

Magnum Opus
Language Change

By Rosemarijn Bovens

Redundancy: Unnecessary, because it is more than is needed. Might as well get rid of it.

Assimilation: when 2 sounds are adjacent they will move toward one another, either completely or partly. Refers to place of articulation.

Iconicity: relationship between linguistic items; non-arbitrary link between a linguistic form's phonetic shape and its meaning. Iconic items resist the change that would lessen the connection. (cow -> cows)

Conversion: conversion of one part of speech into another. Special interest: grammatical => lexical (lexicalisation).

Ergative: a subject of an intransitive verb has the same syntactic form as the object of a transitive verb. Verbs: change of state, cooking, movement involving vehicles.

Prophylaxis: acting before a problem arises; pro-active measures taken by speakers of a language to prevent break-down of a language. No evidence for the break-down, there needs to be a problem before we fix it.

Therapy in sound change: once disruptions have taken place, therapeutic changes have to be made.

Sound-symmetry: the tendency of sounds to appear in pairs.

Voiced consonants: when the vocal cords vibrate.

Voiceless consonants: when the vocal cords do not vibrate.

Plosives:

Fricatives: consonants where the outflow is partially obstructed, resulting in audible friction.

Low, high, front, back vowels: the position the tongue takes when producing vowels.

Vowel system/diagram: diagram/ system showing symmetry of vowels. Denotes vowel closeness and vowel backness.

Misanalysis (or 'abduction'): misunderstanding a foreign construction in terms of a familiar one, thus misinterpreting it.

Analogy: tendency of items that are similar in meaning to become similar in form. Become more like another with which it is somehow associated.

Opacity: non-transparency.

Transparency: clear constructions, no room for misunderstanding.

Exaptation: re-utilising of old relics in a language.

Paradigmatic pressure: internal pressure to secure balance. Operates in retrospect.

Restores symmetry after a change has created dissymmetry. Not preventative.

Push chain: a sound invades the territory of another and the original sound moves away before they merge into one. The evicted sound evicts another.

Drag chain: a sound moves from its original place, leaving a gap for another to move into, leaving room for the next, etc.

Merger: two sounds combine to form new sounds. Sound A and Sound B become Sound B. Or Sound C. Irreversible.

Gradual sound change:

Abrupt sound change:

Grimm's Law: original PIE [bh], [dh], [gh] became [b], [d], [g]; this became [p], [t], [k]; this became [f], [th], [h]. Changes in stop series. 3 changes, affects Germanic languages.

Great Vowel Shift: all the long vowels changed places.

Typological harmony: every language type has a certain number of constructions attached to it. When a typological shift occurs, all those construction shift along with it.

Unconditional/independent sound change: sound change which happens independently of phonetic environment. Wherever the sound appears, not dependent on context.

Conditional/dependent sound change: sound change which happens dependent on phonetic environment.

Language typology: study of the types of language.

Metathesis: rearranging of sounds or syllables in a word, or words in a sentence.

'Critical period' for language acquisition: period for acquiring language between the ages of two and adolescence; or after their internal grammars during childhood.

Consonant harmony: altering consonants so that the two are closer in pronunciation.

Malapropism: substitution of a word for a word with a similar sound in which the resulting phrase makes no sense but often creates a comic effect.

Haplology: omission of one or two similar adjacent syllables or sounds in a word.

Folk etymology: a less common word or part of a word is associated with another more familiar word.

Blends: blending of two words to create a new one.

Principle of isomorphism: there should be one form per unit of meaning. No great number of different endings, just one per form.

Pidgin/pidginization: simplified language systems which cater for essential common needs (trade) when people speaking different languages come into contact. Pidginisation is the process during which pidgins arise.

Creole: pidgin languages which get elaborated, increasingly used and which children might learn as a first language. It has the potential for a full language. It has a bigger vocabulary, emerging morphology, stable, growing grammar and a stable-ish phonology.

Language universals: the universal features every language possesses. A pattern that occurs systematically across all languages, believed to be true of all languages.

Substratum language: the language of a politically dominated group (language with a lower status) which influences the politically dominant group.

Base language: the existing language which a creole uses as a point of origin.

Transparency: when the meaning of a compound can be gathered from the analysis of its morphemes. Understandability.

Bioprogram theory: a theory which proposes that creoles follow a biologically programmed blueprint which exists in the human mind. Certain universal features emerge when a creole emerges and the creole moves straight towards them.

Decreolization: when a creole gets devoured by the socially more prestigious lexifier language. Social pressure moves the creole in its direction.

Language murder: an old language is slaughtered by the new. It happens in stages. There is a decrease in number of people who speak the old language, who then need to become bilingual. Their children will learn the new language first and the old one incompletely. There will be no need for the old language and as its final speakers die, the language dies. Total disappearance, triggered by social needs; did not fill the needs of the speakers, gradual process; multilingualism precedes death.

Language suicide: when two languages are similar to one another. The less socially prestigious language borrows words, constructions and sounds from the more socially prestigious one, completely obliterating itself in the end.

Language drift: the evolution of a language over time.

Standardization: when a standard language is imposed and accepted by the entire population. (e.g. England) most appropriate and prestigious language; routes to standardisation may vary.

Therapeutic change: a change which wipes out an irregularity in the language.

Disruptive change: a change which could alter a language drastically.

RP: the standard accepted language in England. Not very widespread, mostly confined to the South, and the London area.

Mutual intelligibility: people speaking different dialects can still understand each other. Political and historical issue (continental versus insular scandinavian).

Patois: any language that is considered nonstandard. Could be creoles, pidgins, dialects.

Codification (of standard): fixing of pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary. Formulate norms and variant reduction. The process of standardizing and developing a norm for a language.

Proto-Germanic: the parent language of the modern languages belonging to the Germanic branch of Indo-European. Proto Germanic dates back to the second half of the first millennium BC. North Germanic (east west), West Germanic (high low) East Germanic (dead) all underwent Grimm's Law. Descended from Proto-Indo-European.

West, North and East Germanic: Different branches of the Germanic family tree.

Runic alphabet: alphabet of runes.

Old Norse (Old Icelandic): Ancestor of Norwegian, Icelandic, Faroese, Swedish and Danish. Now called old Icelandic. The oldest records of North Germanic are in Old Icelandic. Masses of sagas the Edda (Fenrir).

High vs. Low West Germanic: German, Yiddish and Swiss German vs. Plattdeutsch, Dutch, Afrikaans and Flemish. High German consonant shift separated it from Old Saxon.

Ablaut: altering the vowel in a word's root in order to show something about its meaning or grammatical function. Characteristic of IE languages (swim swam)

Strong vs. weak verbs: strong verbs change grammatical meaning through the process of ablaut, and weak verbs change grammatical meaning through inflection or agglutination by means of a dental suffix. Strong verbs come from PIE. Dental suffix is an invention from German. Weak pattern is most dominant. (go (strong) went (*wendan* weak) gone (strong))

Analogy: when a speaker alters the form of a word to resemble the form of the word it is related to, in order to smooth out irregularities.

Mood in OE: mood is an indication of whether an action is viewed as a fact or non-fact. Indicative is fact, imperative command, optative wish, injunctive unreality and subjunctive is a possibility. This is shown through inflection. PDE: 3 moods, indicative, imperative and subjunctive (set phrases, "if I were you").

Voice: an indication of whether a grammatical subject is acting, acted upon or both. Active vs passive.

Case: an indication, by means of inflection, of the function of the noun in the sentence. (subject, direct object, etc) synthetic languages have a lot of cases. PIE has 8 PG has 5.

Case syncretism: the collapse of cases, so not all cases of PIE are marked anymore. (dative in PG)

Strong and weak adjectives: strong or indefinite adjectives alone identify the noun, no other modifier, whereas weak or definite adjectives use a demonstrative or possessive adjective as well. Indefinite: gode batas and definite: tha godan batas. (NL: gender)

Grimm's Law: a massive sound change which affected all the consonants, only in Germanic languages.

Verner's Law: the exceptions to Grimm's law, such as the shift of the reflexes. Sniden (past) or snithan. Depends on where the stress fell in PIE (off vs of).

Pitch accent: an accent which depends on variations in tone. (PIE) Stress can fall anywhere depending on things as inflection. PIE accent determines whether Verner's Law applies or not.

