meaning 'He was a very successful man.'

Most striking in Old English prose is the manner in which ideas were strung together. Old English had not yet developed the highly defined sentence as is standard in today's usage. Today's sentence is replete with subordinations and conjunctions, all used in a predictable fashion. In OE, clauses were juxtaposed with no formal signal of their relationship, something linguists call parataxis (as opposed to today's system of subordination called hypotaxis). The linguists Pyles and Algeo give this example of a paratactic sentence:

*Ða hē forð on ðæt leoht cōm, ðā beseah he hine under bæc wið ðæs wīfes; ða losode hēo him sōna*

'Then [when] he came forth into that light, then looked he backward toward that woman; then slipped she from him immediately.'

A more modern translation would be 'When he came into the light he looked back at the woman, who slipped away from him immediately.'

Old English also carried over from both the Germanic and original IE a highly inflected system seen in the endings on nouns, adjectives, pronouns, and verbs. […]

### *Questions to think about*

4. What does the term Anglo-Saxon mean?
5. What features of OE show that it retained a very close similarity to its Germanic roots?
6. What new way of word formation was used in OE?
7. What words make up the "glue" of the language?

### *Notions to define*

phonemic vowel length
vernacular
diacritic
parataxis
hypotaxis

## CRYSTAL, D. CASTING THE RUNES

*In:* The English Language: A Guided Tour of the Language. 2nd ed. L.: Penguin Books, 2002. P. 179.

Old English was first written using the runic alphabet. This alphabet was used in northern Europe, in Scandinavia, present-day Germany, and the British Isles, and it has been preserved in about 4,000 inscriptions and a few manuscripts. It dates from around the third century A.D. No one knows exactly where the alphabet came from. It is a development of one of the alphabets of southern Europe, probably the Roman, which runes resemble closely. The runic script could well have been invented in the Rhine area; we know that there were lively trade contacts here between Germanic people and Romans in the first centuries of our era.

The common runic alphabet used throughout the area consisted of twenty-four letters. It is written both from left to right and from right to left. Each letter had a name, and the alphabet as a whole is called the 'futhorc' (in Britain), from the names of its first six letters (in a similar way to our name 'alphabet', derived from the first two letters of the Greek alphabet, alpha and beta). The version found in Britain used extra letters to cope with the range of sounds found in Old English, and at its most developed form, in ninth century Northumbria, consisted of thirty-one letters (with the variant shapes which can be found in the different inscriptions).

The inscriptions in Anglo-Saxon date from the fifth or sixth centuries A.D. They are found on weapons, jewellery, monuments, and other artefacts. Sometimes they simply tell who made or owned the object. Most of the Old English rune stones say little more than 'X raised this stone in memory of Y'. Often the message is unclear.

### *Questions to think about*

1. Is the runic alphabet used in Britain similar to that used in northern Europe?
2. How many runes were there in the alphabet?
3. Why are the letters angular, with straight lines (but no curved lines)?

## LASS, R. PROPER NAMES

*In:* Old English. A Historical Linguistic Companion. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998. P. 205–207.

[…] Speakers of Germanic languages generally do not think of their names as having 'structure' (or meaning). There are of course obvious compounds *(Mary-Ann),* and some dear derivations with diminutive or feminizing suffixes *(Mari-etta* vs. Mary, Marie; *Joseph~ine* vs. *Joseph),* as well as names that seem to be simple non-onomastic lexical items (rare in English, but German *Wolf* 'wolf') or compounds (G *Wolfgang* 'wolf-path', *Gottlob* 'god-praise': but not perceived as such by speakers). The common run of names like *Alfred* or *Edith* however seem to be just unmotivated, arbitrary simple words, with no 'meanings'.

If however we look back at the OE forms of the last two, we see something quite different: *Ælf-rǣd, Ēad-gyþ.* They are both compounds: the first consists of the elements of 'elf' and 'counsel'; the second of 'joy, blessing' and a derivative of *gēotan* 'pour'. *Alfred* is presumably a bahuvrīhi[1] '(the one) counselled by the elves'[2]; *Edith* is a determinative 'the pourer of blessings'.

[1] bahuvrīhi (*pl.* bahuvrīhis) (Sanskrit) A type of nominal compound in which the first part modifies the second and neither part can be used alone while retaining the intended meaning, e.g. *redcoat*, *bluestocking*, *lowlife*

[2] 'Elves' here in the serious old (or Tolkien) sense of wise supernatural beings, not Santa's helpers.

Virtually all Old Germanic names are in fact either simplex lexemes or (more commonly) transparent word-formations of one kind or another; as an example, the personal names in the NWGmc runic corpus exhibit the following types:

(i) Bahuvrīhi compounds: *Glaaugiz* [[gla]-aug-i-z] 'bright-eye(d)'.

(ii) Determinative compounds: *Bidawarijaz* [[bid-a-]war-j-a-z] 'covenant-protector', *Widuhu(n)daz* [[wid-u-] hund-a-z] 'wood-dog' (-wolf?), *Ansugisalaz* [[ans-u-] gisal-a-z] ' gods'-hostage', *Skiþaleubaz* [[skiþ-a-] leub-a-z] 'justice-lover', *Hadulaikaz* [[had-u-] laik-a-z] 'battle-dancer'.

(iii) Derivatives: *Har-j-a* 'warrior', *Har-i-so* 'female warrior', *Tan-ul-u* 'little enchantress', *Un-gand-i-z* 'un-beatable', *Hak-u-þ-u-z* 'crooked one', *Wig-i-z* 'warrior'.

(iv) Simplex nouns: *Haraban-a-z* 'raven'.

In other words, all the main Germanic word-formation types are represented in the NWGmc name-stock. Moreover, the structures are 'normal' and generally transparent, even to the extent of the first elements of determinative compounds showing the appropriate theme-vowels for their declension classes. At this stage names are 'words' like any others, more or less.

By attested OE times, the structural situation is much the same (except for a good number of borrowed names, mainly Celtic); but semantically things are rather different. While the name-elements or **themes** are still largely visible, and the different types of compounds are still identifiable, many names appear to be arbitrary collocations of themes. Bahuvrīhis like *Huaet-mod* 'brave-spirit' or determinatives like *Ælf-uini* 'Elf-friend' reflect the principles seen in NWGmc names; but what are we to make of *Ælf-uulf* 'Elf-wolf', or even worse *Frið-hild* 'Peace-battle'? In fact as OE progressed, the principle of constructing **dithematic** names like these remained productive, but the themes themselves could become simply (nearly) meaningless elements, as in *Wulf-stān* 'Wolf-stone'; that is, names were in the early stages of becoming what we might call 'onomasticized', losing their lexical sense.

Still, one could say that by and large OE names were still, if not necessarily 'meaningful', at least transparent; and that they still reflected standard Germanic WF strategies in the same way as ordinary lexical compounds or derivations. Here for instance is a sample of names from the ninth-century Northumbrian *Liber vitae* (Sweet 1885), a list of benefactors of the Durham church:

(i) Dvandvas[1] (male): *Ead-bercht* 'blessed-bright', *Huaet-berht* 'brave-bright'.

(ii) Bahuvrīhis (male): *Ecg-bercht* '(sword)-edge-bright', *Ecg-heard* 'edge-hard', *Huaet-mod* (brave-spirit(ed)', *uulf-hard* 'wolf-brave'.

*(iii)* Determinatives: (a) male: *Aelf-uini* 'elf-friend', *Cyni-degn* 'royal-servant', *Berht-uulf* 'bright-wolf, *Isern-uulf* "iron-wolf, *Gar-uulf* 'spear-wolf; (b) female: *Cyni-ðryð* 'royal-power/majesty/glory', *Hildi-ðryth* 'battle-power', *Hroeð-gifu* 'glory-gift', *Frið-hild* 'peace-battle', *Uulf-hild* 'wolf-battle'.

(iv) Non-compound nouns and adjectives, (a) male: *Beorn* 'man, warrior', *Bercht* 'bright', *Snella* 'smart, strong one', *Huita* 'white one'; (b) female: *Cuoemlicu* 'comely', *Badu* 'battle', *Nunnae* 'nun'.

In a society in which female warriors (and warrior goddesses) were not unknown, the semantics of a compound name do not necessarily carry any gender implications *(Uulfhild* is no more 'feminine' than *Berhtuulf,* and *Aelfuini* could suggest desirable qualities for either sex). What does count however (at least in names with a nominal head) is simply the grammatical gender of the head noun: regardless of semantics *wolf* and *wine* (to give their later forms) are masculines, and *hild, giefu* are feminines.

[1] dvandva (*pl*. dvandvas) (*Sanskrit*) a copulative or coordinative type of a compound in which members, if not compounded, would be in the same case and connected by the conjunction *and*.

*Abbreviations:*
NWGmc – Northwest Germanic
WF – word formation

### *Questions to think about*

1. What word-formation was characteristic of OE personal names?
2. Were OE names of persons structurally and semantically similar to PG?

## BLAKE, N.F. BACKGROUND SURVEY

*In:* A History of the English Language. L.: MacMillan Press Ltd., 1996. P. 41.

Changes in syntax […] tend to fall into certain patterns, but they are more difficult to characterise. When word order became the main method of indicating grammatical function, the order SVO became the dominant one for declarative sentences – those which make a statement rather than, for example, a command. In earlier forms of English there were a number of impersonal verbs which took the old dative form of the personal pronoun or noun which was placed before the verb itself. This survives in the now archaic *Methinks,* which could be interpreted as roughly 'To me [it] seems'. Once the pattern of SVO became established, an expression that had an oblique form before the verb became anomalous and was replaced. Today we can say either *It seems to me* or simply *I think.* Equally the word order pattern in English allows the adverbials to occupy a relatively free position, but this freedom has its limits. The pattern of putting the object as close to the verb as possible has grown stronger over the years and this has discouraged the placing of an adverbial between the verb and the object. A sentence like ***I caught this morning the bus* is not generally acceptable except in poetry, because *this morning* could be understood as the object.

### *Questions to think about*

1. Why are changes in syntax more difficult to characterise?
2. What Russian verbs allow the subject in the Dative case?

## MILLWARD, C.M. OLD ENGLISH SYNTAX

*In:* A Biography of the English Language. (2nd ed.). N.Y., L.: Harcourt Brace college publishers, 1996. P. 107–111.

Word order in Old English, at least compared with that in Present-Day English, was relatively free. The speaker or writer of Old English had more options than we do today as to where to place such elements as direct objects with respect to other elements in the sentence. However, OE never had the syntactical freedom of a language like Classical Latin, and there were definite "favorite" phrase, clause, and sentence patterns that were followed quite consistently, especially in prose. Further, most of these patterns were the same as those of PDE, For example, a word-for-word translation of the following sentence from Alfred's *Orosius* (c. 895) produces a completely idiomatic PDE sentence.

Hē sǣde ðæt Norðmanna land wǣre swyþe lang and swyþe smæl.

*He said that (the) Northmen's land was very long and very narrow.* […]

**Syntax within clauses**

If we take the basic elements of a clause as subject (S), verb (V), and object/complement (O), then there are six theoretically possible orders in which these elements may occur: SVO, SOV, VSO, VOS, OSV, and OVS. All of these orders occurred, at least occasionally, in Old English. Nonetheless, order of elements was by no means random; in fact, word order in OE was in many ways similar to that of PDE. In particular, the subject usually preceded the verb. The favorite order in independent declarative clauses was SVO, as it remains in PDE.

and mæsse-prēost āsinge fēower mæssan ofer þān turfon
*and (the) mass priest (should) sing four masses over (the) turves*

Sēo stōw is gehāten Heofonfeld on Englisc
*That place is called Heavenfield in English*

Se fērde on his iugoðe fram frēondum and māgum tō Scotlande on sǣ
*He went in his youth (away) from friends and relatives to Scotland by sea*

However, in dependent clauses, the typical order was SOV. Indeed, the SOV order was common even in independent clauses when the object was a pronoun.

þām þe his willan on worolde gewyrcað
*(to) those who his will in (the) world do*

for ðan Ælma:r hī becyrde
*because Elmer them betrayed*

ond hē hine sōna to þǣre abbudissan gelǣdde
*and he him at once to the abbess led*

This SOV order is virtually impossible in PDE, though it survives marginally in verse and song lyrics ("while I the pipes did play").

The order VSO was the rule in interrogative clauses and imperative clauses with an expressed subject. It was normal, but not universal, in declarative clauses preceded by an adverbial.

*Interrogative* Hæfst ðu hafocas? . . . Canst ðu temman hafocas? . . . Hwæt
*Have you hawks? Know how you to tame hawks? What*
secge wē be þǣm cōce?
*say we about the cook?*

*Imperative* Ne sleh þū, Abraham, þīn āgen bearn
*Not slay you, Abraham, your own son*

*Preceded by Adverbial* Eall þis ȝear wunode se cyng Henri on Normandiȝ
*All this year stayed King Henry in Normandy*

Ðā cwæþ se fǣder tō his þēowum ...
*Then said the father to his servants*

Ond þā se here eft hāmweard wende
*And then the army again homeward turned* (no inversion of S and V)

Of these three types of constructions, PDE regularly has inversion in interrogatives ("Why do you say that?" "Can he play backgammon?"). The VSO order is obligatory in PDE after a preceding *negative* adverbial ("Never have I seen such a mess"; "Rarely does the class begin on time"), and is a familiar stylistic variant after other adverbials, especially of direction or position

("Here comes the rain"; "On the table was a yellow cat"). In imperatives, PDE normally does not include a subject; but when it does, the order is SVO ("You eat your porridge!"), except in the idiom *mind you.*

The three remaining possible orders of OSV, OVS, and VOS all appear in OE texts, but are relatively rare, especially in prose. They seem to have been stylistic variants used primarily to emphasize the object or complement, though they also offered convenient metrical options to poets.

OVS Fela spella him sǣdon þā Beormas
*Many stories (to) him told the Kareliam.*

OSV bēot hē gelǣste
*vow he fulfilled*

Strained as these examples may appear to the modern ear or eye, both are still used in certain circumstances in PDE. Fronting of an object or complement for emphasis is common in PDE, though perhaps more in speech than in writing ("Time I have, money I don't"). Even the seemingly bizarre order OVS is acceptable in PDE if the object is both negated (which provides the stimulus for inverting S and V) and emphasized ("No evidence have I seen to support that assumption"). In written, though not in spoken, PDE, the OVS order is conventional in reporting direct speech ("I don't care,' said Beulah").

## Syntax of sentences

For the most part, the structure of entire sentences in OE prose was much looser than we would find elegant today – more like the typical sentence structures of spoken PDE; today's composition teachers would mark OE sentences "rambling" or "run-on". There was much less of the complex subordination that characterizes careful PDE prose; clauses within the sentence tended to be linked simply by the conjunctions *and* and *þā* 'then'. Although OE used such basic subordinating conjunctions as *þā* 'when', *gif* 'if', and *for þan* 'because', it lacked the rich array of subordinating conjunctions that PDE has, and the relative pronoun system was poorly developed.

One of the reasons why OE sentences were generally loose and cumulative in structure was the lack of models for tighter, more hypotactic structures. Although most writers were familiar with Latin, its grammar differed so much from OE grammar that its structures simply could not be transferred wholesale into English. Indeed, even in glosses, where scribes "translated" Latin texts simply by writing an English equivalent over each Latin word, scribes often changed the original word order, apparently feeling that a word-for-word translation in such instances would be too distorted to be comprehensible to a native speaker of English.