Stress accent: an accent which depends on variations in loudness. (Germanic) In Germanic stress falls on the first syllable or root syllable.

Danelaw: an area in Northern England.

Anglo-Saxon Chronicles: Old English documents, depicting the major events of each year.

Palatalisation: the front vowel (articulated in the palatal region) causes a sound to move either forward or backward to become more palatal in articulation.

i-umlaut: the vowel moves to resemble in its articulation the I or the j.

Breaking: a process where certain vowels become diphthongised.

Hybrid: a word which has one part derived from one language and another part from another language.

Loan translation: words or phrases that are translated from another language and then adapted into the translating language.

Semantic loan: when the semantic meaning is borrowed and added to the meaning of a word already existent in the borrower's language.

Compounding: combining two or more free roots into one word.

Derivation: creation of new words by adding prefixes or suffixes to existing roots.

Kenning: special type of compound, where the literal translation of a word is a metaphor for the actual meaning of the word.

Person: the participants in a communicative situation (first, second, third person)

Number: an indication of how many things are being talked about (plural, singular)

Gender: (*grammatical vs natural*) natural gender: the biological sex of what is being talked about. Grammatical: a means of classifying nouns, either masculine, feminine or neuter.

Case: the role of a noun phrase in a sentence (nominative, genitive, accusative etc.)

Suppletion: different inflected forms not only show different endings but are formed from different roots.

Agreement/concord: process in which the grammatical information expressed in one form must be repeated in other forms which accompany it.

Subjective genitive: where the relation is of a subject to a verb. (John's murder (he did it)).

Objective genitive: where the relation is like an object to a verb. (murder of John)

Partitive genitive: the whole in respect to a part; always expressed with an of-phrase (two of the members).

Preterit-present verbs: the present tense of these verbs was formed from the old strong preterit; in PrDE they are modals.

Periphrastic forms: a way of expressing grammatical function; through separate words or phrases rather than word endings.

Impersonal constructions: construction without a personal nominative subject; must now be supplied with an it subject or it must be given a personal subject.

Norman French: French dialect spoken by the Norman rulers of England, which became stigmatised, considered inferior to Central French.

Central French: the prestigious accent of French, centred in Paris.

Prestige: when a dialect is prestigious, it is superior over other dialects.

Stigmatisation: A severe social disapproval of personal characteristics that are perceived to be against cultural norms. Perceived standard form.

Semantic differentiation: a difference of specific meaning in synonyms.

Innovative dialects: the dialect that shows the most change from the standard.

Conservative dialects: the dialect that remains close to the standard; best preserving the phonological and grammatical features.

Phonemic spelling: a word is spelled the way it sounds.

Phonemicisation: sounds that are originally allophones of the same phoneme become separate phonemes.

Qualitative vowel changes: A change in place of articulation of the vowels.

Quantitative vowel changes: affect the length of the vowels (and sometimes the consonants). Usually associated with changes in intonation or accent.

Lengthening: the lengthening process of a vowel. Happens to vowels before sequences of a nasal or liquid plus stop, or in an open syllable.

Shortening: a vowel is shortened in ME if it is a long unstressed vowel, a stressed long vowel before a consonant cluster or a stressed long vowel before two or more unstressed syllables.

Open syllable lengthening: a short stressed vowel in an open syllable of a two-syllable word (normally the first syllable of the word) is lengthened.

Vowel reduction: is the centralisation and laxing of vowels to schwa in many syllables other than those with primary stress.

Analogy: tendency of items that are similar in meaning to become similar in form. Become more like another with which it is somehow associated.

Metathesis: rearranging of sounds or syllables in a word, or words in a sentence.

Apocope: the loss of a final vowel.

Syncope: the loss of a medial vowel.

Levelling of inflections: a merger of inflections into just a few distinct forms.

Periphrastic constructions: constructions which employ function words in place of inflectional endings to express grammatical meaning.

Synthetic languages: grammatical relationships show through means of inflection. It involves agglutination and inflecting. Hungarian and Basque are agglutinating. German and Latin are inflectional (fusional).

Analytic languages: grammatical relationships show through word order, periphrastic constructions and function words. (e.g. English)

Spelling pronunciation: the pronunciation of a word as it is written rather than as it is conventionally pronounced.

Diphthongisation: the creation of a diphthong from a monophthong by the addition of a glide ([u] > [au])

Etymological (Renaissance) respelling: Renaissance interest in the Latin and Greek origins of words in English led to respellings of borrowed words to make them correspond more closely to their etymology. Sometimes these were based on a mistaken concept of a word's origin.

Unetymological respelling: a word is spelled differently due to analogy, even though it has not changed in pronunciation.

Causative verbs: verbs that mean to 'cause' or 'make' someone do something.

Honorifics: second-person plural forms used as markers of politeness.

Inkhorn terms: a derisive seventeenth-century term for learned borrowings, considered overly pedantic and unnecessary.

Prescriptivism: dictates and proscribes certain ways of speaking and writing in an attempt to establish and maintain a standard of correctness.

Descriptivism: explains or analyses how language works and how it is used, without regulating usage. This approach is the basis of modern linguistics.

Ascertainment: an eighteenth century term meaning 'to settle a matter and render it certain and free from doubt'. Ascertainment involved the codification, refinement and fixing of the language in a permanent form.

Double negatives: one of the things forbidden by the eighteenth-century prescriptivists. It seemed to lead up to a positive. It was widely used for emphasis in ME and OE.

Double comparatives/superlatives: more happier, most fairest etc. They seemed logically redundant to the grammarians, since there is no degree in absolutes. This, also, was common in earlier periods.

Split infinitives: when the infinitival marker to is split from the infinitive. Also forbidden by the grammarians.

Rhotic: denoting dialects which preserve [r] pre-consonantly and word-finally.

Non-rhotic: denoting dialects in which [r] is deleted pre-consonantly and word-finally as in ca(r) and ca(r)t.

Creole continuum: a spread of dialects ranging from the 'deepest' creole to something approximating standard English. The one closest to the standard is called the acrolect; the one showing the most creole features is the basilect.

Syllable-timed: syllables occurring at approximately regular intervals.

Stress-timed: stressed syllables occur at regular intervals.

Estuary English: a mixture of Cockney and RP. Spoken in London. Is slowly becoming the standard over RP.

Hiberno-English: Irish English.

Gaeltacht: Regions in Ireland where people still speak Irish Gaelic.

African American Vernacular English: a continuum of English vernaculars spoken by African Americans.

Chapter 11 Doing What Comes Naturally

Social triggers set off or accelerate deeper causes of language change. Ease of effort is the first cause that springs to mind. Max Müller (linguist) claimed that due to an inherent laziness, sophisticated people do not use the forceful articulatory movements required for primitive tongues. This is bollocks of course, there is no proof that one language is more or less primitive than another. What makes more sense is that ease of effort belongs to the tendencies which are built into language because of the anatomical, physiological and psychological make-up of human beings.

Dropping of Consonants

When the sequence [an] is pronounced, the nasal cavity cannot be totally closed off during the vowel [a]. This leads to a nasalised vowel, which means there is an imbalance between [an] and [en], [in], [on], [un]. The unnecessary [n] will be omitted and, through analogy, the nasalisation will spread to the other vowels.

Another reason for the dropping of consonants is the fact that all consonants are weak at the end of a word if no vowel follows. This is general and inevitable, thus not due to sloppiness. The reason: the articulation of a stop consists of three stages; first, the placing of the obstruction; second, the building up of compressed air behind the construction; third, an explosion (!) as the obstruction is removed. It is not uncommon for stops to be 'unreleased', which makes them particularly difficult to hear. Therefore, it is normal for consonants to disappear at end of words over the ages.

Linking Sounds Together

The more proficient someone becomes at a language, the smoother the words will be linked together. This happens in two ways. First, by assimilation (becoming similar): when two sounds are adjacent, one often moves partially or wholly in the direction of the other. Second, by omission: in a group of sounds clustered together, one sometimes gets left out. When assimilation and omission occur within words instead of between them, the effect is likely to be longer-lasting. If a change occurs in enough words, people grow to accept it.

There is evidence that an alternating consonant-vowel-consonant-vowel sequence is the most natural one for the human vocal organs. It might be extreme to say that all languages strive towards this stage, but it is true that they inevitably simplify consonant sequences. It seems that language is merely trying to be efficient, eliminating that which is not necessary.

Other Natural Tendencies

All sounds are immensely different (spoken by different people, different speeds, different loudness). People mentally normalise or correct the sounds they hear, to what they think they should have heard. But they only do this, when they notice something needs correcting. If not, they simply get confused. There is a fairly extensive list of changes which happen repeatedly, due to the difficulty of co-ordinating a number of articulatory movements perfectly (such as in pronunciation of [ml] or [mr]), or to perceptual problems (a dark [l] sounding like a [u]), or to idiosyncratic effects which certain sounds have on others. These are all results of a human's physical make-up. It often happens that change infiltrates the same weak spot in different dialects, such as the [t] in American and British English. It turns out the [t] is hard to maintain when it is surrounded by vowels, thus you can't distinguish between latter and ladder in AmE, whereas in BrE (Cockney) the [t] is simply omitted.

Changes can be accelerated, slowed and reversed. Like the final [d] in words in Swedish was disappearing but due to a spread of literacy there is now a decline in omitted [d]'s. Change usually just creeps in though.

Natural Developments in Syntax

There seem to be certain mental tendencies alongside the aforementioned physical tendencies for language change. There is a preference for keeping the object and the main verb close together in a sentence. Also there is a tendency in language to omit unnecessary repetitions (Aloysius like oysters and mussels instead of Aloysius like oysters and Aloysius like mussels).

Shadowing the World

Words weakly copy certain external features, a process which is known as iconicity. It applies to the relationship between linguistic items, and the copying follows natural preferences which shadow behaviour in the real world.

Iconic principles:

- Quantity: conceptual complexity corresponds to formal complexity (cow => cows)
- Proximity: conceptual distance tends to match with linguistic distance (she went to London, Paris and Rome)
- Sequential order: the sequential order of events described is mirrored in the speech chain (First he grabbed his bike and then he cycled into town)
- Verbs have various attachments, and the attachments which describe the type of action are likely to be nearer the root and those for tense.
- Metaphor shows how links between the world and language are maintained.

The statistical likelihood that languages retain this shadowing is so high that it must affect the way languages develop.

Ensuing Disruptions

Plurality in French is no longer marked at the end (because the pronunciation of the endings disappeared) but at the beginning (le, la, les). Maori has also lost the endings to its active verbs, so that the endings of passive verbs are multiple and confusing. One ending is taking over now. Language seems to have a remarkable tendency to restore its patterns and maintain its equilibrium.

Chapter 12 Repairing the Patterns

Language contains inbuilt self-regulating devices which restore broken patterns and prevent disintegration. Actually it is the speakers of the language which do this. They can practise prophylaxis, which means that they tackle problems before these arise; or they wait until the problems arise and then nip it in the bud; or they wait until disaster strikes and then act accordingly. First, it is impossible to act before something happens because we don't know what language is going to do. The other two both occur in language. Sometimes language needs a small therapeutic change, other times it needs a huge therapeutic change.

Neatening the sound patterns

Language has a preference for neat, formal patterns, particularly in the realm of sounds. It has a tendency toward symmetry; sounds are tidily arranged in pairs, voiceless and voiced. The plosives all have a partner, but in the eighteenth century, the fricatives did not. Pattern neatening for fricatives started in the nineteenth century, when a partner was created for [ʃ]: [ʒ]. This sound came both from borrowed French words and the [j] sound which crept into words like pleasure. [h] still has no mate, and it might be in the process of disappearing. It might have already been lost if not for weird social pressure to keep it, such as from nineteenth century etiquette books which said h-dropping was a mark of

inferiority. However, it is not only partnerless but also difficult to hear, so it might be on the way out.

Front vowels tend to be partnered with back vowels. If one of a pair moves, the other is likely to follow. Same goes for diphthongs. Speakers are unaware of vowels shuffling around, they are aware of pattern neatening in words and word endings, which is when they will start complaining.

Tidying up dangling wires

A long-term tidying-up process has been going on which has been affecting English plurals for centuries. First, the many endings were tidied down to -s and -n.

The neatening is called analogy (yay!) the tendency of items that are similar in meaning to become similar in form. This term is used for various things. There are a few principles behind this version of analogy:

1. There should be one form per unit of meaning. (principle of isomorphism)
2. Alternation in the form of words should be systematic and easily detectable. It needs to minimise opacity and maximise transparency.

Smoothing out the syntax

Speakers tend to misanalyse a construction which has become confusing or unclear in terms of a more familiar one with superficial similarities. This happened with impersonal verbs. After 1000, endings were gradually lost off the end of nouns and there was an increasing tendency to use subject-verb-object word order; thus impersonal verbs were misinterpreted as simple subject-verb-object sentences.

So: the tendency of language to eliminate pointless variety and a preference for constructions which are clear and straightforward.

Making use of old junk

Exaptation is when an archaic way of speaking is reused and given a new role.

Unattainable Equilibrium

Some linguists believed that simplification is the most important factor in a language. However, attempts to restore the equilibrium can lead a chain reaction which changes the language radically.

Chapter 13 The Mad Hatter's Tea Party

Shifting Sounds

The first example is Grimm's Law. The original PIE [bh], [dh] and [gh] became [p], [d] and [g]: [b] [d] and [g] became [p], [t] and [k]; and [p], [t] and [k] became [f], [θ] and [h]. (page 184).

The other one is the Great Vowel Shift, concerning the English long vowels. No one can tell which vowel started it, but it concerned all long vowels. (Fig. 13.3)

Push Chains or Drag Chains?

In a drag chain, one sound moves from its original place and leaves a gap which an existing sound rushes to fill, whose place is in turn filled by another, and so on.

In a push chain, the reverse happens. One sound invades the territory of another, and the original owner moves away before the two sounds merge into one. The evicted sound in turn evicts another, and so on.

If we look at examples, we might be able to shed some light on the GVS and Grimm's law. An example of a drag chain is the second shift in High German. [p] [t] [k] were first to change, then [d] changed and then [θ] moved into the space left by [d].

Examples of push chains are harder to find, because people claim that sounds can only merge, they cannot push one another out of the way. However vowels do not move suddenly but gradually. There is a good GVS in Late Middle Chinese (page 190). So drag chains and push chains both exist, but drag chains are more common than push chains. It could be that the GVS was in the middle, dragging some sounds and pushing some others.

Estuary English Vowels

Superficially, the most noticeable feature of Estuary English is the extensive use of the glottal stop in place of [t]. But it is the British diphthongs that are doing something noticeable: they are moving into their neighbour's place. Page 193; good examples.

American Northern Cities Shift

The Northern Cities shift involves short vowels, rather than long ones. The earliest changes in this drag chain were [a] > [i] and [o] > [a]. Other links in the shift might be a push chain with [e] > [ʌ] and [ʌ] > [o]. It has already described a full circle, but it has not affected all speakers yet. (this was a Labov study, yay!)

Typological Harmony

Larger constructions like syntax seem to be more stable than sounds. However, there may be some covert movement we are not aware of. This has to do with typological harmony.

Certain constructions are frequently associated together in languages. For example, English (as a VO language) has prepositions, where OV languages have post-positions. When a typological shift takes place, it is not just a shift of verbs and objects, but also of all the constructions associated with that type. Languages seem to have a need to maintain typological harmony within themselves. There is no overall agreement why. Some say it creates comprehension problems if the constructions are not in harmony; but German currently has two types (one for main clauses and one for subordinate clauses). There is less agreement on the order in which harmonising occurs. It was thought to be the switch over of the order of the verb and object, but this turned out to be wrong. It appears to be a series of linked changes which are reminiscent of a drag chain.

Overview

Change is likely to be triggered by social factors, such as fashion, foreign influence and social need. However, these factors cannot take effect unless the language is ready for a particular change. They simply make use of inherent tendencies which reside in the physical and mental make-up of human beings. Causality needs to be explored on a number of different levels. The immediate trigger must be looked at alongside the underlying propensities of the language concerned, and of human languages in general.