### *Questions to think about*

1. What word order was characteristic of OE? Why?
2. What type of arrangement of S, V, O was the most typical?
3. When inverted what function could the word order perform?

### *Terms to define*

clause
hypotactic structure
paratactic structure
coordination
subordination

## LASS, R. TOPICS IN OE HISTORICAL SYNTAX: WORD-ORDER AND CASE. RECONSTRUCTED SYNTAX?

*In:* Old English. A Historical Linguistic Companion. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998. P. 216–225.

Morphology […] poses problems for historical reconstruction […]. Syntax poses these problems as well, in addition to special ones of its own.

[…] Since syntax is the 'creative' part of grammar, we do not normally think of a given sentence in a language as the 'descendant of' an equivalent sentence in an earlier stage, itself the descendant of some yet older sentence. It makes sense to say that OE *cyning* is the descendant of WGmc */kunin-γ/, which descends in turn from PGmc **/kuninγ-a-z/*. But it appears not to make the same kind of sense to say that the OE sentence *se cyning þās word gehierde* 'the king heard those words' is the descendant of the Proto-Gmc sentence */se kuninγ*az* θais worðu " γ*a*xauziθ*a*/.

It shouldn't be hard to see why, in a general way. Given sentences' high specificity of meaning, their embedding in discourses, texts, etc. – as well as the fact that the 'set of sentences' in a language is at least indefinitely large – we would not expect this kind of descent. Anymore than we'd expect discourses or texts to be ancestral to others (barring special cases like successive translations or utterances of a ritual or scripture, or prefabricated chunks like proverbs or idioms). Sentences can be (and probably are) largely 'fashioned anew' for specific utterance-occasions; this is not however true of the materials they're made of, like morphemes or phonemes. So while we can say that *cyning* 'descends from' **/kunin-γaz/*, and that each phoneme in it is a descendant of a particular phoneme in Ingvaeonic, West Germanic, NWGmc, Proto-Gmc .., we can't apparently make the same kind of claims about syntax.

Or can we? While a particular sentence does not have an 'ancestry', this is not the case for a particular construction. Take for example a word-order pattern. Here the possibilities for history open out a bit. Surely *þās word gehierde* could be a 'descendant' of an older object-Verb construction, which we might try to project back to an earlier stage, even PGmc.

The point is that it appears to be possible, under certain conditions, to attribute a construction type to a protolanguage, or to see it as a descendant of another, more or less in the way we do phonological or morphological reconstruction. For example, if all the daughters of a protolanguage agree in some 'arbitrary' feature (one that is not necessary or even highly likely), there's no objection to reconstructing this for the immediate parent. And if the same structure or a very similar one shows up in more distant sister languages, this gives us an even wider time-scale. The reverse however does not hold – at least not in detail. For instance, the Old Germanic dialects show such a variety of relative clause formations that we cannot recover a single ancestral construction. But this does not mean that NWGmc or PGmc or IE had no relative clauses: indeed it is virtually impossible for this to have been the case. All it means is that the change has been so deep and idiosyncratic that we have no material for recovering an earlier stage.

### *Basic constituent order*

Virtually all languages have numerous word-order possibilities; but most have a basic or dominant order of major constituents. It is customary to think of languages as falling into broad order types with respect to the major clause constituents Subject, (direct) Object, Verb; and into subtypes with respect to other clause-internal orders, e.g. whether modifiers in general precede or follow their heads, or what kind of adpositions the language has: prepositions (as in English ***with*** *John*) or postpositions (as in Finnish *Juha-n* kanssa 'John-gen with').

A basic order in this sense is not exclusive. ModE is clearly an SVO language overall, in terms of neutral or unmarked order in simple declarative main clauses (the usual criterion): *John loves Mary*, but not **John Mary loves* (SOV), ** Loves John Mary* (VSO), etc. But other orders

do exist: e.g. OSV *(this book I hate)*. Similarly, ModE is a Modifier + Noun language *(these cats, red shoes, three mice);* but there are postmodifying constructions as well *(Soldiers Three, Prometheus Bound)*.

It seems likely that PIE was basically SOV, though the daughter languages show a wide variety of orders, including SVO and VSO (the later particularly in Celtic). PGmc is usually taken as continuing this order, though there is of course considerable debate. As I remarked earlier, we can't reconstruct syntax by strict comparative method the way we do phonology or morphology; but in the case of Old English we do have at least fragments of an ancestor: the NWGmc runic corpus (third to seventh centuries AD). This corpus is small and often obscure; there are not that many inscriptions, and some are damaged, partly illegible, or uninterpretable. But it is a precious resource: it brings us as close as we can get to the foundations of Germanic, and contains the earliest pieces of Germanic syntax we have. (The oldest inscriptions predate the Gothic text corpus by some three centuries.) It is, despite its small size, rich enough to suggest reasonable ancestors for some major OE construction types, and gives us some material for constructing a syntactic history of the murky period between the two traditions. […]

About 70 per cent of the transitive clauses in this corpus are OV (mainly SOV, with one OVS: vii); less than 20 per cent are SVO, and the rest V-initial (imperatives as expected for IE generally, otherwise topicalized verbs). As far as adpositions go, only prepositions appear (and this is true for the early NGmc inscriptions as well).

Evidence for other parameters is somewhat thin, but it seems clear that NWGmc is basically postmodifying: N + Modifier constructions of all types (adjectives, determiners) outnumber Modifier + N by about 4:1. The main exceptions appear to be quantifiers; at least the one quantified NP in the data (in *þrijoz dohtriz*) is preposed. There is also a systematic distinction in genitive modifiers depending on the animacy of the head noun: genitives precede inanimate heads *(Hnabdas hlaiwa* 'Hnabdaz-gen grave', B0 stone, c. 500), and follow animate heads *(erilaz Ansugislas* 'messenger Ansugislaz-gen'). It is also worth noting that the one early EGmc inscription with a modified noun has a prenominal genitive with an inanimate head *(gutanio wih-hailag* 'Gothic-women's consecrated, sacred (object)', Pietroassa ring, c. 300–400). This may then represent a very old pattern.

The bulk of the OE material in fact presents a picture either consistent with or easily derivable from an ancestor that looked like NWGmc. Both OV and VO orders are common in transitive clauses (the latter increasing later on). OE is largely premodifying (especially in later prose), but postmodification is not uncommon. It is basically prepositional, though postpositions do appear.

Fortunately, from the mid-eighth century on there are surviving texts of greater length, which give us a more detailed idea of the syntactic resources available as input to later periods, and the kind of changes that must have preceded the emergence of OE as a recognizable dialect tradition. One of the earliest texts of any size displays these properties clearly: the Northumbrian version of Cædmon's Hymn (Moore MS, c. 734–7; Smith 1968) [...]

In this early text, the figures for OV vs. VO transitive clauses (excluding imperatives, which are always V-initial) are 17 OV to 14 VO, a ratio of roughly 1.5:1, as opposed to the NWGmc 4:1. We can already see a drift away from dominant OV order.

As OE developed, a strong tendency arose to restrict OV to subordinate clauses; we have no data for NWGmc on this, but the development in general is not surprising in a language with a 'mixed' word-order. In Alfredian and post-Alfredian prose, perhaps the majority of main clauses without topicalization are VO (in particular verb-second […]), and subordinate clauses tend to be OV. Or to put it another way, the verb tends to come early in main clauses and late in subordinate clauses, and the overall pattern is reminiscent of the dominant order in modem German or Dutch. This is not however an original Germanic pattern, but the result of later developments. […]

### *The clausal brace and verb-second order*

Modern English is an SVO language, which is not the same as being verb-second. In SVO English, a sequence XSVO (where X = any non-subject constituent, like an adverb) is allowed; in a language with a main clause verb-second (V-2) constraint, like German or Swedish, if anything other than the subject occupies the initial slot in a main clause, the verb moves to second position. (This is traditionally called 'subject-verb inversion').

*English*:
I go to London tomorrow.
SV
Tomorrow I go to London.
X SV

*German*
Ich *fahre* morgen nach London.
S V X
Morgen *fahre* ich nach London.
X V S

This tendency was never as strict in OE as it later became in the other Germanic languages (except, of course English); but it is a major feature of OE and other Germanic word-orders, which does not at first sight have obvious antecedents in the NWGmc materials.

### *Questions to think about*

1. Is the idea of ancestry applicable to syntax?
2. What word order was typical of OE?
3. What kind of language is English in terms of word-order ?
4. Does the SVO-notion mean the same as V-2 (verb-second) feature?

## THOMAS, L., & TCHUDI, S. A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE. CHAPTER 5

*In:* The English language: An owner's manual. Boston: Allyn & Bacon, 1999. Pp. 154–156.

### *The Viking Invasions*

Besides the migration of the Germanic Angles, Jutes, Saxons, and Frisians to England, a second series of invasions had an effect on the developing language during the OE period. Beginning in 793 and continuing through the ninth century, Vikings (Danes and Scandinavians) descended from the northern countries, plundering monasteries and churches that had been centers of learning. They then settled in the land and dominated this region of England. […]. The English suffered many crushing defeats at the hands of the Vikings, often being ruled by them. In 878 one English king, Alfred the Great, managed to defeat the Vikings and to establish a region in England known as the Danelaw: Here the Norsemen were to live, peacefully coexisting with the English.

Despite the years of hardship and turmoil, it seems that the English over time accepted these peoples from the North as relatives; they were, after all, also descendants of Germanic tribes. Their languages were quite similar to English with many root words in common with OE. Linguists have suggested that contact with the Vikings, who assimilated with the English through intermarriage, may have contributed to the decline in the inflectional system. The Vikings and English may have largely understood each other except for perhaps the different inflections used in their languages. At the same time, word order became more important as a way of signaling

relationships between words. It is quite possible that this led to a leveling, meaning a dropping or merging, of inflectional endings. Documentation also shows that lexical items were borrowed from the Vikings, and some sound changes, such as the development of the *sk* as in *sky, skin,* or *skill* also entered the English language from the Scandinavian languages. The Old English word *scyrte* has become *shirt,* while the corresponding Viking (Old Norse) word, *skyrta* has become *skirt* […].

The OE period provides a good example of peoples and languages in contact and the dynamics of language change that occur in such situations. It is important to note that even after the Romans left the island, Latin remained an important language for the transmission of knowledge and education as well as for religious purposes. It was the beginning of a long period of influence of Latin on English. As noted, the Celts who originally inhabited the land had little impact on the development of OE. The influence of the Scandinavians and Danes, who spoke languages very similar to OE, was much greater; we can trace a number of loanwords, sounds, and morphological changes in OE to the contact between the Vikings and the English.

### *Questions to think about*

1. Why do linguists believe that contact with the Vikings may have contributed to the decline in the inflectional system in English?
2. What is the origin of the NE words *skirt* and *shirt*?
3. Why was the influence of the Scandinavians and Danes on English much greater than that of the Celts?

## MILLWARD, C.M. ON YOUR FEET

*In:* A Biography of the English Language. (2nd ed.). N.Y., L.: Harcourt Brace college publishers, 1996. P. 77.

### *On Your Feet*

We know more about Anglo-Saxon jewelry than about other articles of dress because jewelry, usually made of metal, is more likely than cloth or leather to survive being buried for centuries in damp English soil. Still, the Old English language gives us many clues about other items of clothing. For footwear alone, Old English had a number of words. The most common and most general term was *scoh,* the ancestor of our word *shoe,* A *stæppe-scoh* was a slipper, as was a *swiftlere*.

Rawhide footwear was called *hemming* or *rifeling*. As the word suggests, *leþerhose* were leather boots or gaiters. Monks might wear a *calc,* a sandal; the word is an early borrowing from Latin. A softer foot-covering was the *socc* (PDE *sock*).

And, just like people today, the early English apparently sometimes suffered from uncomforable shoes. There is a Middle English proverb, *Tel þou neuer þy fo þat þey fot akeþ,* that is, "Never tell your foe that your foot hurts". The accompanying drawings are of Anglo-Viking footwear found in York, England, and dating from the seventh to ninth centuries A.D.

Adapted from information in Gale R. Owen-Crocker, *Dress in Anglo-Saxon England*. – Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1986.

# CHAPTER 4
# MIDDLE ENGLISH PERIOD

## BAUGH, A.C., CABLE, T. MIDDLE ENGLISH A PERIOD OF GREAT CHANGE

*In:* A History of the English Language. 3rd ed. revised. L.: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1978. P. 158.

The Middle English period (1150-1500) was marked by momentous changes in the English language, changes more extensive and fundamental than those that have taken place at any time before or since. Some of them were the result of the Norman Conquest and the conditions which followed in the wake of that event. Others were a continuation of tendencies that had begun to manifest themselves in Old English. These would have gone on even without the Conquest, but they took place more rapidly because the Norman invasion removed from English those conservative influences that are always felt when a language is extensively used in books and is spoken by an influential educated class. The changes of this period affected English in both its grammar and its vocabulary. They were so extensive in each department that it is difficult to say which group is the more significant. Those in the grammar reduced English from a highly inflected language to an extremely analytic one. Those in the vocabulary involved the loss of a large part of the Old English word-stock and the addition of thousands of words from French and Latin. At the beginning of the period English is a language which must be learned like a foreign tongue; at the end it is Modern English.

### *Questions to think about*

1. When, according to the author, does the Middle English period begin?
2. Are all ME changes associated with the Norman Conquest?
3. What language parts were affected by the changes in ME?

## CRYSTAL, D. MIDDLE ENGLISH

*In:* The English Language: A Guided Tour of the Language. 2nd ed. L.: Penguin Books, 2002. P. 184–191.

The year 1066 marks the beginning of a new social and linguistic era in Britain, but it does not actually identify the boundary between Old and Middle English. It was a long time before the effects of the invasion worked their way in to the language, and in the meantime, Old English continued to be used. Well past 1100, texts were still being composed in the West Saxon variety that had developed in the years following the reign of King Alfred.

The series of manuscripts which form the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle clearly illustrate the period of change. This long work, which began to be compiled in Alfred's time, recounts events in the history of Britain from the time of the Anglo-Saxon invasions until the middle of the twelfth century. In 1116, most of the monastery at Peterborough was destroyed by fire, along with many manuscripts. The monks immediately began to replace the writings which had been lost. They borrowed the text of the Chronicle from another monastery, copied it out, and then carried on writing the history themselves. They continued until 1131, but then the writing stopped – doubtless because of the chaotic conditions of civil war which existed in the reign of King Stephen.

When the writing begins again, in 1154, after the death of Stephen, the style is quite different. There are points of similarity with the previous work, but the overall impression is that the writers were starting again, using vocabulary and grammatical patterns which reflected the language

of their time and locality, and inventing fresh conventions of spelling to cope with new sounds. […] Apart from a few phrases, the language now seems much closer to modern English; indeed, the Peterborough Chronicle is the earliest extensive text written in the East Midland dialect, from which modern standard English developed.