A language never allows disruptive changes to destroy the system. In response to disruptions, therapeutic changes are likely to intervene and restore the broken patterns - though in certain circumstances therapeutic changes can themselves cause further disruptions by setting off a chain of changes which may last for centuries.

Above all, anyone who attempts to study the causes of language change must be aware of the multiplicity of factors involved. It is essential to realise that language is both a social and a mental phenomenon in which sociolinguistic and psycholinguistic factors are likely to be inextricably entwined.

Chapter 14 Development and Breakdown

Some linguists think that all or most language changes are due to the imperfect learning by children of the speech forms of the older generations. Others have argued that

language breakdown is of special relevance to language change, since it can reveal in an accelerated form what might happen to a changing language.

The Generation Gap

It was argued that each generation re-creates a slightly different grammar from that of its parents, in both syntax and sound structure. This theory seems to be supported by the 'critical period' theory, which claimed that humans could only alter their internal grammars during childhood. Second, the observation that there are similarities between child language and language change.

Critical Years?

Eric Lenneberg suggested (in the late 1960s) that humans have a 'critical period' for acquiring language: between the ages of two and adolescence. He said that the critical period coincided with the biological phenomenon of lateralisation, the specialisation of language to one side of the brain (usually the left). After this, language was fixed. This gave a plausible biological reason for why children would be instigators of language change. Then doubts started to creep in, his lateralisation theory turned out to be wrong; he desperately tried to find new proof but it was all shot down. There was an increasing number of reports of adults who could pick up languages apparently perfectly. Sociolinguists (like in Reading) reported that adolescence seems to be a time when changes are often made to language. In the end the notion of the critical period was replaced with a 'sensitive period', a time early in life when acquiring language might be the easiest.

Comed and Goed

Children iron out irregularities in language, much like analogy. It seems logical for people to think that these ironed out verbs survive into adulthood and then get adopted by the speech community. So they did an experiment. It turns out, all groups (children aged five and under, children aged between eight and ten and university students) tended to regularise the least common verbs. All groups had problems with words as *build*, which has past *built*, which is a strange process (*though surely not for university students?*). All groups sometimes incorrectly changed vowels. Overall, the youngest children's responses were least like language change.

Infrequently used words tend to get regularised and neatened up by adults. So there is no real evidence of children influencing syntactic changes.

Back to Nature

The idea was put forward that children are predisposed by the nature of their articulatory make-up to implement certain natural tendencies. It is true that children tend to harmonise the consonants by altering one so that the two are closer in pronunciation. Also, words get shortened in length both by children learning to speak and in the course of time. But the shortening method differs. Children tend to omit syllables, adults leave out vowels. Another thing children do is substituting the stops for fricatives. In language change, the reverse is more common. Closer scrutiny reveals that many of the child language processes are due to lack of muscular co-ordination or to memory strain, whereas most of the adult ones are due to speedy shortcuts executed with excellent co-ordination. Also, changes begin with social groups, and babies don't really have those.

Age-Grading

Young children can hear far more than they can produce. At the preadolescent stage, we find the beginnings of a move from parent-oriented to peer-oriented networks. By

adolescence they go through a period of language rebellion and then settle into a more regular pattern.

Language in Disarray

Whenever a language falls into a disordered state, it is tempting to suppose that the breakdown shares characteristics with natural language change. There are three phenomena which are commonly associated with language change: drunken speech, slips of the tongue and speech of brain damage patients.

Drunken speech is somewhat slower, and the slowing down was done in an abnormal way: the consonants are lengthened but the vowels remain the same. The consonants tended to be devoiced at the end of words. Final fricatives and affricates changed. There are some overlaps, but not significant enough to regard the processes as interlinked or parallel.

Slips of the Tongue

The majority of speech errors involve more than one word; sometimes sounds are switched or sounds adapt under the influence of another. Sound change however involves change within individual words. Any possible parallels between sound change and speech errors would thus involve those slips of the tongue which affect a single word, or the fusing together of two words into one. There are three categories: malapropisms (substitution of a word for another which sounds similar); blends (two words combined into one); and misordering of sounds in a word (e.g. Wipser/whisper). Malapropisms can cause confusion between two similar words; this overlaps with a process called folk etymology, when a less common word gets confused with a more familiar word. But these confusions often do not spread because its speakers do not have enough influence.

There are consciously coined blends, which are the majority in language, and there are some in the less-educated strata of society but these are unlikely to spread outside the small group which says them. Slips of the tongue are not really valuable in language change, but more interesting in a study of speech production; the order in which people assemble words and sounds for utterance.

Language Decay

Speech disorders from brain damage do not present any unitary picture. The symptoms are too diverse and it makes no sense to look at disorders and think you are looking at language change. The most one can say is that patients with speech disorders tend to have most difficulty with sounds which require the greatest neuromuscular co-ordination, and these sounds are also those which children often require late.

Language change occurs when people whose brains and muscles are acting normally speak fast and efficiently.

Summary

Similarities found between child language and language change are illusory. The symptoms found in language breakdown only incidentally coincide with those in language change.

Chapter 15 Language Birth

There are various theories about the origin of language. The 'ding-dong' theory hypothesises that the earliest words were imitations of natural sounds; the 'pooh-pooh' theory thought language comes from cries and gasps of emotion. Otto Jespersen thought the words in a primitive language were very long, and sung rather than spoken.

All these speculations led to widespread disapproval, but now it has been found that language evolved by normal evolutionary mechanics, so it is more respected again.

The Origin of Human Language

Africa was probably the homeland of modern humans, and also of human language. They were stranded in the desert and started scavenging for meat, which aided brain growth, and walking upright, which promoted the production of clear sounds. Primates are social animals so language may have developed as a part of extensive interaction. The ability to see things from another's point of view led to a 'naming insight', an understanding that an object may have a symbol which can replace it. These clear sounds and 'naming insight' possible led to hundreds of vocabulary items.

From words to grammar

Numerous words led to the need for word order; humans have a tendency to put references to animate beings before other words; preferences become habits, habits become rules.

How Pidgins arise

A pidgin is frequently described as a 'marginal' language, used by people who need to communicate for certain restricted purposes. They tended to arise on trade routes. (Pidgin may have come from Chinese word for business or Hebrew 'pidjom' 'barter') A pidgin takes one or more already existing language(s) as its point of origin. Some people have condemned pidgins as 'crudely distorted by false ideas of simplification' and dismissed them as 'broken language' or a 'bastard blend' unworthy of serious study. There are a number of conflicted ideas on how pidgins came into being.

First they thought European languages are too sophisticated and complex to be learnt by supposedly primitive 'natives', who therefore simplified these advanced languages down to their level. This is no longer thought to be relevant.

The first real theory is that of imperfect learning. A pidgin represents the best attempt of a people to learn a language quite unlike their own. This becomes petrified when the speakers are no long in contact with the base language.

The second theory is that a pidgin represents unconscious attempts by native speakers of the base language to simplify it in ways that might make it easier for non-native speakers to talk. This is very unlikely.

Both of these theories do not account for that fact that pidgins have shared features; this has given rise to the idea that all pidgins derive from a common source (Portuguese). One problem: it cannot be proved. This gave rise to another idea: universal structures automatically surface when anyone tries to build a simple language, and that any shared features will be universal features. These universals are often obscured by common features shared by the base and the substratum languages.

While the linguists argue these theories, we can see all of them happening in Tok Pisin, which has evolved into a creole now.

Embryo languages

A genuine pidgin must not be confused with broken English. A true pidgin has consistent rules. Vocabulary items and constructions from native languages are incorporated into the pidgin. A pidgin is easier to learn than a full language. It is impoverished and simpler; there are a smaller number of elements and vocabulary items. A pidgin is simpler because it is more transparent; it is nearer to the ideal of one form per unit of meaning.

Simplicity brings ambiguity and length, unfortunately. Once a pidgin becomes used in a wider variety of functions, it must expand; it becomes an extended pidgin; then children of mixed marriages learn it as a first language and it becomes a creole.

Creoles as New-Born Languages

A creole is a one-time pidgin which has become the mother tongue of a speech community. Around the time of its 'birth' as a creole, it grows rapidly and extensively. The rate of speech speeds up remarkably, words are telescoped and endings are omitted. A number of cumbersome phrases are replaced by new shorter words and technical, political and medical terms are being imported from other languages. It become normal to mark the time of an utterance (through tense).