- There are several important grammatical developments shown in the extract. The system of Old English word endings is beginning to die away. Several of the old endings are still present, especially on verbs, but they are not used with as much consistency, and they no longer seem to play an important role in conveying meaning. The word order is now critical, and in most respects is very similar to that in use today. There is no sign in the extract of the Old English tendency to put the object before the verb, which was such an important feature of the Caedmon text. On the other hand, there are still several places where the grammar continues to show the older pattern, including a number of instances where the subject follows the verb:
  ræueden hi *they robbed*
  forbaren hi *they spared*

[…] And this particular extract makes a lot of use of 'double negatives' (and even triple negatives), another link with Old English. These need to be correctly interpreted, to follow the sense of the passage. There should be no temptation to 'cancel out' – using the mathematical rule that 'two negatives make a positive'. That is not how negative words worked in early English (nor, for that matter, in most of modern English). The principle is simple: the extra negative words increase the emphasis, making the negative meaning stronger. So, the multi-negative phrases should be interpreted as follows:

I ne can ne I ne mai tellen *I don't know how to, nor am I able to tell of. . .*
þa þe uureccemen ne hadden nan more to gyuen *when the wretched people had no more to give*
for nan ne wæs o þe land *for there was none in the land*
ne næure hethen men werse ne diden *nor did heathen men ever do worse*
ne hi ne forbaren *neither did they spare*

- The spelling is a curious mixture. There are some special features, such as the use of *g* for a sound that most other texts of the time were spelling with the symbol ȝ ('yogh'). The old English runic symbols are still being used, but there is inconsistency. The *th* spelling is occasionally used (though this doesn't become widespread until the fourteenth century). The word for *was* is sometimes spelled with *a* and sometimes with æ. The runic symbol *þ* is used in the manuscript, and is here shown as *w* (as is usual in modern editions of these texts), but *uu* is also a common spelling for this sound; the word for 'wretched people', for example, is spelled both ways in the extract. In addition, *u* is used where we would now find *v,* in such words as *æure* 'ever' and *gyuen* 'give'.
- There are still many words which need to be glossed for their meaning to be clear. Several words have since dropped from the language. We no longer use *þines* ('cruelties'), *gæildes* ('forced payments'), *tenserie* ('protection money'), *fare* ('journey'), *sturuen* ('died'), *ieden* ('went'), *sithon* ('experience, custom'), or *namen* ('took, seized'). And of the words which are still found today, several have altered meanings. The best examples in the extract are *wunder* ('wonder), which could mean 'atrocities' as well as 'marvels', *flesc* ('flesh') meaning 'meat', and *tunes* (villages'), which developed into *towns.* Words like these are always a problem when reading a Middle English text. Because they look the same as the modern English equivalents, we can be fooled into thinking that they mean the same, whereas the meaning is in fact different. This problem of 'false friends' does not happen so often in reading Old English, where the vocabulary looks less familiar.

At the same time, because of the spelling, several words look stranger than they really are. The odd-looking word *wreccemen,* for instance, would have been pronounced very like *wretch-man*

(but with the *w* sounded) and is thus very close to modern *wretched. Cyrceiærd* likewise would have been close to the modern pronunciation of *churchyard,* because the two *c* spellings represented the *ch* sound, and the *i* stood for the same sound as modern *y.* The same *ch* sound turns up in *cæse* ('cheese'). And *altegædere* is not far from *altogether,* nor *læiden* from *laid.*

Perhaps the most important point about the vocabulary of this text is the absence of French words. It is almost a century since the French arrived, but you would never guess from the language of this Chronicle.

The Peterborough Chronicle looks back towards Old English and ahead towards Middle English. In fact, scholars have argued at length about whether it is best to call it 'late Old English' or 'early Middle English'. Some stress the archaic features of the text, pointing to similarities with Old English; others stress the differences. The text illustrates very clearly the difficulty of drawing a sharp boundary between different stages in the development of a language – which is why I have chosen it. But it does not take much longer before the ambiguity is resolved. Other texts from the twelfth century confirm the new direction in which the language was moving. When we look at manuscripts 100 years later, there is no doubt that a major change has taken place in the structure of English.

## The story of Middle English

The period we call Middle English runs from the beginning of the twelfth century until the middle of the fifteenth, with the manuscripts at either end of this period showing the language in a state of change. The main influence on English was, of course, French – the language introduced to Britain by the Normans. Following the accession of William of Normandy, French was rapidly established in the corridors of power. William appointed French-speaking barons, and this was rapidly followed up by the appointment of French-speaking abbots and bishops. The links remained strong with Normandy, where the nobles retained their estates, and many of the kings spent long periods of time there. The written records show that there was very little use of English among the hierarchy. We are told that William himself tried to learn English at one point, but without success. Most of the Anglo-Norman kings were unable to communicate in the language – though it is said that some used it for swearing!

In 1204, the situation changed. King John of England came into conflict with King Philip of France, and was obliged to give up control of Normandy. The English nobility lost their estates in France, and antagonism grew between the two countries (leading ultimately to the Hundred Years War, which began in 1337). The status of French diminished as a spirit of English nationalism grew. During the twelfth century, English became more widely used among the upper classes. There was an enormous amount of intermarriage with English people. Scaccario, a chronicler writing in 1177, has this to say:

> Now that the English and Normans have been dwelling together, marrying and giving in marriage, the two nations have become so mixed that it is scarcely possible today, speaking of free men, to tell who is English, who of Norman race.

By the end of the twelfth century, contemporary accounts suggest that some children of the nobility spoke English as a mother tongue, and had to be taught French in school. French continued to be used in Parliament, the courts, and in public proceedings, but translations into English increased in frequency through the period, as did the number of handbooks written for the teaching of French. In 1362 English was used for the first time at the opening of Parliament. By the end of the century, when Richard II was deposed, Henry IV's speeches at the proceedings were made in English. By about 1425 it appears that English was universally used in England, in writing as well as in speech.

How had the language managed to survive the French invasion? After all, Celtic in England had not survived the Anglo-Saxon invasions 500 years before. Evidently the English language in

the eleventh century was too well established for it to be supplanted by another language. Unlike Celtic, it had a considerable literature and a strong oral tradition. It would have taken several hundred years of French immigration to have changed things – but the good relations between England and France lasted for only 150 years.

This 150 years, none the less, is something of a 'dark age' in the history of the language. There is hardly any written evidence of English, and we can thus only speculate about what happened to the language during that period. Judging by the documents which have survived, it seems that French was the language of government, law, administration, and the church, with Latin also used as a medium of education and worship. The situation becomes clearer in the thirteenth century, when we find an increasing number of sermons, prayers, romances, songs, letters, wills, and other documents in English. And then in the fourteenth century, we have the main achievements of Middle English literature, culminating in the writing of Geoffrey Chaucer (?1340–1400).

### *Questions to think about*

1. D. Crystal believes that the year 1066, although marking the beginning of a new social and linguistic era in Britain, does not actually identify the boundary between Old and Middle English. Why not?
2. To what language facts does D. Crystal refer to show the difficulty of drawing a sharp boundary between different stages in the development of a language?
3. Why did he choose the Peterborough Chronicle to illustrate his opinion?

## THOMAS, L., & TCHUDI, S. A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE. CHAPTER 5

*In:* The English language: An owner's manual. Boston: Allyn & Bacon, 1999. Pp. 156–159.

### Middle English (1100–1500 A.D.)

What is described as Middle English was spoken from roughly 1100 through 1500. You may note that the Middle English period overlaps with the historical period generally referred to as the Middle Ages (1000–1400); in fact the term *middle* works nicely here to establish that this was a transitional period in the history of English between Old English and Modern English, the English we know today.

The single most noteworthy event affecting the change into Middle English and Modern English was the Norman Conquest. In 1066 (a date all English majors must memorize), during a time of dispute over who would succeed Edward the Confessor as King of England, William, the duke of Normandy, took the throne of England. The Normans were from the region we now call France, although interestingly, they were also descendants of Scandinavians who had migrated to the area of France known as Normandy. (The term *Norman* comes from Old French meaning Northmen.) With the Norman Conquest came the Norman rule of England, with the Normans in charge of government, administration, and ecclesiastical matters. […]. The French spoken by the Normans developed into a dialect called Anglo-Norman, and it did not enjoy prestige status on the continent. In fact, in subsequent years, the noble Norman families of England would send their children to France, especially to the Paris region, to learn "real" French. Nonetheless, during the period in which England was under Norman domination (1066–1204) and continuing through the Hundred Years War (1337–1453), French was the language of the ruling and upper classes.

Even though French was the language of the ruling class and Latin continued to play a very important role in the Church and in education, the common people never stopped speaking the English of Germanic and Scandinavian origins. The attitude of the nobility towards English was most likely simply one of indifference. There is substantial documentation that many persons in

the ruling class did not speak any English, yet we need to remember that the large percentage of the population did not belong to this elite class. They were peasants and artisans, and at the end of the Hundred Years War, there existed a new, growing class with commercial interests centered in London and other cities. From a sociolinguistic perspective, the profile that evolves is one in which the elite and educated spoke French and Latin and the common people continued to speak English. The greatest impact on the English language created by this situation was in the area of borrowed French words. The English lexicon began to incorporate many French words, a trend that continued and is highly apparent in today's English. […].

In his book, *Origins of the English Language: A Social and Linguistic History* Joseph Williams provides some helpful data that allows us to appreciate the great impact that French has had on the English language. He notes that the extent of borrowing of French words that began in Middle English is reflected in Modern English prose samples (taken from scholarly, popular, technical, and comic books, and so on); in the thousand most often occurring words, 83% are of English (Germanic) origin and 11% are French origin (and 2% are from Latin). In the second thousand most often occurring words, this figure shifts to 43% English and 46% French (and 11% Latin, which holds the second place for borrowing into English). Where would we be without our words *fruit, royal, salary, victory, question,* and the odd *assortment* of some other nine thousand French words? This shows the enormous impact French has had on the word stock of the English language. And because French words were not always changed in spelling to reflect the English alphabet-sound correlations, this has led to one of our big headaches in the spelling of English. Think just about the syllable [šən], which is spelled *-tion, -cion, -sion,* or *shun.* You can probably think of many more similar examples, and you can check your guesses and hunches in the dictionary, which gives the origin of most words.

During the Middle English period, there were further changes in the consonant and vowel sounds. One vowel change involved unstressed syllables that either became [ə], [i], or were lost entirely. In Chaucer's English, in the forms for the noun *stone,* there were *stān, stānes, stāne, stān* in the singular and *stānas, stāna, stānum, stānas* in the plural, the unstressed syllables were reduced to just *stān, stānes,* and *stāne*—and of course today we have only one form, *stone*. We want to demonstrate here that the loss of the unstressed vowel sounds, together with a general loss of inflectional endings on words, led to the simpler morphological form of the language we know today.

During this time, word order in prose writing developed into very much what we have today; by about the year 1500, the subject-verb-object word order was probably well-established. It became substantially the order of the day that our sentences would organize themselves as follows: The boy (subject) hit (verb) the ball (object).

The best known English author of this period was Geoffrey Chaucer (1340–1400). Perhaps you've had a chance to read his *Canterbury Tales.* His dialect represents the language that was in the process of becoming the standard prestigious dialect of English: that of London (although he did maintain some slight differences).

### *Questions to think about*

1. What does the term *middle* with regard to ME imply?
2. What was the most noteworthy event affecting the change from OE into ME and NE?
3. What language was called Anglo-Norman?
4. What population spoke English in the period after the Norman Conquest?
5. What was the impact of French on English?
6. Who was the best known English author of this period?
7. What was the prestigious dialect of English in late ME period?

## BAUGH, A.C., CABLE, T. MIDDLE ENGLISH. DECAY OF INFLECTIONAL ENDINGS

In: A History of the English Language. 3rd ed. revised. L.: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1978. P. 158–159.

The changes in English grammar may be described as a general reduction of inflections. Endings of the noun and adjective marking distinctions of number and case and often of gender were so altered in pronunciation as to lose their distinctive form and hence their usefulness. To some extent the same thing is true of the verb. This leveling of inflectional endings was due partly to phonetic changes, partly to the operation of analogy. The phonetic changes were simple but far-reaching. The earliest seems to have been the change of final *-m* to *-n* wherever it occurred, i.e., in the dative plural of nouns and adjectives and in the dative singular (masculine and neuter) of adjectives when inflected according to the strong declension. Thus *mūðum* (to the mouths) > *mūðun, gōdum* > *gōdun*. This *-n*, along with the *-n* of the other inflectional endings, was then dropped *(*mūðu, *gōdu)*. At the same time[1], the vowels *a, o, u, e* in inflectional endings were obscured to a sound, the so-called "indeterminate vowel", which came to be written *e* (less often i, *y, u,* depending on place and date). As a result, a number of originally distinct endings such as *-a*, *-u, -e, -an*, *-um* were reduced generally to a uniform *-e,* and such grammatical distinctions as they formerly expressed were no longer conveyed. Traces of these changes have been found in Old English manuscripts as early as the tenth century[2]. By the end of the twelfth century they seem to have been generally carried out. The leveling is somewhat obscured in the written language by the tendency of scribes to preserve the traditional spelling, and in some places the final *n* was retained even in the spoken language, especially as a sign of the plural.

### *Questions to think about*

1. What are the reasons for the ME changes in grammar?
2. What parts of speech were affected by the changes?

## BAUGH, A.C., CABLE, T. MIDDLE ENGLISH. THE NOUN

*In:* A History of the English Language. 3rd ed. revised. L.: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1978. P. 159–160.

A glance at the few examples of common noun declensions in Old English […] will show how seriously the inflectional endings were disturbed. For example, in the first declension the forms *mūð, mūðes, mūðe, mūð* in the singular, and *mūðas, mūða, mūðum, mūðas* in the plural were reduced to three: *mūð, mūðes,* and *mūðe.* In such words the *-e* which was organic in the dative singular and the genitive and dative plural (i.e., stood for an ending in the Old English paradigm) was extended by analogy to the nominative and accusative singular, so that forms like *stōne, mūðe* appear, and the only distinctive termination is the *-s* of the possessive singular and of the nominative and accusative plural. Since these two cases of the plural were those most frequently used, the *-s* came to be thought of as the sign of the plural and was extended to all plural forms. We get thus an inflection of the noun identical with that which we have today. Other declensions

[1] The chronology of these changes has been worked out by Samuel Moore in two articles: "Loss of Final *n* in Inflectional Syllables of Middle English," *language, 3* (1927), 232–59; "Earliest Morphological Changes in Middle English," *Language,* 4 (1928), 238–66.

[2] Kemp Malone, "When Did Middle English Begin?" *Citrine Volume of Linguistic Studies* (Philadelphia, 1930), pp. 110–17.

suffered even more, so that in many words *(giefu, sunu,* etc.) the distinctions of case and even of number were completely obliterated.

In early Middle English only two methods of indicating the plural remained fairly distinctive: the *-s* or *-es* from the strong declension and the *-en* (as in *oxen)* from the weak. And for a time, at least in southern England, it would have been difficult to predict that the *~s* would become the almost universal sign of the plural that it has become. Until the thirteenth century in the south the *-en* plural enjoyed great favor, being often added to nouns which had not belonged to the weak declension in Old English. But in the rest of England the *-s* plural (and genitive singular) – of the old first declension (masculine) was apparently felt to be so distinctive that it spread rapidly. Its extension took place most quickly in the north. Even in Old English many nouns originally of other declensions had gone over to this declension in the Northumbrian dialect. By 1200 *-s* was the standard plural ending in the north and north Midland areas; other forms were exceptional. Fifty years later it had conquered the rest of the Midlands, and in the course of the fourteenth century it had definitely been accepted all over England as the normal sign of the plural in English nouns. Its spread may have been helped by the early extension of *-s* throughout the plural in Anglo-Norman, but in general it may be considered as an example of the survival of the fittest in language.

### *Questions to think about*

1. What is the origin of the PDE inflection *–s* of the noun in plural and possessive forms?
2. What is the origin of the PDE inflection *–en* of the noun in the plural form?

## BAUGH, A.C., CABLE, T. MIDDLE ENGLISH. LOSS OF GRAMMATICAL GENDER

*In:* A History of the English Language. 3rd ed. revised. L.: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1978. P. 166.

One of the consequences of the decay of inflections described above was the elimination of that troublesome feature of language, grammatical gender. […] [T]he gender of Old English nouns was not often determined by meaning. Sometimes it was in direct contradiction with the meaning. Thus *woman* (O.E. *wīf-mann*) was masculine, because the second element in the compound was masculine; *wife* and *child,* like German *Weib* and *Kind,* were neuter. Moreover the gender of nouns in Old English was not so generally indicated by the declension as it is in a language like Latin. Instead it was revealed chiefly by the concord of the strong adjective and the demonstratives. These by their distinctive endings generally showed, at least in the singular, whether a noun was masculine, feminine, or neuter. When the inflections of these gender-distinguishing words were reduced to a single ending for the adjective, and the fixed forms of *the, this, that, these,* and *those* for the demonstratives, the support for grammatical gender was removed. The weakening of inflections and the confusion and loss of the old gender proceeded in a remarkably parallel course. In the north, where inflections weakened earliest, grammatical gender disappeared first. In the south it lingered longer because there the decay of inflections was slower.

Our present method of determining gender was no sudden invention of Middle English times. The recognition of sex which lies at the root of natural gender is shown in Old English by the noticeable tendency to use the personal pronouns in accordance with natural gender, even when such use involves a clear conflict with the grammatical gender of the antecedent. For example, the pronoun *it* in *Etað þisne hlāf* (masculine), *hit is mīn līchama* (Ælfric's Homilies) is exactly in accordance with modern usage when we say, *Eat this bread, it is my body.* Such a use of the personal pronouns is clearly indicative of the feeling for natural gender even while grammatical

gender was in full force. With the disappearance of grammatical gender the idea of sex became the only factor in determining the gender of English nouns.

### *Questions to think about*

1. What is the difference between the OE and ME gender in nouns?
2. What are the ways to distinguish gender in ME and PDE?

## BAUGH, A.C., CABLE, T. MIDDLE ENGLISH. THE ADJECTIVE

*In:* A History of the English Language. 3rd ed. revised. L.: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1978. P. 160–161.

In the adjective the leveling of forms had even greater consequences [than in nouns]. Partly as a result of the sound-changes already described, partly through the extensive working of analogy, the form of the nominative singular was early extended to all cases of the singular, and that of the nominative plural to all cases of the plural, both in the strong and the weak declensions. The result was that in the weak declension there was no longer any distinction between the singular and the plural: both ended in *-e (blinda > blinde* and *blindan > blinde).* This was also true of those adjectives under the strong declension whose singular ended in *-e.* By about 1250 the strong declension had distinctive forms for the singular and plural only in certain monosyllabic adjectives which ended in a consonant in Old English (sing. *glad-,* plur. *glade).* Under the circumstances the only ending which remained to the adjective was often without distinctive grammatical meaning and its use was not governed by any strong sense of adjectival inflection. When in the fourteenth century final *e* largely ceased to be pronounced, it became a mere feature of spelling. Except for a few archaic survivals, such as Chaucer's *oure aller cok,* the adjective had become an uninflected word by the close of the Middle English period.

### *Questions to think about*

1. What were the reasons for the grammatical changes in adjectives?
2. What adjectives were the first to lose the distinction between singular and plural forms?
3. When did the distinction between weak and strong declensions in adjectives disappear?

## BAUGH, A.C., CABLE, T. MIDDLE ENGLISH. THE PRONOUN

*In:* A History of the English Language. 3rd ed. revised. L.: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1978. P. 161–162.

The decay of inflections which brought about […] a simplification of the noun and the adjective […] made it necessary to depend less upon formal indications of gender, case, and (in adjectives) number, and to rely more upon juxtaposition, word order, and the use of prepositions to make clear the relation of words in a sentence. This is apparent from the corresponding decay of pronominal inflections, where the simplification of forms was due in only a slight measure to the weakening of final syllables that played so large a part in the reduction of endings in the noun and the adjective. The loss was greatest in the demonstratives. Of the numerous forms of *sē, sēo, pæt* we have only *the* and *that* surviving through Middle English and continuing in use today. A plural *tho* (those) survived to Elizabethan times. All the other forms indicative of different gender, number, and case disappeared in most dialects early in the Middle English period. The same may be said of the demonstrative *þēs, þēos, þis* (this). Everywhere but in the south the neuter form *þis* came to be used early in Middle English for all genders and cases of the singular,

while the forms of the nominative plural were similarly extended to all cases of the plural, appearing in Modern English as *those* and *these.*

In the personal pronoun the losses were not so great. Here there was greater need for separate forms for the different genders and cases, and accordingly most of the distinctions that existed in Old English were retained. However the forms of the dative and accusative cases were early combined, generally under that of the dative *(him, her, [t]hem).* In the neuter the form of the accusative *(h)it* became the general objective case, partly because it was like the nominative, and partly because the dative *him* would have been subject to confusion with the corresponding case of the masculine. One other general simplification is to be noted: the loss of the dual number. Language can get along without such nice distinctions as are expressed by separate pronouns for two persons and more than two. Accordingly the forms *wit, ȝit,* and their oblique cases did not survive beyond the thirteenth century.

It will be observed that the pronoun *she* had the form *hēo* in Old English. The modern form could have developed from the Old English *hēo,* but it is believed by some that it is due in part at least to the influence of the demonstrative *sēo.* A similar influence of the demonstrative is perhaps to be seen in the forms of the third person plural, *they, their, them,* but here the modern developments were undoubtedly due mainly to Scandinavian influence. The normal development of the Old English pronouns would have been *hi (he), here, hem,* and these are very common. In the districts, however, where Scandinavian influence was strong, the nominative *hi* began early to be replaced by the Scandinavian form *þei* (O.N. *þeir),* and somewhat later a similar replacement occurred in the other cases, *their* and *them.* The new forms were adopted more slowly farther south, and the usual inflection in Chaucer is *thei, here, hem.* But by the end of the Middle English period the forms *they, their, them* may be regarded as the normal English plurals.

### *Questions to think about*

1. How was the relation of words in a sentence expressed after the disappearance of formal indications of gender, case, and (in adjectives) number?
2. What is the origin of the modern personal pronoun *she*?
3. What is the origin of PDE pronouns *they, their, them*?

## CRYSTAL, D. CHOOSING *THOU* OR *YOU*

*In:* The Stories of English. L.: Penguin books Ltd., 2005. P. 307–310.

In the beginning, in Old English, the rules controlling the use of the second-person pronouns were straightforward:

> *thou* and its variant forms *(thee, thy, thine)* were used in talking to one person *(singular); you* and its variant forms *(ye, your, yours)* were used in talking to more than one *(plural).*

And within sentences:

> *thou* and *ye* were used as the *subject* of a clause: *thou/ye saw me; thee* and *you* were used as the *object* of a clause: / *saw thee/you.*

But things began to change during Middle English.

The first change was the emergence of *you* as a singular, noticeably during the second half of the thirteenth century. The same kind of development had already taken place in French, where *vous* had come to be used as a polite form of the singular, as an alternative to *tu* and it seems likely that the usage began in English because the French nobility began to think of the English pronouns in the same way.

The second change took place some time later: during the sixteenth century the difference between the subject and the object forms gradually disappeared, and *you* became the norm in both situations. *Ye* was still in use at the end of the century, but only in contexts which were somewhat literary, religious, or archaic.

So, for anyone talking to one person, there was a choice in Early Modern English: *thou* or *you.* And quite quickly the language evolved a set of social norms, based on the distinction. We can see them already present in *Le Morte D'Arthur,* written between 1461 and 1470. […]

The social basis of the *thou/you* distinction was established by the sixteenth century. The *you* forms would normally be used:

- by people of lower social status to those above them (e.g., ordinary people to nobles, children to parents, servants to masters);
- by the upper classes when talking to each other, even if they were closely related;
- as a sign of a change (contrasting with *thou)* in the emotional temperature of an interaction.

The *thou* forms would normally be used:

- by people of higher social status to those below them (e.g., nobles to ordinary people, parents to children, masters to servants);
- by the lower classes when talking to each other;
- in addressing God;
- in talking to ghosts, witches, and other supernatural beings;
- in an imaginary address to someone who was absent;
- as a sign of a change (contrasting with you) in the emotional temperature of an interaction.

The old singular/plural distinction could still be expressed, of course. For example, in the Book of Common Prayer (p. 278), the *thou* forms tend to be used (there is some variability) when the minister is addressing an individual member of the congregation, whereas the *you* forms tend to be used when the minister is talking to the congregation as a whole. Thus we find the individual communicant addressed with *thee:* 'The Body of our Lord Jesus Christ which was given for thee'; by contrast, *you* is used in the general absolution: 'pardon and deliver you from all your sins'.

In the theatrical setting, the interest focuses on what is meant by a 'change in the emotional temperature', which applies to both forms. It is often the case that a switch from *you* to *thou* signals special intimacy or affection between two characters, whereas the reverse switch would signal extra respect or distance. But it all depends on context. Often, a switch to *thou* expresses social condescension or contempt. The use of *thou* to a person of equal rank would usually be an insult […].

The *thou/you* distinction was quite well preserved until about 1590, when Shakespeare was beginning to write. […].

*Thou* disappeared from Standard English completely during the first half of the seventeenth century. It remained widespread in regional dialect (and would continue so into Modern English), and continued to be used in plays as an archaism. The distinction was sufficiently alive in the popular mind for it to become an issue mid century, when the Society of Friends movement began. […].

The second-person pronoun system may have simplified in Standard English; but throughout the English-speaking world variant forms continued to be used.

### *Questions to think about*

1. How does the author explain the emergence of *you* as singular in ME, although in OE it was used in addressing more than one *(plural)*?
2. When did *thou* disappear from Standard English?
3. Where is the *thou* form preserved?

## BAUGH, A.C., CABLE, T. MIDDLE ENGLISH. THE VERB

*In:* A History of the English Language. 3rd ed. revised. L.: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1978. P. 162–164.

Apart from some leveling of inflections and the weakening of endings in accordance with the general tendency[1], the principal changes in the verb during the Middle English period were the serious losses suffered by the strong conjugation. This conjugation, although including some of the most important verbs in the language, was relatively small as compared with the large and steadily growing body of weak verbs. While an occasional verb developed a strong past tense or past participle by analogy with similar strong verbs, new verbs formed from nouns and adjectives or borrowed from other languages were regularly conjugated as weak. Thus the minority position of the strong conjugation was becoming constantly more appreciable. After the Norman Conquest the loss of native words further depleted the ranks of the strong verbs. Those that survived were exposed to the influence of the majority, and many have changed over in the course of time to the weak inflection.

### *Losses among the Strong verbs*

Nearly a third of the strong verbs in Old English seem to have died out early in the Middle English period. In any case about ninety of them have left no traces in written records after 1150. […] In other words, more than a hundred of the Old English strong verbs were lost at the beginning of the Middle English period.

But this was not all. The loss has continued in subsequent periods. Some thirty more became obsolete in the course of Middle English, and an equal number, which were still in use in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, finally died out except in the dialects, often after they had passed over to the weak conjugation or had developed weak forms alongside the strong. Today more than half of the Old English strong verbs have disappeared completely from the standard language.

*Strong Verbs Which Became Weak.* The principle of analogy – the tendency of language to follow certain patterns and adapt a less common form to a more familiar one – is well exemplified in the further history of the strong verbs. The weak conjugation offered a fairly consistent pattern for the past tense and the past participle, whereas there was much variety in the different classes of the strong verb. We say *sing – sang – sung,* but *drive – drove – driven, fall – fell – fallen,* etc. At a time when English was the language chiefly of the lower classes and largely removed from the restraining influences of education and a literary standard, it was natural that many speakers should wrongly apply the pattern of weak verbs to some which should have been strong. The tendency was not unknown even in Old English. Thus *rǣdan* (to advise) and *sceððan* (to injure) had already become weak in Old English, while other verbs show occasional weak forms. In the thirteenth century the trend becomes clear in the written literature. Such verbs as *bow, brew, burn, climb, flee, flow, help, mourn, row, step, walk, weep* were then undergoing change. By the fourteenth century the movement was at its height. No less than thirty-two verbs in addition to those already mentioned now show weak forms. After this there are fewer changes. The impulse seems to have been checked, possibly by the steady rise of English in the social scale and later by the stabilizing effect of printing. At all events the fifteenth century shows only about a dozen new weak formations and in the whole modern period there are only about as many more.

In none of the many verbs which have thus become weak was the change from the strong conjugation a sudden one. Strong forms continued to be used while the weak ones were growing up, and in many cases they continued in use long after the weak inflection had become well established. Thus *oke* as the past tense *of ache* was still written throughout the fifteenth century

[1] For example, the *-an* of the Old English infinitive became *-en* and later *-e:* O.E. *drifan* > M.E. *driven* > *drive.*

although the weak form *ached* had been current for a hundred years. In the same way we find *stope* beside *stepped, rewe* beside *rowed, clew* beside *clawed.* In a good many cases the strong forms remained in the language well into modern times. *Climb,* which was conjugated as a weak verb as early as the thirteenth century, still has an alternative past tense *clomb* not only in Chaucer and Spenser but in Dryden, and the strong past tense *crope* was more common than *crept* down to Shakespeare's day. *Low* for *laughed, shove* for *shaved, yold* for *yielded,* etc., were still used in the sixteenth century although these verbs were already passing over to the weak conjugation two centuries before. While the weak forms commonly won out, this was not always the case. Many strong verbs also had weak forms *(blowed* for *blew; knowed* for *knew; feared* for *tore)* which did not survive in the standard speech, while in other cases both forms have continued in use *(cleft – clove, crowed – crew, heaved – hove, sheared – shore, shrived – shrove).*

***Questions to think about***

1. What were the reasons for the depletion of strong verbs?
2. What is the principle of analogy?
3. Why was the tendency for strong verbs to acquire weak forms at its height in the fourteenth century? Why did it slow down later?

## BAUGH, A.C., CABLE, T. SURVIVING STRONG VERBS

*In:* A History of the English Language. 3rd ed. revised. L.: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1978. P. 164–166.

When we subtract the verbs that have been lost completely and the eighty-one that have become weak, there remain just sixty-eight of the Old English strong verbs in the language today. To this number may be added thirteen verbs which are conjugated in both ways or have kept one strong form. These figures indicate how extensive has been the loss of strong verbs in the language. Beside this loss the number of new strong formations has been negligible. Since the irregularity of such verbs constitutes a difficulty in language, the loss in this case must be considered a gain.