Almost There

Layering is taking place; a behaviour typical of grammaticalisation. The creole is starting to develop complex sentences. There are different ways of making relative sentences now, but one will win out if the creole becomes standardised. A creole is a full language in the sense that it is often the only language of those who learn it as their mother tongue. Thus it needs to accommodate for different types of communication.

Is There a Bioprogram?

The bioprogram theory suggests that creoles follow a biological programmed blueprint which exists in the human mind. Consequently, certain universal features are bound to surface when a creole emerges, and the creole moves straight to these. This does not work out, because creoles do not all follow the same path.

The spaghetti junction idea suggests that a creole sprouts various possibilities, like a spaghetti junction, a road intersection with several possible turn-offs. These are then gradually narrowed down, so that in practice one exit is used.

The stages by which pidgins develop into creoles seem to be normal processes of change. More of them happen simultaneously, and they happen faster than in a full language. This makes them valuable to study.

Chapter 16 Language Death †

By language death we do not simply mean a gradual alteration over time. We are referring to a more dramatic and less normal event, the total disappearance of a language. When a language dies, another language has gradually ousted the old one as the dominant language, for political and social reasons. One of two things is liable to happen: one, speakers of the old language will continue speaking it, but will gradually import forms and constructions from the socially dominant language, until the old one is no longer identifiable as a separate language (an extreme form of borrowing; more like a suicide). Or two, the old language disappears, is murdered by the dominant language as it gradually suppresses and ousts the subsidiary one.

Language suicide

The best known cases of language suicide is when a creole gets devoured by its parent. The lexifier language is the one with the social prestige, so social pressure moves the creole in its direction (decreolisation). It begins with an overlap between constructions and sounds of the creole and the lexifier language. A change saturates every linguistic environment in turn, slowly taking over.

Such as English in Tok Pisin. English is used in universities and business. When there is a political crisis Tok Pisin needs to borrow from English; advertisements advocate

English products; basically, English constructions crop up everywhere. There is a tremendous fluctuation in people's speech. Western foods are being introduced; new sound combinations occur. English and Tok Pisin are inextricably linked. These constructions have an insidious effect and start to alter the creole.

So in short, phrases from the base language are borrowed in particular situations, usually where there is a strong overlap between the creole and the base language and/or where the creole is lacking or cumbersome. The base language spreads out in all directions, like an octopus entwining its tentacles round all parts of an animal before it eventually kills it.

Language Murder

The first stage is a decrease in number of people who speak the language. Bilingualism becomes essential for survival. The first generation of bilinguals is often fluent in both languages. But the next generation down become less proficient in the dying language, partly due to lack of practice. Languages die out because there is no need for them; languages at the lower end of the prestige scale retreat, until there is nothing left for them appropriately to be used about. The final remaining speakers are semi-speakers.

Language death is messy. Although general trends can be discerned, the old language does not fade away neatly. Language death is a social phenomenon, and triggered by social needs. The old language faded away because it did not fulfil those needs of the community who spoke it.

So Many Doors

There are various scenarios of language death. One is code-switching, the dying language is intertwined with the dominant one. In the end one wins out and the other is demoted.

Diminishing numbers

Around 6,000 languages exist, about half of which are no longer learned as a first language. A further 2,400 have fewer than 100,000 speakers. This leaves 600 languages in the safe category. The structural diversity of the world's languages will undoubtedly be diminished. The way to keep languages alive perhaps, is to ensure that people are aware of the value of their first-learned language. Only they, the speakers, can preserve it.

Chapter 17 Progress or Decay?

Language change is natural, inevitable and continuous, and involves interwoven socio-linguistic and psycholinguistic factors which cannot easily be disentangled from one another. Sometimes alterations are disruptive; other times they can be viewed as therapy. It is in no sense wrong for human language to change, any more than it is wrong for humpback whales to alter their songs every year. Humans are probably programmed by nature to behave in this way.

Forwards or Backwards?

Opinions about progress or decay in language have tended to reflect the religious or philosophical preconceptions of their proponents, rather than a detached analysis of the evidence. First there were the prescriptivists, who thought language had declined from a former state of perfection. Then, the opposing viewpoint, Darwin who believed that language was the better the shorter. Survival of the fittest confuses the notions of progress and decay in language with expansion and decline. Popularity reflects the military and political strength of the nation which speaks the language, not the worth.

Jespersen says that language reaches excellence when it is able to express the greatest amount of meaning with the simplest mechanism. That would mean pidgins are

the most advanced, but they are extremely ambiguous. A language which is simple and regular in one respect is likely to be complex and confusing in others.

Languages are not progressing to a certain goal, there is a continuous pull between the disruption and restoration of patterns. Therefore, language is ebbing and flowing like the tide, but neither progressing nor decaying, as far as one can tell.

Are Languages Evolving?

Languages, if they are evolving, are doing it very slowly; and they are all moving in opposite directions. The evolution has never been demonstrated and the inherent equality of all languages must be maintained on present evidence.

Is Language change socially undesirable?

It is only undesirable when communication gets disrupted. Mutual intelligibility may be impaired or even destroyed if different groups alter their speech radically. A mild degree of regional variation is probably a mark of individuality to be encouraged rather than stamped out. There is no logical reason behind the disapproval of regional accents. Attempting to halt language change is a waste of time. You can attempt to ensure that all members of the population have at least one common language, and one common variety of that language. A standard language cannot be brought about by force. Once standardisation has occurred, and a whole population has accepted one particular variety as standard, it becomes a strong unifying force and often a source of national pride and symbol of independence.

Great permitters

The Great Permitters are prepared to accept new usages which they regard as advantageous and are prepared to battle against those which seem sloppy or pointless. They are unlikely to reverse a strong trend. We need to realise how personal these judgements are; they mean no more than the preservation of personal preferences. It may be more important to look at the ways language manipulates people than to discuss whether media is plural or singular.

Conclusion

Disruption and therapy balance one another. Languages are neither moving forward or backward; merely in different directions. Language change is not wrong but it can be socially undesirable. It is possible that linguists have not identified every way of development of language. There is more to be discovered.

Need To Know:

Important sounds: thorn (-> th), eth (-> voiced th), wynn (-> w) and yogh (-> z).

Early OE: 3 Major Sound Changes:

1. Palatalisation
2. Umlaut
3. Breaking

(Terminology courtesy of Jacob Grimm)

1. Palatalisation: sound change; affects consonants pronounced in the palatal region of the mouth. Cause: presence of another palatal sound such as a /j/ or a front vowel.
2. Umlaut: sound change; affects vowels; vowel becomes fronted or raised. Cause: an original /i/ and /j/ causes the vowel of the preceding syllable to become fronted and raised. *gos => gosi => geese.
3. Breaking: sound change; affects a number of vowels: æ (ash); æ (long ash (imagine line on top)); e (short e); ē (long e); i (short i); ī (long i). These become short diphthongs if followed by r + C or l + C or h +/- C.

- a. Næh (long æ) => nēah
- b. Fællan => feallan
- c. Herte => heorte
- d. Betwīh => betwioh
- e. Tihhian => tiohhian.

f.

The Writing of English

English uses an alphabetic system whereby individual sounds are represented by discrete symbols.

The History of Writing

It is tempting to count rock carvings and paintings as writing, however, we don't know what function these might have had. Archaeologists venture educated guesses, and we can infer some ideas from recent peoples' practices. Researchers have never been able to form a system of communication out of the "rock art". Moreover, there has never been a "missing link" from rock art to writing. All writing, right from the beginning, shows a consciousness toward language. Writing can therefore be defined as a conscious and complete system for the conveyance of ideas or sounds by marks on some suitable medium.

There are three types of writing systems: ideographic, logographic and phonographic. In ideographic writing, the sign is a picture of something, there is a one-to-one correspondence. Out of this system can arise the logographic system, in which a word becomes associated with the picture to the point that the sign functions as a word. Phonographic writing arises from the need to express words and sounds that cannot adequately be expressed by pictures. Phonographic writing can be seen as the graphic or visual counterpart of speech, because the signs in the written language correspond to sounds in the spoken one.