The surviving strong verbs have seldom come down to the present day in the form which would represent the normal development of their principal parts in Old English. In all periods of the language they have been subjected to various forms of leveling and analogical influence from one class to another. For example, the verb *to slay* had in Old English the forms *slēan – slōg – slōgon – slægen.* These would normally have become *slea* (pronounced *slee) – slough – slain,* and the present tense *slea* actually existed down to the seventeenth century. The modern *slay* is reformed from the past participle. The past tense *slew* is due to the analogy of preterites like *blew, grew.* In Old English the past tense commonly had a different form in the singular and the plural, and in two large classes of verbs the vowel of the plural was also like that of the past participle (e.g., *bindan – band – bundon – bunden).* Consequently, although normally the singular form survived in Modern English, in many cases the vowel of the plural or of the past participle has taken its place. Thus *cling, sting, spin,* etc., should have had a past tense *clang, stang, span* (like *sing),* but these forms have been replaced by *clung, stung, spun* from the plural and the past participle. The past tense of *slide* should have been *slode,* but the plural and the past participle had *i* and we now say *slide – slid – slid.* Sometimes a verb has changed from one class to another. *Break* belonged originally to the fifth class of strong verbs, and had it remained there, would have had a past participle *breken.* But in Old English it was confused with verbs of the fourth class, which had *o* in the past participle, whence our form *broken.* This form has now spread to the past tense. We should be saying *brack* or *brake,* and the latter is still used in the Bible, but except in biblical language the current form is now *broke. Speak* has had a similar development.

Almost every strong verb in the language has an interesting form-history, but our present purpose will be sufficiently served by these few examples of the sort of fluctuation and change that was going on all through the Middle English period and has not yet ended.

*Survival of Strong Participles.* For some reason the past participle of strong verbs seems to have been more tenacious than the past tense. In a number of verbs weak participles are later in appearing and the strong form often continued in use after the verb had definitely become weak. In the verb *beat* the participle *beaten* has remained the standard form, while in a number of other verbs the strong participle *(cloven, graven, hewn, laden, molten, mown, (mis)shapen, shaven, sodden, swollen)* are still used, especially as adjectives.

***Questions to think about***

1. What changes did strong verb forms undergo?
2. Did all the forms of strong verbs change similarly?

## BAUGH, A.C., CABLE, T. DEVELOPMENT OF PROGRESSIVE VERB FORMS

*In:* A History of the English Language. 3rd ed. revised. L.: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1978. P. 290–293.

[…] It is a commonplace that English is distinctly more varied and flexible in some of its verbal expressions like other better-known modern languages. […] The forms with *to be* and the present participle are generally called progressive forms since their most common use is to indicate an action as being in progress at the time implied by the auxiliary. The wide extension of the use of progressive forms is one of the most important developments of the English verb in the modern period.

In Old English such expressions as *he wæs lærende* (he was teaching) are occasionally found, but usually in translations from Latin. In early Middle English, progressive forms are distinctly rare, and although their number increases in the course of the Middle English period, we must credit their development mainly to the period since the sixteenth century. The chief factor in their growth is the use of the participle as a noun governed by the preposition *on (he burst out on laughing)*. This weakened to *he burst out a-laughing* and finally to *he burst out laughing.* In the same way *he was on laughing* became *he was a-laughing* and *he was laughing.* Today such forms are freely used in all tenses *(is laughing, was laughing, will be laughing,* etc.).

*The Progressive Passive.* The extension of such forms to the passive *(the house is being built)* was an even later development. It belongs to the very end of the eighteenth century. Old English had no progressive passive. Such an expression as *the man is loved, feared, hated is* progressive only in so far as the verbs *loving, fearing, hating* imply a continuous state. But no such force attaches to *the man is killed,* which does not mean *the man is being killed* but indicates a completed act. The construction *the man is on laughing* was capable also of a passive significance under certain circumstances. Thus *the house is on building* can only suggest that the house is in process of construction. This use is found from the fourteenth century on, and in its weakened form the construction is not unknown today. Colloquially, at least, we say *there is nothing doing at the mill this week. The dinner is cooking* and *the tea is steeping* are familiar expressions. In some parts of America one may hear *there's a new bam a-building down the road.* When the preposition was completely lost *(on building > a-building > building)* the form became *the house is building.* Since such an expression may at times be either active or passive, it had obvious limitations. Thus *the wagon is making* is a passive, but *the wagon is making a noise* is active. And whenever the subject of the sentence is animate or capable of performing the action, the verb is almost certain to be in the active voice *(the man is building a house).* With some verbs the

construction was impossible in a passive sense. Thus the idea *he is always being called* could not be expressed by *he is always calling.*

In the last years of the eighteenth century we find the first traces of our modern expression *the house is being built.* The combination of *being* with a past participle to form a participial phrase had been in use for some time. Shakespeare says: *which, being kept close, might move more grief to hide (Hamlet).* This is thought to have suggested the new verb phrase. The earliest instance of the construction which has been noted is from the year 1769. In 1795 Robert Southey wrote: *a fellow, whose uppermost upper grinder is being torn out by a mutton-fisted barber.* It seems first to have been recognized in an English grammar in 1802. As yet it is generally used only in the present and simple past tense *(is* or *was being built).* We can hardly say *the house has been being built for two years,* and we avoid saying *it will be being built next spring.*

The history of the new progressive passive shows that English is a living and growing thing, that its grammar is not fixed, that it will continue to change in the future as it has changed in the past, even if more slowly. If the need is felt for a new and better way of expressing an idea, we may rest assured that a way will be found. But it is interesting to note that even so useful a construction was at first resisted by many as an unwarranted innovation. […] In 1837 a writer in the *North American Review* condemned it as "an outrage upon English idiom, to be detested, abhorred, execrated, and given over to six thousand penny-paper editors". And even so enlightened a student of language as Marsh, in 1859, noted that it "has widely spread, and threatens to establish itself as another solecism". "The phrase 'the house *is being built'* for '*the house is building',"*he says", is an awkward neologism, which neither convenience, intelligibility, nor syntactical congruity demands, and the use of which ought therefore to be discountenanced, as an attempt at the artificial improvement of the language in a point which needed no amendment." […] Although the origin of the construction can be traced back to the latter part of the eighteenth century, its establishment in the language and ultimate acceptance required the better part of the century just past.

***Questions to think about***

1. Which verbal category is the last to develop?
2. What was the attitude towards the newly developed form?
3. What, according to the author, testifies that English "grammar is not fixed, that it will continue to change in the future"?

## CHAPTER 5
## STANDARDIZATION OF ENGLISH. GROWTH OF THE LEXIS

### THOMAS, L., & TCHUDI, S. A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE. CHAPTER 5

*In:* The English language: An owner's manual. Boston: Allyn & Bacon, 1999. Pp. 159–162.

### Modern English (1500 A.D. – Present)

It is rather daunting to try to lump together the language changes of the past four hundred years, yet by hitting the greatest events and changes, we will attempt to do just that. As we start with the printing press and move through the Great Vowel Shift, then on to the early grammarians of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, we will see the trends that have left us with the wonderfully rich and ever-changing English language of the world today (troublesome spellings and all!).

The printing press was first brought to London in 1476 by William Caxton. Imagine the influence that the printers could have had on the development of a language and the education of a people. Given the opportunity, you might think that they would have standardized spelling to make the spelled words truly reflect the sounds of their pronunciations, yet they did not. The printers, like the Norman scribes before them, based many of their spelling conventions on medieval manuscripts. Also, the earlier scribes had been trained to write in primarily French and Latin, so when they wrote in English, they transferred some conventions from these languages into English. For example, they often used the "c" instead of "s" for [s] in words like *race* and *vice.* This complicated the sound-letter correspondence of the "s" [s] by having a second letter that could represent this sound, "c." They used two letters for one sound as in "ch" rather than a "c" for [č] as in *cheer* or *cherry.* Other inconsistent conventions that carried over include letters that represent no sound, as in *throu**gh** desi**g**n, hav**e**,* and the same sound being represented by different letters in different words, as in the [u] in *rude, soup, new, loop, sue, to,* and *two*.

But over time, the printing press did have an impact on standardizing the way words were spelled. Different scribes had always been less than consistent, even within their own works. An example of this is seen in the spelling of the word *pity* in texts of the 1500s as *pity, pyty, pitie, pytie, pittie,* and *pyttye.* In the 1500s and 1600s there was a cry for standardized orthography, and the first lists of words and spelling rules appeared, gradually leading to a more standard method of spelling English words.

Even as this process of describing how English words should be spelled proceeded, a major sound shift was occurring in the vowel system of English known as the Great Vowel Shift. This change was evident in the daily pronunciation of English by the people, yet it was not reflected in the way words were being spelled in writing. The change was a general *raising* of long vowels in vowel space. In the case of the two highest vowels, [i] and [u], these became *diphthongs* which, […] are sounds that actually incorporate two vowels by moving from one place of pronunciation in the direction of another, as in the [au] in *house.* In this word the vowel begins with the [a] sound and then moves rapidly into the [u]. […].

From Chaucer's time to that of Shakespeare's, pronunciation of the vowels changed so extensively that today students have difficulty understanding the words of Chaucer when they are pronounced in the original manner. For example, compare the pronunciations of the words in Table 5.5 from Chaucer's era, from Shakespeare's, and from our modem time. Work through these pronunciations and compare them to the spellings. You will see how the sounds of the words changed while the spellings became fixed. The fact that these spellings were fixed in written works and remained so has been one of the great sources of anguish for children (and adults!) when writing in English. Our vowel pronunciations just don't always correspond with the way spelling suggests they might. Not only did spelling difficulties result from borrowing so many words, especially from the French, but the Great Vowel Shift was also another culprit contributing to our spelling woes in the English language.

During the Renaissance, which covered the Early Modern English Period, the quintessential author in English was William Shakespeare. His prolific writing exemplifies many of the language changes we are discussing here – from the sound changes above to morphological and syntactic neologisms such as double superlatives and comparatives, as in *perfectest, most poorest, more strong,* Shakespeare used nouns as verbs and verbs as nouns; he showed how the language could simply explode with meaning and Innuendo when used in creative ways. In this passage from

**TABLE 5.5. Pronunciations in Chaucer's, Shakespeare's and Our Times**

| Chaucer | Shakespeare | Modern Spelling |
|---|---|---|
| [me:də] | [mi:d] | mead |
| [klɛ:nə] | [kle:n] | clean (now [kli:n]) |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| [na:mə] | [ne:m] | name |
| [gɔ:tə] | [go:t] | goat |

In exploring spelling today, we see variations primarily based on the regional variety. The British write *centre* and the Americans, *center.* A common morphological variation in English of the Indian subcontinent is *informations* in contrast both the British and people in the U.S. would use *information.* As English becomes more and more a World Language, new variations in both spelling and pronunciation are appearing.

Besides the frustrations English speakers have with spelling, grammatical correctness is still high on the list of insecurities. Much of the unease stems from a period in Modem English history during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries when men who set themselves up as the "experts" decided on some grammatical usage questions. […] As noted, the only real arbiters of usage in English are the people and what they decide to use to express themselves. Today, the ability to adhere to prescriptive rules of grammar simply means that the speaker (or writer) is educated and had a chance to learn these arbitrary conventions. It doesn't mean that a speaker knows how to use the English language successfully in all situations. Knowing a rule such as "Don't end a sentence with a preposition" does not mean one is a more proficient user of the English language.

### *Questions to think about*

1. Who started printing in England? When was it started?
2. What was the influence of the first printers on the development of the language?
3. Why did the Great Vowel Shift cause discrepancies between the sound and written form of a word?
4. What do we call the period of the 17th and 18th centuries in the English language history?

## CRYSTAL, D. WHERE DO THE IRREGULARITIES COME FROM?

*In:* The English Language: A Guided Tour of the Language. 2nd ed. L.: Penguin Books, 2002. P. 78–80, 82–83

The English spelling system is the result of a process of development that has been going on for over 1,000 years. The complications we are left with today are the result of the major linguistic and social events which took place during this time.

- Some of the complications arose at the outset, when Old English was first written down by the Roman missionaries, using the 23-letter Latin alphabet – the same as our modern alphabet, except that there was no distinction between I and J or U and V, and there was no W (these were added in the Middle English period) – but there were simply not enough letters to cope with Old English, which contained nearly forty vowels and consonants. The missionaries used extra symbols from the local runic alphabet to write sounds that were noticeably different from Latin (such as the *th* sound heard in such words as *think).* But despite this, it still proved necessary to use some letters (such as *c* and *g)* for more than one sound, and to represent some sounds by combinations of letters (such as *sc-* the equivalent of present-day *sh).*
- After the Norman Conquest, the French scribes brought their own ideas about spelling to bear on the language. Several Old English spellings were replaced. The French introduced *qu,* where Old English had used *cw* (e.g. *queen).* They brought in *gh* (instead of *h)* in such words as *night* and *enough,* and *ch* (instead of *c)* in such words as *church.* They used *ou* for *u* (e.g. *house).* They began to use *c* before *e* or *i* in such words as *circle* and *cell.* Because the letter *u* was written in a very similar way to *v, n,* and *m,* words containing a sequence of

these letters were difficult to read; they therefore often replaced the *u* with an o, in such cases as *come, love, one,* and *son.* By the beginning of the fifteenth century, English spelling was a mixture of two systems – Old English and French.

- The introduction of printing in 1476 brought further consequences. In the early fifteenth century, there were many ways of spelling words, reflecting regional variations in pronunciation. William Caxton had to choose one system as a standard to follow in his printing house. He chose the system which reflected the speech of the London area. As a result, the spelling of many words became stable for the first time, and the notion of a 'correct' spelling began to grow.

However, although spelling stayed relatively stable, pronunciation did not. During the fifteenth century, the sounds of London speech were undergoing the greatest change in its history. Six of the vowels of Middle English altered completely. To take just one such change: in Chaucer's time, the word *name* was pronounced with an /a:/ vowel sound like that of *calm,* which is why it is spelled with an *a* vowel now. It was the fifteenth-century 'vowel shift' which changed the pronunciation to its modern form. Before the advent of printing, the scribes would have heard this new pronunciation, and changed the spelling to suit. *Name* would have come to be spelled *neim* or *naym,* or some such. But after the advent of printing, changes of this kind were no longer acceptable. The consequence is that our modern spelling in many respects reflects the way words were pronounced in Chaucer's time.

The same kind of reasoning explains many of the 'silent letters' of modern English spelling. The *k* of such words as *knee, know,* and *knight* was pronounced in Old English, but it ceased to be sounded during the fifteenth century. The *e* at the end of such words as *name* and *stone* was also pronounced – the sound was similar to the last vowel of *sofa* – but it became silent during this period. The spelling, however, continued to reflect the older sounds.