Phonographic writing can either be syllabic or alphabetic. The orthographic symbol in a writing system (syllabary) represents a nucleus (containing a vowel) and associated consonants. Alphabetic writing proves to be more economical because it represents the individual sounds of a language, which are much less numerous than possible sound combinations used to form syllables. These forms of writing are not mutually exclusive.

The Origin of the Alphabet

All the alphabets in the world descended from a single, common ancestor alphabet. The first known alphabet belonged to a group of Northwest Semitic speakers living in Palestine around 1800-1700 BCE. The alphabet was abstract and geometrical, containing 22 symbols that represented consonant sounds. Speakers reading would automatically supply the missing vowel. The alphabet changed over time as it was adopted by different groups of speakers. The Greeks borrowed the Semitic alphabet, and before it stabilised it was borrowed by the Etruscans. From the Etruscans it developed into several offshoots, two of which are the Latin and the runic alphabet. Runes came to England with the North Sea invaders. It was known by its first six letters as the Futhorc (f-u-th-o-r-c). Runic symbols are angular because they were used to be inscribed in stone or wood. The futhorc was used by the Germanic people until they acquired the Latin alphabet, which, after a number of changes, stabilised with 23 letters. The Latin alphabet provided the basic system used for writing OE. Two runic symbols remained part of the OE writing system. In the medieval system, the alphabet was further modified; once the letter w came into existence and the letters j and v separated from i and u respectively, the system stabilised into the 26 letters of the Latin alphabet we know today.

Chapter 5: Germanic and the Development of Old English

Proto-Germanic

Proto-Germanic can be reconstructed on the basis of its daughter-languages. It is thought that the Germanic speakers lived in southern Scandinavia, from southern Sweden through Denmark to northern Germany. They lived there until the second century BCE, after that they began to break up. Reasons could be overpopulation, infertile lands or pressure from other groups. Table 5.1 represents the different branches.

The ancestors of the modern Germanic languages are:

- Old High German (German, Yiddish, Swiss German)
- Old Saxon (Low German)
- Old Low Franconian (Dutch, Flemish, Afrikaans)
- Old Frisian (Frisian)
- Old English (English)
- Old Norse/Old Icelandic (Norwegian, Icelandic, Faroese, Swedish, Danish)

The oldest record of East Germanic is a translation of parts of the Greek New Testament into Gothic. East Germanic is now dead, but this gives us an accurate account of this language family.

Before the acquisition of the Latin alphabet existed the Germanic writing system called the Runic alphabet, which could not be used for long documents but rather for inscriptions (third to eighth century BCE).

Grammatical and Lexical Changes from PIE to Germanic

The Germanic branch of the Indo-European language family went through a specific set of changes. The verbal system of PIE is based on aspect, meaning an indication of whether an action is ongoing or completed. This can be shown in three ways:

- A present stem (ongoing)
- A past stem (completed)
- A perfect stem (resultant)

Germanic has evolved into a system of tense, showing past (preterit), present or future. The past and perfect stems of PIE formed the preterit tense of Germanic and the present stem remains the present tense. We use inflection for past or present and a periphrastic construction to indicate future.

Germanic formed the past by ablaut (changing the root vowel) which we can still see in strong verbs nowadays. Germanic innovated the dental suffix to indicate past, which is seen in weak verbs (weak and strong being Grimm's innovations). The dental suffix might derive from the grammaticalisation of the verb *do*. This has become the analogical (therefore dominant; it wants to make everything equal) means of making past forms.

PIE had five moods (action fact or non-fact): indicative (fact); imperative (command); optative (wish); injunctive (unreality); subjunctive (possibility) and Germanic has kept the first two and conflated the others into the subjunctive.

Voice shows whether the Subject is acting, acted upon, or both. PIE had middle voice inflection (like a reflexive) which was lost in Germanic.

Case indicates the function of a noun in a sentence through inflection. PIE had 8 cases which Germanic collapsed into 5: nominative; accusative; genitive; dative; instrumental.

An adjective without a modifier is strong or indefinite, whereas a adjective with a modifier (like a demonstrative or possessive) is weak or definite (Grimm again).

Finally, the vocabulary of Germanic is very different to PIE. There can be loan words and neologisms involved.

Phonological changes from PIE to Germanic

One of the two most important sound changes in the history of English is the First Sound Shift. One part of the First Sound Shift is Grimm's Law, the other part is Verner's Law.

Grimm's Law

Grimm's Law affected every stop consonant of PIE, therefore it is unconditioned. The shift occurred somewhere between 1000 and 400 BCE. The plausible reason for this shift is a substratum or a language mixture.

PIE had three sets of stop consonants: voiceless stops, voiced stops and voiced aspirated stops.

First, all voiceless stops became voiceless fricatives in Germanic:

*p > *f; due to borrowing we find both a Germanic form and non-Germanic cognates.

*t > *θ

*k > *x or *h (initial position); [x] sound is recorded in the written form [gh] of ModE.

*k^w > *x^w or *h^w (initial position);

These changes operate everywhere except when they follow [s]. A sequence of two fricatives is generally avoided.

Second, all voiced stops transform into voiceless stops in Germanic. All that happens is a change in voicing.

*b > *p

*d > *t

*g > *k

*g^w > *k^w

It is common in IE languages for labiovelars to be simplified to either a labial sound or a velar sound.

Third, the voiced aspirated stops in PIE become voiced fricatives and then later voiced stops in Germanic.

*bh > *β > *b

*dh > *ð > *d

*gh > *yogh > *g

*g^wh > *g, *w

Grimm's Law only affects the stop consonants of PIE, not fricative *s, liquids *l, *r, nasals *m, *n, and glides *w and *j.

Verner's Law

There are Germanic words which appear to violate the unconditionality of Grimm's Law.

Verner says:

If a PIE voiceless stop is in a voiced environment (sound does not begin and end a word and is not next to a voiceless sound), then it will appear in Germanic as a voiced fricative (or stop) when the PIE accent does not fall on the immediately preceding syllable (i.e. vowel). Verner observed that stress is associated with voicing.

Accent Shift and Ordering of Changes

PIE has a pitch accent, therefore stress can fall on any syllable depending on the word and the inflection. Germanic changed to a stress accent, depending on variations in loudness. The accent then always falls on the first or root syllable of a word. The sequence of changes is Grimm's Law-> Verner's Law-> Accent shift. Summary in table 5.4.

Vowel Changes

See figures pages 140, 141.

Second Sound Shift and Mechanisms of Change

The Second Sound Shift took place between the sixth and eighth century CE. It only affected [p, t, k], [d] and [θ], and it did not reach northern Germany. This is what distinguishes High German from Low German and English.

p > pf or ff (after vowels)

t > z = [ts] or ss (after vowels)

k > ch = [x] (after vowels)

d > t

θ > d

This was a consonantal drag chain, [p], [t] and [k] started in 500 CE, then [d] in 600 CE and then [θ]. In a push chain, a sound moves into another sound's space and forces it to find a new space. We can assume Grimm's Law was also a drag chain.

A Brief History of Anglo-Saxon England

The Old English history spans from 449 to 1066 CE. The natives were Celts, and resisted the Romans until they conquered Britain in 43 CE (with 40.000 men). Some buildings were built, but the Romans had difficulty with the weather, the landscape and the Picts and Scots. In 410 CE the Visigoths (East Germanic) attacked the Romans who retreated, leaving the population to the Scots and Picts.

The Germanic Settlement of England

The account of the Germanic settlement was written by Bede (finished in 731 CE). He gives the date of their coming as 449 CE (probably started arriving 20 years before that). First came the Jutes (Jutland/Danish peninsula), then the Saxons (Germany and Holland) and finally the Angles (Germany). Jutes settled in Kent, Isle of Wight and part of Hampshire; the Saxons in Wessex, Sussex and Essex; and the Angles in East Anglia, Mercia and Northumbria. Seven kingdoms formed (Anglo-Saxon Heptarchy): Kent, Wessex, Sussex, Essex, East Anglia, Mercia and Northumbria. By 800 4 kingdoms remained: Wessex, East Anglia, Mercia and Northumbria. Britain became known as Angli-land, land of the Angles. These people were all speakers of the West-Germanic dialect.