- In the sixteenth century, there was a fashion among learned writers to show the history (or *etymology)* of a word in its spelling, and several of these new spellings became standard. This is where the silent *b* in *debt* comes from, for instance. The word had no *b* sound in Middle English. The *b* was added by people who wished to remind everyone that the word comes from *debitum* in Latin. Similarly, a *b* was added to *doubt* (from *dubitare)* and a *g* to *reign* (from *regno).* In addition, there was a concern to 'tidy up' the spelling – for example, leading people to think that, because there was a *gh* in *night* and *light,* there should be one in *delight* and *tight* also.
- In the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, a new wave of loan words arrived in English from such languages as French, Latin, Greek, Spanish, Italian, and Portuguese. They brought with them a host of un-English-looking spellings – words which ended in strange combinations of vowels and consonants, such as *bizarre, brusque, canoe, cocoa, gazette, moustache,* and *intrigue.* Some of the strangest spellings in the language stem from this period.

Because of the complex history of the English language, […] English spelling is a curious mixture of different influences. It is surprising, indeed, that with such a chequered history so much regularity should have been retained. But the changes took place over a lengthy time scale, and many of the spellings were tried out for long periods (often accompanied by considerable debate, especially in the sixteenth century) before they were finally adopted. The result is a system which, despite its weaknesses, has proved to be sufficiently functional that it has so far resisted all proposals for its fundamental reform.

### *Questions to think about*

1. What factors influenced the English spelling?
2. What are the reasons for the appearance of 'silent letters' in modern English spelling?

## CRYSTAL, D. SPELLING REFORM

*In:* The English Language: A Guided Tour of the Language. 2nd ed. L.: Penguin Books, 2002. P. 82–83.

Despite the existence of a great deal of regularity in English spelling, everyone would agree that a lot of time and money would be saved if the system could be improved by eliminating all the irregularities. Proposals for spelling reform can be traced back to the sixteenth century, but the main movements in favour of reform developed in both America and Britain in the nineteenth century. The Spelling Reform Association was founded in the USA in 1876, and the British Simplified Spelling Society in 1908. Since then, there have been many proposals made and systems devised, some in minute detail.

The arguments in favour of spelling reform are easy to state. Children and foreign learners of English would save much time and emotional effort in learning to read and write. People using the language would save time and money, because they would be able to write English more rapidly, and with fewer letters – as many as 15 per cent fewer, according to some estimates. Over the years, the saving in terms of paper, ink, storage, and so on would be very great.

The arguments against spelling reform are just as easy to state. How could a programme of spelling reform be introduced in a practical or realistic way? How does one persuade people who have learned the old system to adopt a new one? How does one avoid any major break in continuity between old and new spellings? How does one avoid the problems of representing different regional accents in the spelling – for example, accents which pronounce an *r* after vowels, and those which do not?

So far, the disadvantages have proved overwhelming. The nearest the Simplified Spelling Society came to success was in 1949, when their publication, called 'Nue Spelling', was presented to Parliament. The bill was defeated, but only by eighty-seven votes to eighty-four! In 1953, another bill in fact passed its first stage, but was later withdrawn.

One of the biggest problems facing the spelling reform movement is the lack of any universal agreement as to what the best alternative system might be. Over the years, hundreds of proposals have been made, differing from each other in all kinds of ways. Some systems, such as Nue Spelling, stay with familiar letters, and try to use them in a regular way. Others go in for a number of invented symbols, which supplement the letters already in use. The initial teaching alphabet devised by James Pitman in 1959 was of this kind, although it wasn't a proposal for the permanent reform of English spelling, but a system intended to help children when they were learning to read. In addition, there are a few systems which present a totally radical solution – a fresh start in which all old letters are eliminated and brand new symbols introduced. George Bernard Shaw's Proposed British Alphabet ('Shavian') falls within this last category.

Despite more than a century of effort, the spelling reform movement has made little progress. The case is still regularly argued, but the arguments largely fall on deaf ears.

### *Questions to think about*

1. What were the proposals for the English language spelling reform?
2. What are the arguments against spelling reform?

## Бруннер, К. Иноязычные влияния

*В кн.:* История английского языка. Перевод с нем. М.: Изд-во Иностранной литературы, 1955. С. 168–170. (von Brunner, K. Die Englische Sprache ihre Geschichtliche Entwicklung. Halle (Saale), 1950)

Самым сильным и длительным [на английский] было влияние латинского языка. Некоторые латинские слова из области культуры были, вероятно, знакомы уже англо-саксам на их старой родине, и они включили их, подобно всем западным германцам, в свой словарный состав. Другие они узнали в Британии от оставшихся там римлян или от романизованных кельтов. Благодаря принятию христианства в английский язык проникли новые латинские слова и религиозные термины, хотя их по возможности заменяли путем перевода на английский или изменения значения английских слов. Для английского языка в целом важнее было, однако, то, что по латинским образцам научились более точной передаче синтаксических отношений с помощью сочинения и подчинения, а также синтаксическому использованию неличных форм глагола (инфинитив, причастия); правда, эти новшества иногда заметно усложняли изложение.

Нормандское завоевание особенно тесно связало церковные ученые круги Англии с соответствующими кругами Франции и Италии. Латинский ученый язык тщательно изучался. В Англии, как и во времена Беды[1], жили и работали видные церковные писатели; многие из них были англичанами по рождению. По образцу континента официальные документы стали составляться в Англии на латинском языке; на этом же языке писались многочисленные исторические сочинения. Постепенно перестали относиться с предубеждением к введению латинских ученых слов в проповеди и в популярные богословские и исторические сочинения, поскольку в общий словарный состав проникли французские слова, которые французский язык заимствовал, в свою очередь, из книжной латыни, приспособив их до некоторой степени к своему строю. Но все же число заимствованных слов явно латинского происхождения в среднеанглийском по сравнению с такого рода словами, засвидетельствованными в новоанглийском периоде, невелико.

Новый приток латинских слов начался с возрождения классического образования в эпоху гуманизма и Возрождения и с тех нор никогда полностью не прекращался, несмотря на попытки заменить ученые слова, которые остались чужды широким слоям населения, словами, более понятными народу, и использовать языковой материал родного языка. Отдельные писатели используют его в разной степени. Однако высчитано, что из 240 165 слов, помещенных в Oxford English Dictionary, около половины относится к ученым словам, большинство которых проникло в английский язык из латинского или из греческого через латинский. Из 20 тыс. слов, включенных Скитом[2] в его этимологический словарь, 2880 заимствованы непосредственно из латинского языка, причем сюда не входят заимствования, проникшие в английский язык через посредство французского. Заимствование латинских слов не прекращалось; с одной стороны, к ним прибегали с целью избавиться от необходимости образования новых английских ученых слов, с другой — с целью придать своему языку ученый вид и тем самым отмежеваться от широких масс, не владеющих классическими языками. Многие из таких заимствований стали общим достоянием языка среднего англичанина, другие и в настоящее время ограничены узким кругом специалистов, так что

[1] *Bede* (in OE, Bæda) the Venerable or (from Latin) Beda (672/673–May 26, 735), was a monk at the Northumbrian monastery, a well known author and scholar; his most famous work, Historia ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum (The Ecclesiastical History of the English People) gained him the title "The Father of English History".

[2] *Skeat ,W.W.* An Etymological Dictionary of the English Language. Published by Clarendon press, 1893. [Electronic resource]. Retrieved from http://books.google.com

для их объяснения нужны словари, которые имеются сейчас в Англии в бóльшем числе, чем в какой-либо другой европейской стране.

В ходе обогащения английского словарного состава заимствованиями из латинского языка более старые заимствования из французского, подобно тому, как это имело место и во Франции, заменялись латинскими; так, например, ср.-англ, *descrive*(*n*) "описывать" было вытеснено новым заимствованием *describe*; ср.-англ, *parfet*, *perfet* "совершенный"— словом *perfect*; ср.-англ, *painture* "картина" – *picture*; ср.-англ, *egal* "равный" — *equal*; ср.-англ. *verdit* "приговор" – *verdict*. Иногда изменение формы заимствованных слов касалось только написания, например: *debt* [det] "долг", *doubt* [daut] "сомнение"; *victuals* [vitlz] "съестные припасы". Иногда изменение формы французских слов по образцу латинских было частичным. Так, например, французская приставка *a-* заменяется в некоторых словах лат.*ad-*: *adventure* "приключение", *advantage* "преимущество" вместо ср.-англ, *aventure*, *avantage*; *advice* "совет, извещение" вместо ср.-англ, *avis*; а франц. *entre-*, англ, *enter-* в некоторых случаях, хотя и не всегда, заменялось лат. *inter-*, например в слове *interchange* "обменивать" вместо раннего новоангл. *enterchange*; также *intercourse* "(торговые) связи" вместо позднего ср.-англ, и раннего новоангл. *entercourse*. Однако такой замены не произошло в словах *entertain* "развлекать", *enterprise* "предприятие"; франц. *en-* также было заменено *in-*, однако глагол "спрашивать" сохранился в обеих формах: *enquire* и *inquire.*

Многие латинские заимствования подверглись семантическим изменениям в английском языке. Например: *exit* "выход", *item* "заметка, статья" (лат. item – вводное слово при перечислениях), *quorum* "кворум" (из лат. quorum vos... unum esse volumus "из которых вас... просим быть одним" – формула приглашения членов третейского суда), *premises* "земельные участки, дома" (ср.-лат. praemissae, первоначально в юридическом языке "перечисленные предметы, переданные на основании закона").

Из латинского языка заимствовались также приставки и суффиксы, которые использовались для новообразований, например приставка *ex-*, вошедшая в слова *ex*-king "бывший король", *ex*-minister "бывший министр" и т. д. или суффикс *-ation*: backwardation "премия" (биржевой термин).

Такое обогащение английского словарного состава иноязычными элементами, продолжающееся и в настоящее время, приводит к тому, что многие слова английского языка, близкие по значению, оказываются пришедшими из разных языков и поэтому связь их между собой внешне не выражена, например: *nose* "нос" и *nasal* "носовой", *mouth* "рот" и *oral* "устный". Однако, с другой стороны, этот процесс в значительной мере обогатил английский язык синонимами, с помощью которых можно передать такие тонкие оттенки значений, как, например, *cold* и *frigid* "холодный", *weighty* и *ponderous* "веский, важный", *greatness* и *magnitude* "величие", *fatherly* и *paternal* "отеческий", *male* и *masculine* "мужской", *royal* и *regal* "королевский".

### *Questions to think about*

1. In what periods of the history of Britain was English influenced by Latin?
2. What language parts were affected by Latin?
3. What are the reasons for the appearance of etymological doublets?

## CRYSTAL, D. TRACKING A CHANGE: THE CASE OF *Y'ALL*

*In:* The Stories of English. L.: Penguin books Ltd., 2005. P. 449–452

It was in 1969, during my first visit to the United States, that I had my earliest face-to-face encounter with *y'all.* I was in Fort Worth, Texas, and went into a store to buy a Stetson hat for my

son. The assistant greeted me with a *Howdy y'all* and a *What can I do for y'all,* and it was so unexpected that I actually looked round to see who else he was referring to, thinking that someone must have come into the store behind me. But I was the only one there. As I left, he said, *Y'all take care now.*

Outside I began listening seriously to the use of *y'all.* On the whole it did seem to be used when addressing more than one person, though sometimes the people were being viewed as a single body. And all kinds of people used it. A professor at the university used it when addressing her class of students, *I hope y'all managed to read my paper.* A cab driver addressed two of us in the back with a general *Where y'all going?* Most of the users were African-American; but many were white.

The use of a nonstandard second-person pronoun, as such, was not a new experience for me. I had spent my teenage years in Liverpool, where *youse* was a perfectly normal form. *Youse* also could be used for either singular or plural: *Can I give youse a lift?* might be said by a lorry-driver to either a group of hitch-hikers or a single hitch-hiker. And such forms were common in Ireland and Scotland, too, where both *youse* and *y'all* can be heard alongside *ye, yiz,* and others. *Youse* travelled to America that way, probably via Liverpool, and one strand in the history of *y'all* probably has an Irish origin.

*Y'all* first comes to notice in the southern states of the USA, chiefly among African-Americans around the turn of the nineteenth century, and rapidly established its presence among southern whites of all social classes (some of whom would also have been familiar – through immigration – with the analogous Irish usage). From there it became more widely encountered in American English, especially as black people moved into northern states after the Civil War, and its active use spread. Eventually it found its way, via novels and stories written in Southern dialect, and later through movies and television serials reflecting life in the US south, all over the world. I have heard *y'all* used in the UK by a number of people, of various ages and ethnic backgrounds.

It is worth noting that dialects which make use of words like *y'all* and *youse* are in fact richer, in their possibilities of expression, than Standard English. This can come as a shock to those who cannot see beyond the standard variety: to realize that regional dialects often allow options that the standard never had or has lost. Early Modern English, of course, did have a more expressive second-person pronoun system, using *thou* (for singular) and *ye* (for plural).

There are still fascinating puzzles surrounding American *y'all.* Did it originate exclusively among the southern black population, as many have suggested, or did it have earlier antecedents? Some have looked for its origins in local Creoles, especially Gullah. Some think that its origins lie within early Scots or Irish usage in the USA – and indeed, it is interesting to note that those parts of the country where we find the widest range of *y'all* usages do seem to be where black and Celtic immigrant populations have long coexisted.

Doing research into *y'all* is not easy, because the written records cannot always be trusted. As it is a feature of colloquial English, it often would not have been written down: there would have been a tendency to write 'correctly', and substitute *you.* When it *was* written down, it might not have been written accurately – there would have been a tendency to write *you all,* or to omit the (often difficult to hear) final '*s* in *y'all's.* And we cannot even trust the feature when it *was* written down correctly: many writers saw *y'all* as a feature stereotyping black speech, and made their characters use it more than would happen in real life. We always have to be sensitive to the presence of parody and exaggeration in early writing – as we do today.

*Y'all* seems very straightforward, but there are in fact some quite complex linguistic factors governing its use, and only some of them are well understood. In pronunciation it is a monosyllabic variant of *you all,* rhyming with words like *call;* but in spelling it is quite variable. A 1993 study found it turning up in several spellings over the past 200 years, such as *you all, you-all, ya'll, yawl,* and *yo-all.* And there are some subtle differences in usage. It tends to occur more

often with certain verbs – *hope, think,* and *want* are notable. It can be used in most parts of the sentence where *you* and *your* can go, but there are some exceptions. Here are some examples taken from a corpus, with the grammatical function noted:

What kind o' hair yawl want? [subject]

Ah mean to carry y'all to Palatka. [object]

How many of y'all wanna live to an old age? [after a preposition]

I feel pretty good, y'all. [vocative]

I passed y'all's house. [possessive]

In each of these cases, we could substitute the word *you* or *your.* But the parallel is not complete: *y'all's selves,* the equivalent to *yourselves,* is hardly ever beard.

There are also constraints, not fully understood, governing the way in which multiple instances of *y'all* turn up in a discourse. In Standard English it is perfectly possible to use *you*-forms several times in the same sentence:

You will need your coat if you are going out.

But 'translating' this into *y'all* forms is not straightforward, as these examples show:

Y'all are moving y'all's legs too much. [said by a swimming teacher]

Y'all left your lights on.

Why did the first speaker use *y'all's* and the second use *your?*

One factor must be that *y'all* is much stronger in stress than *you:* it has a greater impact in a sentence. *You* is a word which can be reduced to just the consonant, as when people say *y'know.* We can't make this kind of reduction with *y'all.* For the same sort of reason, *y'all* is generally not heard at the very end of a sentence, as a tag question. We can often hear:

Y'all come back now, won't you?

but only very rarely

Y'all come back now, won't y'all?

So maybe the swimming teacher repeats *y'all* because he is wanting his listeners to pay serious attention to using their legs, and (unconsciously, of course) uses the stronger form to make his point. And maybe in the second instance, the speaker is making more of a routine observation. Or maybe it is that 'legs' have a closer notion of possession to a person than 'lights' (which strictly belong to cars) and therefore prompt the stronger form. These are the kind of hypotheses that linguists love to investigate.

There are other factors – pragmatic ones. *If you* vs *y'all* doesn't convey a contrast of number (singular vs plural), then what does it convey? Speakers plainly have the choice of both in a sentence: *What can I do for y'all?* or *What can I do for you?* Why use the one and not the other? A plausible suggestion is that *y'all* is 'warmer', a sign of familiarity, friendliness, informality, and rapport, at least among young people. A 1970s study found it being commonly used by younger Virginians to convey this kind of warmth.

However, many older people are still somewhat suspicious of it, and do not use it, perhaps associating it with past ethnic tension, or finding it patronizing. As for my store assistant, I certainly felt that he was being 'customer-friendly'. I bought the Stetson. I wonder whether his farewell would have been ***You*** *take care now*, if I hadn't?

### *Questions to think about*

1. What is the origin of *y'all*?
2. What are the differences in the use of *you* and *y'all*?
3. How is variation of forms associated with language change?

## CRYSTAL, D. A PERIOD OF TRANSITION

*In:* The Stories of English. L.: Penguin books Ltd., 2005. P. 523–529.

At the beginning of the twenty-first century, the relationship between standard and nonstandard language is, evidently, still an uncertain one. We are at a transitional point between two eras. We seem to be leaving an era when the rules of Standard English, as selected and defined by prescriptive grammarians, totally conditioned our sense of acceptable usage, so that all other usages and varieties were considered to be inferior or corrupt, and excluded from serious consideration. And we seem to be approaching an era when nonstandard usages and varieties, previously denigrated or ignored, are achieving a new presence and respectability within society, reminiscent of that found in Middle English, when dialect variation in literature was widespread and uncontentious. But we are not there yet. The rise of Standard English has resulted in a confrontation between the standard and nonstandard dimensions of the language which has lasted for over 200 years, and this has had traumatic consequences which will take some years to eliminate. Once people have been given an inferiority complex about the way they speak or write, they find it difficult to shake off.

However, it is only a matter of time. Institutionalized prescriptivism began to come to an end in the later decades of the twentieth century. Primarily, this meant a change in educational practice, for it was only through the school system that prescriptivism had been able to propagate itself. […] By the 1990s, in the new National Curriculum, as well as in the syllabuses which were being devised for higher examinations, there was a complete change in emphasis. Similar educational changes took place, also, in other parts of the English-speaking world, with Australia and Canada early innovators.

In this new dispensation, exam papers no longer asked students to parse sentences or to make decisions about correctness in relation to such issues as end-placed prepositions and split infinitives. Instead, the questions began to make students *explain* what happens when language is used – to go beyond the mere identifying of a linguistic feature (an infinitive, a metaphor, a piece of alliteration) to a mode of inquiry in which they explored the reasons lying behind the choices of words in such contexts as a scientific report, a news broadcast, or an advertising slogan. It was no longer enough to say, 'I see a passive verb in that science report.' The interesting question – and the one which gained the marks in an exam – was to be able to say why it was there. Only in that way, it was reasoned, would students be able to develop a sense of the consequences of choosing one kind of language rather than another (such as formal vs informal), when it came to using language themselves or evaluating the effect of a language choice upon other people. The aim, in short, was to promote a more responsive and responsible approach to language, in which students would come to understand why people use language in the way they do, and would put this knowledge to active use to become more able to control language for themselves.

There is no agreed term to summarize this change in emphasis. It is not a matter of a 'prescriptive' approach being replaced by a 'descriptive' one, as has sometimes been suggested, for this pedagogy goes well beyond description into a world of explanation and evaluation. A better term would be 'pragmatic' (as opposed to 'dogmatic'), with all that this implies – an ability to adapt knowledge to meet the needs of differing circumstances and a readiness to judge cases on their merits. From the viewpoint of the present book, the pragmatic approach instils an awareness that variation and change are normal features of linguistic life, demanding recognition and respect. […] In its strongest and most positive manifestation, the pragmatic approach replaces the concept of 'eternal vigilance' (beloved of prescriptivists and purists) by one of 'eternal tolerance'. […]

Of course, it also has to be firmly stated that certain standards do need to be maintained in linguistic schooling. It is important for students to be able to write and speak clearly, to avoid ambiguity, to be precise, to develop a consistent style, to spell properly, to suit their language to the needs of the situation, and to bear in mind the needs of their listeners and readers. Everyone needs help to shape their own personal style and to develop their ability to appreciate style in others, and the role of teachers and of good linguistic models (the 'best authors') is crucial. The more people read widely, acquire some analytical terminology, adopt a critical perspective, and try their hands (and mouths) at different genres, the more they will end up as linguistically well-rounded individuals.

### *Questions to think about*

1. Why does David Crystal consider the modern attitude to language standard as transitional?
2. What does the author mean to say when characterising the approach to language variation as ‘pragmatic’?

## QUESTIONS FOR OVERALL REVIEW AND DISCUSSION

### Old English

1. Define the following terms

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| pre-Old English | declension | strong and weak verbs |
| Old English (Anglo-Saxon) | a-stem | preterit and present tenses |
| Heptarchy | o-stem | principal parts |
| Kentish, West Saxon, | u-stem | preterit-present verb |
| Mercian, Northumbrian Anglian | n-stem,<br>root-stem | indicative |
| grammatical gender | strong and weak nouns | subjunctive |
| natural gender | mutation (umlaut) | imperative |
| strong and weak adjectives | gradation (ablaut) | finite forms |
| definiteness | dual number | nonfinite forms |
| yogh | conjugation | suppletive forms |
| dialect (tribal, regional) | vernacular | analogy |

2. What peoples inhabited the British Isles before the coming of the West Germanic tribes?
3. Which tribes participated in the settlement of the island?
4. What was the influence of the Scandinavian settlement on the English language?
5. Which dialect of Old English was the standard language and from which dialect has Modern English descended?
6. What is the chief difference between the stress patterns of Old English and Modern English, and what historical events help to account for the difference?
7. What are the main differences in word order between Old English and Modern English?
8. From which Old English declension do our living noun inflections derive?
9. How do Old English and Modern English differ in devices for indicating plurality?
10. How did the strong and weak forms of an Old English adjective differ in use?
11. What Old English adjective inflections have survived as living suffixes in Modern English?
12. What is the origin of Modern English adverbs without endings such as *deep, fast,* and *loud?*
13. What is the difference between mutation (umlaut) and gradation (ablaut)?
14. From what class of Old English verbs are the Modern English modal auxiliaries *shall, should, may, might, can, could, must,* and *ought* derived?

15. What distinctions in form, universal in Old English verbs, are preserved in Modern English only in the verb *to be?*

16. Old English differs from Modern English in the amount of inflection for nouns, adjectives, pronouns, and verbs. Name four or five other major differences between the linguistic systems of the two periods.

## Middle English

1. What was the chief influence of the Norman Conquest on the English language?
2. Which variety of Middle English became the standard dialect and when did it become the literary standard?
3. Compare the vowel system of Old English with that of Middle English.
4. Make a similar comparison of the consonant systems of the two periods.
5. What additions, losses, and rearrangements took place between the two periods?
6. Which sound change between Old and Middle English had the most far-reaching effect on the language?
7. What is the chief difference between Old and Middle English grammar?
8. Did word order and function words increase or decrease in importance during the Middle English period?
9. What factors contributed to the loss of grammatical gender in Middle English?
10. How did English acquire a device for indicating plurality independent of case?
11. What grammatical category of number was lost from the Middle English personal pronouns?
12. The traditional seven classes of strong verbs survived (although reduced in number) in Middle English, but what factors began to disturb their orderly arrangement?
13. What was the origin of the verbal ending *–ing?*
14. What is the chief difference in word order between Middle and Modern English?
15. What caused the decline of French as the language of the governing classes in England?

Adapted from Algeo, J. Problems in the Origins and Development of the English Language. 4th ed. New York: Harcourt Brace College Publishers, 1996. P. 115, 148.

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| Middle English Dictionary | http://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/med/ |
| The Peterborough Chronicle and the Transition from Old English to Middle English | http://www.csun.edu/~sk36711/WWW/engl400/assignment7.pdf |
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| Bookmarks for Corpus Linguists | http://devoted.to/corpora |
| British National Corpus | http://www.natcorp.ox.ac.uk/ |
| BYU Interface for BNC | http://view.byu.edu/ |
| International Corpus of English | http://www.ucl.ac.uk/english-usage/ice/index.htm |
| Linguistic Data Consortium | http://ldc.upenn.edu/ |

## SECTION 4

# GLOSSARY

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| **A.D.** | full form is '*anno Domini*', used to indicate a date that is a particular number of years after the birth of Jesus Christ, i.e. our era. Its literal Latin meaning is "in the year of the Lord". AD is traditionally put before the numeral to which it relates, so that it makes grammatical sense if understood in its expanded form: *AD 1453*. In practice, AD is usually put after the numeral, and it is also acceptable to put it after the identification of a century, as in *the fifth century AD*. Can be also **P.E.** (Present era) or **C.E.** (Common era). *See also* **B.C.** |
| **ablaut** | a set of Indo-European vowel alternations, ancestral to those in e.g. *ride/rode/ridden* |
| **accentuation** | emphasis on syllable: the emphasis placed on a sound or syllable by pronouncing it more loudly or forcefully than those surrounding it in the same word or phrase. *See* also **stress** |
| **affix** | a **bound** morpheme that attaches to a root or stem **morpheme** (called the **root** or **stem**). **Prefixes** and **suffixes** are the most common types of affixes in the world's languages (less common are infixes and circumfixes) |
| **affixation** | the formation of a new word by adding a prefix or suffix to a base, e.g. *un*happy, happi*ness* |
| **affricate** | a consonant sound produced by complete stoppage of the flow of air which is gradually released as a **fricative.** English affricates are [ʧ] [ʤ] |
| **allo-** | a variation in the form of a linguistic unit that does not alter its basic identity, e.g. *allographs, allophones, allomorphs* |
| **allograph** | a variant of a grapheme, e.g. *A, a* (capital letters, small letters) |
| **allomorph** | a variant of the same morpheme in a particular phonological environment , e.g. the plural morpheme *(e)s* has three allomorphs [iz] (as in *languages*), [z] (as in *dogs*), and [s] (*as in cats*) |
| **allophone** | a variant of the same phoneme, e.g. the *p* sound in the English words *pin* and *spin* is pronounced differently, they are different allophones of the same phoneme |
| **alphabet** | a writing system in which, ideally, each graphic sign represents a separate (distinctive) sound (i.e. a phoneme) of the language |
| **amelioration of meaning** | a change of meaning to a more favourable one, e.g. marshal (originally '*keeper of horses*'), minister (originally '*servant*') |
| **analytic language** | a language that tends to express grammatical relationships between words by means of separate words or word order rather than inflations, e.g. *more difficult* (vs. synthetic *heavier*); *the house of my friend* (vs. synthetic *my friend's house*). *See also* **synthetic language** |

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| **anomalous verb** | a verb that deviates from regular patterns, e.g. by sharing features of two or more classes. In OE, the verb *dōn* 'to do' was anomalous as it had characteristics of both **strong** and **weak** verbs |
| **ash** | a conventional name for the OE grapheme (letter) Æ æ [æ] |
| **aspect** | a category of verb denoting the duration of the action. **Continuous** (or progressive) as opposed to **non-continuous** |
| **assimilation** | The process whereby two neighbouring sounds become more similar ('partial ~') or identical ('complete ~') |
| **back vowel** | a vowel formed with the highest part of the tongue arched toward the soft palate at the back of the mouth. English back vowel include [u, ʊ, o, ɔ] |
| **B.C.** | full form is 'Before Christ', before birth of Jesus Christ**:** used to indicate a date that is a particular number of years before the traditional date of the birth of Jesus Christ (used after dates), i.e. before our era |
| **bilingual** | having competence, both grammatical and communicative in more than one language |
| **bilingualism** | the state of having competence, both grammatical and communicative in more than one language |
| **borrowing** | the process of introducing a linguistic feature, especially a word or a grammatical feature, from another language. *See also* **loan word** |
| **bound morpheme** | a morpheme that can not stand alone as a word, e.g *–ment* (as in *development*), *-er* (as in *painter*), or plural *–(e)*s (as in *tongues*). *See* also **free morpheme, derivational morpheme, inflectional morpheme** |
| **case** | a grammatical category associated with nouns and pronouns, indicating their grammatical relationship to other elements in the sentence, often the verb, e.g. the pronoun *I* is marked for nominative case, *me* for objective case, while *book* is said to be unmarked or to be marked for common case. In some languages, adjectives agree in case with nouns. In OE there were four cases: **Nominative**, **Genitive**, **Dative**, **Accusative** |
| **central vowel** | a vowel pronounced with the tongue in a "neutral" position. [ə] is a central vowel |
| **circumfix** | a discontinuous morpheme that combines a prefix and suffix in a single morpheme occurring on both ends of a root. *See also* **prefix**, **suffix**, **infix** |
| **codification** | the process of providing a systematic description of a language in grammars and dictionaries, frequently connected with the establishment of prescriptive rules of correct usage. *See also* **Normalization** |
| **cognates** | words or **morphemes** in **genetically related** languages which derive from a common source in the **proto-language** |
| **Common Germanic** | The features of the ancestor language shared by all the branches of Germanic (East Germanic, North Germanic and West Germanic group) |

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| **Common Indo-European** | the features of the ancestor language shared by all descendants of Indo-European, such as Celtic, Germanic, Indo-Iranian, Italic, Russian |
| **comparative reconstruction** | The reconstruction of the non-attested **proto-language** through systematic comparison of **cognates** in the daughter languages |
| **compounding** | or word-composition, the process of **word-formation** in which two independent words or **free morphemes** are combined to form a new word, e.g. *housewife* (< house + wife) |
| **conjugation** | the paradigm of the verb (the set of verb forms expressing its various categories) |
| **conjunction** | a closed class of words (function words) that serve to link clauses or phrases (coordinating vs. subordinating conjunctions) |
| **conversion (also zero derivation)** | a type of word formation whereby a word changes its class, i.e. undergoes formal change without the addition of an **affix**, such as verb to noun (*to cheat* > *a cheat*), or adjective or adverb to verb (*lower* > *to lower*, *up* > *to up*) |
| **declension** | the term used for a noun paradigm (the set of case forms of the noun or adjective) |
| **deletion** | the diachronic process of omitting a linguistic element, especially a sound |
| **dependent sound change** | or **conditioned** (also **positional**, or **assimilative**), a sound change that occurs in specific phonetic environment. *See also* **independent sound change** |
| **derivation** | a process of creating new words by adding affixes, e.g. *slow* (adj.) – *slowly* (adv.) |
| **derivational morpheme** | a morpheme that serves to derive a word of one class or meaning from a word of another class (part of speech), e.g. *-ment* (as in *establishment*) drives the noun from the verb *establish*; *-re* (as in *repaint*) changes the meaning of the verb '*paint*' to 'paint again'. *See also* **bound morpheme, inflectional morpheme** |
| **deterioration of meaning** | also **pejoration**, or **degeneration**: the process whereby a word loses its neutral or positive meaning and acquires a negative one, e.g. *knave* (in Modern English [neiv] 'cunning untrustworthy man: a man who is considered dishonest and deceitful (*archaic*)'; (originally in Old English *cnafa* 'boy, male servant' < Germanic). *See also* **amelioration of meaning** |
| **devoicing** | the loss of voicing, i.e. the feature [voiced], as in the change from [b] > [p] |
| **diachronic** | the study of ) language historically, i.e. over time (from Greek "chronos" – *time*, "dia" – *through*). *See also* **synchronic** |
| **dialect** | (from the Greek word διάλεκτος, *dialektos*) a language variety distinguished from other varieties in such aspects as pronunciation, lexis, grammar, semantics, and characteristic of a particular group of the language's speakers. *See also* **regional dialect, tribal dialect** |
| **diphthongization** | The change of a pure vowel into a diphthong, i.e. a vowel ending in a glide, as in [u:] > [au]. *See also* **monophthongization** |