The Celts were banished to the fringes, Cornwall and Wales and Brittany in France.

The Christianisation of the Anglo-Saxons

Christians came from the North (Ireland) and the South (Rome). Scotland was converted in the sixth century, Northumbria in the seventh. St Augustine was dispatched to convert the English. This had quite an impact. They acquired the Roman alphabet, the Roman and Christian traditions of literacy and scholarship were imported and many Latin loan words entered the English language and native words acquired new meanings.

The Scandinavian Invasions of England

In the late eighth century a second wave of invasions was carried out by the Norwegians, Swedes and Danes. They began as plundering raids by the Vikings, then they started wintering and in 870 Northumbria, Mercia and East Anglia had all fallen to the Danes. When the Anglo-Saxons, led by King Alfred, were victorious over the Danes, they allotted them the Danelaw, an area north of the Thames running to Chester. There was still battle between the English and the Scandinavians, but it led to a lot of language contact. The North Germanic the Scandinavians spoke was very similar to the West Germanic of the Anglo-Saxons.

The Records of the Anglo-Saxons

The Dialects of Old English

There was Kentish (Kent and part of Hampshire); West Saxon (south of the Thames except for Cornwall); Mercian (between the Thames and Humber Rivers); Northumbrian (North of the Humber River).

The Written Records of Old English

King Egbert was victorious over the Mercian king, and established Wessex as the strongest kingdom, of which Winchester was its cultural centre. King Alfred fended off the Danes and encouraged literacy and learning. Therefore most books were in West Saxon, which came close to being the standard form of OE.

Ælfric, a monk, was the most influential writer in the normative version of OE, which emerged in the late 10th century. Another important guy was Wulfstan, who wrote religious and legal texts. The period after 600 produced many Christian texts, but perhaps the most important texts are the Anglo-Saxon Chronicles. King Alfred might have commissioned them, either way, they depicted all of the major events of each year. The last one keeps record of 1154. It is the perfect way of observing the language change. There is no pretension, no convolution by Latin, it is plain and native.

Chapter 6 The Sounds and Words of Old English

The Orthographic System of Old English

The Latin alphabet is one of the most important effects of Christianisation. The changes to the alphabet include the addition of the letter eth (ð and uppercase Ð) representing th and a special form of the letter g (ȝ) called yogh. The Anglo-Saxons added thorn þ and uppercase Þ, another way of representing th and wynn, representing w. Also ash æ or Æ.

The Phonological System of Old English

Consonants

OE has a phonemic writing system, each alphabetic symbol stands for a distinct sound, there are no silent letters. OE has double consonants, which are thought to be pronounced longer than single consonants.

[c] can represent [k] before back vowels (a,o,u), after back vowels at the end of a word, before consonants and when doubled. [c] represents [ç] before front vowels (i,e,æ,ea,eo), between front vowels, after front vowels at the end of a word. When it appears between a front and a back vowel, the [k] sound remains. These sounds can be found in mutually exclusive environments, therefore they are allophones. The change from [k] to [ç] is due to palatalisation. The front vowel causes a sound to move either forward or backward to become more palatal in articulation (velar to palatal or alveolar to palatal).

[g] can be represented as [g] initially and medially before back vowels, before consonants, when doubled, and in the sequence ng. This is another example of palatalisation, the sound moves forward to become the palatal glide [j] when [g] is before a front vowel, between front vowels and after front vowels at the end of a syllable. In all other circumstances, such as after and between back vowels or r and l, it represents the voiced velar fricative [yogh].

For fricatives their pronunciation depends on the phonetic environment. They can either be voiced or voiceless. These environments are predictable, therefore they are allophones. The [x] sound is a bit complex. It represents [h] at the beginning of a word before a vowel; [x] elsewhere except after a front vowel, when palatalisation occurs, making it the palatal fricative [ç].

Remember; [ŋg] is always pronounced fully. Then there are digraphs, which are spelled with two letters, but consist of a stop released into a fricative [ʃ] (spelled sc) or [ʒ] (spelled cg (dg is later English)).

Vowels

OE has both long and short vowels, which are phonemic because they distinguish meaning. OE long vowels were both tense and long, the short vowels were lax and short. Significant sound changes: [ɑ] split into [æ] and [ɑ]: [ɑ] is found before back vowels in the following syllables, before nasals, and before [w]; [æ] appears everywhere else. [ā] and [ɑi] merged as [ā]. See table 6.5. Additionally, 4 new vowels were added: [y but long], [y], [æə] and [ɛə].

Sound Changes

The most important process influencing vowel sounds in OE is umlaut, also known as mutation. In umlaut, the vowel moves either directly forward in the mouth [u > y, o > e, a > æ] or forward and up [a > æ > e], because the speaker anticipates a high palatal sound. The vowel comes to resemble an i or j (regressive assimilation). Once the vowel is fronted or raised, the i is either changed to e or lost, and the j is lost altogether except after r. This is important because a number of inflectional endings contained a i or a j which was then lost. We see umlaut in irregular noun plurals, comparatives, transitive verbs, verbs formed from nouns, verbs derived from adjectives and adjectives derived from nouns.

Umlaut occurred after palatalisation, therefore it is hard to ascertain the value of c or g in OE, because one would need to know the history of the word.

A second process affecting vowels is breaking. Certain vowels are diphthongised as they enter OE. The long and short æ, short e and long and short i. The change occurs when these vowels precede r + consonant, or l + consonant or h + or - consonant.

The Word Stock of the Anglo-Saxons

The Continuity of Germanic Vocabulary in English

The Germanic function words of OE have survived best in ModE. Nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs have been lost or replaced. The core vocabulary of Modern English is Germanic.

Borrowing in Old English

Loan words often followed a complex route of transmission.

Latin

Three separate periods of borrowing:

Borrowing from Latin:

3 phases:

- Germanic invaders who had picked it up from trading with Romans (trade words) (intimate, popular, familiar language)
- Celtic period (Romans > Celts > Anglo-Saxons), either direct or indirect borrowing (landscape words)
- Christianisation (learned, religious, scholarship words)
 - Early Latin borrowings (king Alfred) underwent various sound changes such as palatalisation.
 - Late Latin borrowings (late 10th century) did not undergo these changes.

Once borrowings are fully assimilated they can acquire native bits; a hybrid. (Latin presbyter -> OE prēost -> prēosthād -> priesthood).

Another way of borrowing is to translate words from another language into your own. Loan translations or calques.

Weaker forms of loan translations are loan renditions or creations, depending on how closely the original was translated. A creation is the idea taken from a foreign word, but does not correspond with the original.

Borrowings from Celtic:

- not many Celtic words were incorporated into Anglo-Saxon language
- Celtic was marginalised and Celts driven into exile
- Only a few elements in place names

Borrowings from Scandinavian

- most important source of borrowing
- Borrowed in late OE
- They were in close contact after the second wave of Scandinavian settlements

Scandinavian loans:

- replace the OE original (OE niman -> ON taka)
- OE and ON can exist side by side
 - ON kirkja (Northern English kirk)
 - OE cirice (Standard English church)
- OE and ON exist side by side but with change of meaning. Doublets.
 - *shirt* (OE scyrte) *skirt* (ON skyrta)
- OE word is retained (as a form) but adopts a Scandinavian meaning (OE with = against) (ON vith =with) with took with. Semantic loan!

Native OE or borrowed ON?

- no palatalisation of sk -> sj > borrowed
 - No palatalisation of g -> j > borrowed
 - No palatalisation of k -> tjs > borrowed
 - Tend to have a g after a back vowel (ON draga -> PDE drag. OE dragan -> PDE draw)
- Language contact between Scandinavian and OE was so close that they borrowed a pronoun: **they**.

Two ways for Anglo-Saxons to augment their vocabulary

- compounding
- Derivation

Compounding: characteristic of all Germanic languages; built from 2 or more roots; one-third of the language; no limitations

- literal compounds (Īsceald = icecold)
- Based on metaphor: kennings. Battlesweat = blood. Used in poetry. Synonymous expressions.

Derivation:

- OE had rich derivational system
- Suffixes and prefixes
- Even more productive in Middle English because of influx of latinate affixes
hāl-ig cyne-scipe
- prefixes change only the meaning of the root to which they are attached.