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| **dual number** | a grammatical number in addition to singular and plural, used to indicate 'two of something'. OE had dual pronouns for the first and the second persons |
| **Eth** | the name of the character (ð) in the OE alphabet that represented [θ] or [ð]. Also spelt *edh* |
| **etymological** | connected with the origin of a language unit |
| **etymology** | the study of the origins of words |
| **etymon** | the linguistic form from which a word or a **morpheme** is historically derived (has historically developed) |
| **extension of meaning** | the process whereby the meaning of a word becomes more general, such as in Middle English *bird* '*young bird'* > Modern English '*bird*' (a word with a wider meaning), also **generalization** |
| **external / outer history (changes)** | the events that have happened to the speakers of the language leading to changes in the language (economic, political events, foreign contacts, etc.). *See also* **internal / inner history** |
| **extralinguistic** | outside or beyond the language itself. The Viking invasions of England were an extralinguisic event, although they had profound linguistic effects. |
| **Family tree** | A model which represents the genetic relationship of languages in the form of a tree diagram |
| **First Consonant Shift** | Grimm's Law and Verner's Law taken together, also called Great Consonant Shift |
| **fixed stress** | stress that does not change its position in different forms of the same word, as in *'come*, *be'come*, *be'coming* (it remains on the root morpheme). *See also* **flexible stress** |
| **flexible stress** | stress that changes its position in different forms of the same word, as in *'circumstance*, *ˌcircum'stantial*. *See also* **fixed stress** |
| **folk etymology** | changing an unfamiliar word or phrase to make it look and/or sound more familiar and meaningful, e.g. mushroom is a folk etymology from French *mousseron* |
| **free morpheme** | a **root** morpheme, a morpheme that can function alone as a word, e.g. paint, table, pretty. *See also* **bound morpheme** |
| **free stress** | stress that can fall on any part of words (root, or suffix, or ending) |
| **fricative** | a consonant produced by forcing air through a constricted passage, creating audible friction [θ, v, z], also **spirant** |
| **front vowel** | a vowel formed with the highest part of the tongue arched toward the hard palate at the front of the mouth /i, ɪ, e, ɛ, æ / |
| **gender** | a way of grouping words into different formal classes on the basis of sex distinctions – **masculine**, **feminine**, **neuter** |
| **genealogical classification** | the grouping of languages into families based on their historical relationships (kinship, or origin), also **genetic classification** |
| **genetically related languages** | languages which go back to the same parent language or **proto-language** |
| **Gospel** | one of the four books in the New Testament of the Bible |

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| **Grimm's Law** | rules formulated by Jacob Grimm, detailing the regular changes in the IE plosives that occurred in Germanic languages |
| **hybrid** | a word composed of elements from different languages, as in *Devon – shire* (Celtic + Germanic) |
| **independent sound change** | or **unconditioned** (also **sporadic**, **spontaneous**) a sound change that affects all occurrences of a specific sound, irrespective of context (surrounding). *See also* **dependent sound change** |
| **Indo-European (IE)** | a language family all of whose members are descendants of an ancestral language called Proto-Indo-European, spoken probably in Central Asia about 5000 years ago. It is made up of 12 language groups. Indo-European (*Indo* refers to the Indian subcontinent) has the largest numbers of speakers of the recognised families of languages in the world today, with its languages spoken by approximately three billion native speakers.<br>*See also* **family of languages, proto-language** |
| **infix** | a morpheme that is inserted within another morpheme. *See also* **prefix**, **suffix**, **circumfix** |
| **inflecting language** | a language in which grammatical relationships like number, case, tense, etc. are predominantly expressed by grammatical affixes |
| **inflection/ending** | a **bound morpheme** expressing a grammatical category, changes the form of the same word |
| **inflectional morpheme** | a morpheme that serves to change the form of the same word, e.g. *box- boxes*, *play-played*. *See also* **derivational morpheme** |
| **internal/ inner history (changes)** | historical changes referring to language (its phonetic, grammar and lexical levels). *See also* **external / outer history** |
| **language family** | a group of genetically related languages, i.e. of languages that descend from a common **proto-language** (or ancestral language) |
| **lingua franca** | a language or mixture of languages used for communication by people who speak different first (native) languages, e.g. English is the lingua franca of the international scientific community |
| **loan word** | a word borrowed from another language or variety. *See also* **borrowing** |
| **Middle English (ME)** | the English language from about **A.D.** 1100 to 1500 (the period of leveled or reduced endings) |
| **monophthongization** | the process whereby a diphthong (vowel ending in a glide) becomes a monophthong, i.e. a vowel with a perceived stable quality, e.g. [ai] > [a:]. *See also* **diphthongization** |
| **mood** | the category of the verb expressing a real fact, or unreality – wish, or possibility, etc., e.g. indicative, subjunctive, imperative |
| **morpheme** | the smallest meaningful unit of language |
| **morphological classification** | classification of languages based on their **word change** similarity |

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| **mutation (palatal mutation)** | changes in vowel sounds in PG and Early OE (their fronting and narrowing) under the influence of *i* or *j* in the following syllable |
| **narrowing of meaning** | the change of meaning in which a word becomes more specific, like *fowl* 'bird'> Modern English *fowl* 'a bird kept for its meat and eggs, especially a chicken' (Old English *fugol* 'bird' < Germanic) |
| **national literary language** | a language variety spoken by nation and excepted as a "correct" language, codified in grammars, dictionaries, used in literature. *See also* **standard language** |
| **native word** | a word that belongs to the original inventory of words of a given language and that cannot be attributed to borrowing from any other language (for English it is words of Indo-European, Common Germanic and West Germanic origin) |
| **Early New English (ENE)** | the English language from approximately **A.D.** 1500 to 1800 |
| **normalization** | the process of establishing prescriptive rules of correct usage of a language in grammars and dictionaries. *See also* **codification** |
| **Normalization Period** | the English language from about 1800 to 1900, the time when dictionaries and prescriptive grammars establishing rules appeared |
| **normative grammar** | also prescriptive, grammar containing a set of rules that must be obeyed if one wants to speak the language correctly |
| **number** | a grammatical category associated with nouns and pronouns and indicating something about the quantity of referents. Example: *car* and *he* are marked by singular number, while *cars* and *they* are marked for plural number. Number can also be marked on verbs, usually in agreement with subjects, as in singular (3rd person, present, indicative) *He sleeps*, plural *They sleep* |
| **Old English (OE)** | the English language from about **A.D.** 450 to 1100 (the period of full endings) |
| **paradigm** | the complete set of all the inflectional forms of a word, e.g. the paradigm for the 1st person singular pronoun *I/me/my*. *See also* **declension** and **conjugation** |
| **phase** | also time-relation, or retrospective coordination, also aspect. A grammatical category of the verb expressing the correlation of actions in time (as simulations, posterior or prior). It is expressed in the opposition of two forms **perfect** expressing priority vs. non-perfect |
| **person** | a grammatical category associated principally with pronouns marking reference to the speaker (1st person), the addressee (2nd person), someone else (3d person), predicate verbs in a sentence can be marked for person agreement, usually with their subject, as in '*she smiles*', '*they smile*' |
| **phoneme** | the smallest meaningless unit of language, which can be defined as a contemporaneous bundle of features (the abstract distinctive sound unit of a particular language) |
| **phonemic (phonological) change** | a sound change on the level of the abstract phonemic system, when allophones become separate phonemes, e.g. OE allophones *f*/v became independent phonemes in ME |

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| **phonemic merger** | the phonemic change whereby one phoneme merges (completely or partially) with another one, thus leading to a loss of phonemic oppositions |
| **phonemic split** | the phonemic change whereby one phoneme splits into two different ones; often combined with phonemic merger (completely or partially) with another one, thus leading to a loss of phonemic oppositions |
| **phonetic change** | a sound change on the concrete level of speech production |
| **prefix** | an affix that precedes the root or stem |
| **Present-Day English (PDE)** | the English language from 1945 to the present |
| **Proto-Germanic (PG)** | an ancestral (parent) language for all languages of a Germanic group (also Primitive Germanic, Primitive Teutonic). *See also* **Teutonic** |
| **preterit-present verb** | in OE, a verb whose present-tense form was originally a past tense |
| **proto-language** | the unattested common ancestor of a language family or group of languages, reconstructed by a **comparative reconstruction** |
| **qualitative change** | change in the sound quality, e.g. the reduction of unstressed vowels into a neutral [ə] due to the shift of stress |
| **quantitative change** | change in the sound length (long ↔ short) |
| **regional dialect / geographical variety** | a dialect spoken in some area. *See also* **tribal dialect** |
| **replacement** | the substitution of one language element by another |
| **root morpheme** | a free morpheme that can function as a word |
| **Rune** | 1. old Germanic alphabet character: a character in an ancient Germanic alphabet used between the 3rd and the 13th centuries; 2. Magical symbol or spell: a mysterious symbol, inscription, or incantation, especially one with supposed magical power [Old English *rūn* < Germanic]; (a rune means 'mystery'). The runic alphabet is known as *futhark* |
| **Runic inscriptions** | have been found all over western Europe, on *stone* monuments and on such objects as *metal* spearpoints and amulets; the greatest concentrations are in England and Scandinavia. The runic alphabet, called *futhark* after the sounds of the initial letters, originally had 24 characters. In English versions the number was eventually increased to 33, whereas in Scandinavia it was reduced to 16 and later expanded to 26 |
| **Semantic change** | a change in the meaning of a word or morpheme |
| **semi-vowel** | A sound that shares characteristics of both vowels and consonants /w/ and /j/, some also treat /r/ as a semi-vowel |
| **Sound interchange** | vowel or consonant gradation, e.g. '*write-wrote*', '*send-sent'* |
| **stem** | a root morpheme together with a **derivational** affix(es) |
| **standard language** | a particular variety of a language that is socially and culturally predominant and is generally accepted as the most proper form of that language. As it is usually the form promoted in schools and the media, and considered more "correct" than other dialects. *See also* **national literary language** |
| **stress (force stress)** | the emphasis placed on a sound or syllable by pronouncing it more loudly or forcefully than those surrounding it in the same word or phrase. *See* also **accentuation** |

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| **stress (recessive)** | stress tending to go backwards |
| **stress (rhythmical)** | i.e. tendency to alternating stressed and unstressed syllables |
| **strong adjective** | also called **indefinite**: in OE, an adjective not preceded by a demonstrative, or possessive pronoun, or numeral |
| **strong verb** | a verb that forms its past tense and past participle by internal vowel changes rather than by the addition of *-ed*, e.g. *begin, began, begun*. *See also* **weak verb** |
| **suffix** | an affix that follows the root |
| **suppletion /suppletive means** | word-building means when a different root is used as a form of a word, e.g. *be – were*, *good – better, I – me* |
| **synchronic** | the study of language at one moment in time without reference to that language's previous or future development (from Greek "chromos" – *time*, "syn" – *together with*). *See* also **diachronic** |
| **synthetic language** | the general (cover) term for agglutinating and inflecting languages, in which the relations between words in the sentence are expressed by inflections |
| **tense** | a category of the verb that marks time reference of the action expressed by the predicate-verb, for example past (*walked*) or present (*walk*) |
| **Teuton** | ancient German: a member of an ancient Germanic people who originally came from Jutland and invaded Gaul in the 2nd century **B.C.** They were wiped out by the Romans in 102 **B.C**. |
| **Teutonic** | relating to Teutons: relating to the ancient Teuton people, or their culture (also Primitive Teutonic, Primitive Germanic). *See also* **Proto-Germanic** |
| **Teutonic language** | a parent language (dialect) spoken by ancient Germanic tribes |
| **thorn** | The name of the character *þ* in the runic alphabet; it represented the sounds [ð] and [θ] and was used in written English during OE and ME times |
| **Tribe** | social group of people, smaller than a nation, that shares the same customs, beliefs and leadership, and usually the same language |
| **tribal dialect** | a dialect spoken by a particular tribe. *See also* **regional dialect** |
| **umlaut** | a type of assimilation (specifically a harmony) in which a vowel is influenced by another vowel or vowel-like element to its right (regressive assimilation) |
| **velar consonants** | consonants formed by approaching or touching the back of the tongue to the soft palate (velum); /k/, /g/ are velar sounds. |
| **vernacular** | a nonstandard language or dialect of a place, region, or country; the spoken form of a language |
| **Verner's Law** | The rule formulated by Karl Verner to explain apparent exceptions to Grimm's Law (voicing of fricatives) |
| **voice** | the verb category that shows the relation between the subject of the sentence and the action expressed by the verb (in **passive** the subject is acted upon, in **active** voice the subject performs the action) |
| **voicing** | the change of a voiceless consonant into a voiced one, as in the change from [p] > [b] or [v]. *See also* **devoicing** |

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| **vowel gradation** | interchange of vowels as a means of word change, as in *tooth-teeth, sing-sang-sung,* or rarely as a means of word-formation, as in *blood-bleed*. *See also* **sound interchange** |
| **weak adjective** | in OE, an adjective accompanied by a demonstrative, or possessive pronoun, or numeral; also called *definite adjective* |
| **weak verb** | an English verb whose past tense and past participle are formed by adding a suffix ending in [d] or [t]. *See also* **strong verb** |
| **wynn** [win] (*plural* wynns) *or* **wyn** [win] (*plural* wyns) *or* **wen** [wen] (*plural* wens) | the name of the character *Þ* in the runic alphabet. It was incorporated into the Latin alphabet to represent [w] during OE times.<br>Old English rune: a runic letter used in Old and early Middle English, representing a "w" sound. Old English *wyn* "joy." Runes were named using words beginning with their sound |
| **word change** | change of a word form according to its paradigm (also *form-building*) |
| **word-formation** | (also *word-building*) the process of creating new words out of existing words (composite words or compounds) or **morphemes** |
| **yogh** [ yoʊg ] (*plural* yoghs) | letter of Middle English: a letter ȝ used in Middle English, usually represented in modern English as "gh" or "y". The conventional name for the ME letter ȝ. |