Stress

OE had a stress accent. So the stress in simple words fell on the first syllable; in prefixed nouns on the first syllable except be-, for- and ge-; prefixed verbs have stress on the root syllable and compounds have stress on the half and secondary stress on the second half.

Chapter 7 The Grammar of Old English

OE indicates grammatical meaning through regular or irregular inflections; a verb is conjugated, whereas nouns, pronouns, adjectives or demonstratives are declined.

The Nominal System

The Grammatical Categories of the Noun

There are different categories of meaning expressed by the inflections. Person tells us about the participants in a communicative situation (first, second or third person). Number is an indication of how many things are being talked about; OE has singular, dual and plural. Natural gender concerns the real-world sex of the Object referred to; OE has grammatical gender, which functions as a means of classifying nouns (masculine, feminine, neuter). Case indicates the role of a noun phrase in a sentence; there is nominative (subject); genitive (possessor); dative (indirect object); accusative (direct object) and instrumental (the means). In OE every noun, pronoun, demonstrative and adjective contains an indicator of case.

Pronouns

Core grammatical items tend to resist change, therefore the inflections of pronouns in OE is well-preserved in ModE. There are a few differences:

- OE has dual forms for 'we two' and 'you two'.
- OE has a form for distinguishing between 'one of you' and 'many of you'.
- OE has distinct forms for the accusative and the dative cases. These forms merge and take on the form of the dative.
- Third-person feminine nominative form (hēo) changes to she in ME.
- OE third-person neuter forms all contain a h; this was lost in unstressed positions and eventually gave way to the modern form it.

- OE third-person plural forms with initial h were replaced with Scandinavian forms beginning with th, borrowed in late Old English.

OE also had a full set of inflected interrogative pronouns, which look a lot like ModE's forms; only hw has been transposed to wh. As with personal pronouns, the dative eventually replaced the accusative in the feminine/masculine, and the other way around in neuter. To form relative clauses in OE, the form þe was used. (See table 7.1 & 7.2).

Nouns

OE has a number of noun classes, roughly correlated with gender, each with a distinct set of inflectional endings for number and case.

A-stem Nouns (60%; masculine/neuter); from this stem we have acquired our regular noun ending in Modern English:

- Our plural -s ending (-as > -es > -s); the vowel weakened and eventually got omitted (syncope).
- Our -'s ending derives from the genitive singular ending, also by syncope

O-stem Nouns (25%; feminine)

N-stem Nouns (masculine/feminine/neuter); weak declension (Grimm); this had a -an ending, which weakened to -en in Middle English; this competed with -es of the regular plural ending for a bit, but in the end lost. We still see oxen and children.

Root-Consonant stem Nouns (masculine/feminine); has umlaut in three places; some are still preserved in Modern English; most took the plural -s ending; some words have both umlaut and plural -s, this might be because the umlaut was thought to be part of the root.

Minor noun stems: z-stem (neuter) adds an -r in plural declension (children); r-stem (masculine/feminine) for family relationships. These got subsumed by the dominant a-stem pattern.

Demonstratives

Demonstratives have a deictic function, which means their meaning depends on the speech situation. They either function as adjectives modifying a noun or pronouns in place of a noun. In OE they indicate the number, as well as the gender and case of the noun they modify; that is how we distinguish the form of the noun. There are 2: 'that' and 'this'.

- Thone cyning -> cyning is masculine
- Thisse heortan -> heorte must be feminine

Our article *the* grew out of the nominative singular masculine of the first demonstrative, se (later þe). This happened in Middle English, together with a/an, which comes from ān, meaning one. In OE no article is required.

Adjectives

- inflected for number, gender and case. Also shows degree (positive, comparative (-ra > -er), superlative (-ost > -est))
- Two ways of declining the adjective
- Strong (PIE) or weak (PG)
- Strong if the noun phrase does not contain a modifier or follows form of 'to be'. Communicates indefinite reference.
- Weak if the noun phrase contains a modifier (e.g. Demonstrative). Communicates definite reference.
- None of these endings have survived in Modern English

A suppletive paradigm means different inflected forms come from different roots (good/better/best).

Adverbs

- can be made by adding an -e to an adjective. Deop -> deope
- Can also be made by adding lic+-e. Heofonlice
- This is our -ly ending
- -e was lost due to analogy

- form their comparatives with -or and superlatives with -ost or -est.

Agreement

Agreement is a process in which the grammatical information in one form is repeated in the other forms which accompany it. Agreement in Modern English is limited, but in OE it is widespread. Demonstratives are the most specific indicators of the gender of the noun they modify. Because of agreement, the word order is freer. We do find that natural gender is starting to replace grammatical gender.

Case Usage

Besides the standard functions (nominative (subject); accusative (DO); genitive (possessor); dative (IO); instrumental (manner/means)), there are some additional functions. Page 202.

There is the difference in subjective genitive (John's murder; John's murdered someone) and objective genitive (John's murder; someone's murdered John). Genitive of measure expresses measurement (six foot tall; singular, lost the old genitive ending). Partitive genitive expresses the whole in respect to a part (two of the members). Instrumental case is roughly translatable by 'with' in ModE.

The Verbal System

OE has 4 principal parts for the strong verb: the infinitive; first/third-person singular preterit indicative (or past singular); second-person singular and plural preterit (past plural) and past participle.

Weak verbs

- Inherited from Germanic
- Characterised by the dental suffix; makes the verb causative in meaning.
- Also distinguishing mark of the past participle the ge- prefix.
- Umlaut.
- Comes after root but before personal ending
- Three classes:
 - -ede
 - -ode
 - Habban, libban, hycgan, secgan

Strong verbs (page 209)

- inherited from PIE
- System streamlined into OE into 7 classes
- Characteristics: ablaut, past participle and -en
- Through time there has been a general attrition toward weak verbs.

Preterit-Present verbs

- small but important group
- Preterits came to be felt as presents
- New preterit had to be invented
- With a dental suffix
- Descendants of old preterit-present verbs are our modals

Anomalous Verbs

- be, do, go and will
- Be and go are suppletive verbs
- Will has joined the modals

Grammatical Categories of the Verb

Verbs show first, second and third person in the singular and generic in the plural. Because a verb agrees with the subject, the subject are often omitted. OE has two tenses: present and preterit. Present tense may express habitual action, ongoing action or future

action. Indicative is the mood of fact, imperative a mood of non-fact used in making commands (has an inflection), subjunctive also a mood of non-fact.

Inflectional Endings of the Verb

Inflectional endings differ for the different classes of the verb (strong, weak I, and weak II). Table 7.15. In preterit tense for weak classes the dental suffix shows up again. In strong verbs, preterit is shown by vowel alternation. The imperative in OE distinguishes between singular and plural, unlike ModE.

Syntax

Verbal Periphrases

Grammatical categories other than tense and mood are expressed by periphrastic forms.

1. The passive is expressed by a verbal phrase: a finite form of be or weorðan + a past participle + a prepositional phrase naming the agent (fram/from or purh). Or with *man* 'one' and an active verb.
2. Perfect periphrase: finite form of have or agan ('own) + a past participle (transitive) or a finite form of be or weorðan if the participle is intransitive.
3. In place of the progressive or the future, OE uses a simple present tense.
4. OE has impersonal verbs, which in ModE need to be supplied with an it subject or it must be given a personal subject.

Word Order

There is an unmarked word order in OE for declarative sentences. The standard is SVO, but there are remnants of SOV.

Main clauses with an object pronoun have SOV; in negative clauses the negative is placed at the beginning of the clause or after the subject and before the verb. The negative particle can be prefixed to the verb, and they used double negation.

Clauses with an adverb of time or place, have that at the beginning, same goes for the interrogative pronoun. The auxiliary is not obligatory. Subordinate conjunctions also go at the beginning of the sentence and in imperatives the verb goes at the beginning.

Chapter 8 The Rise of Middle English: Words and Sounds

French and English in Medieval England

The single most important event affecting linguistic development is the conquest of England in 1066, by the Duke of Normandy. Edward the Confessor assumed kingship in 1042. He died in 1066, leaving no heir. Harold, son of one of Edward's advisors, took the throne and became Harold II. Both King Harold of Norway and Duke William of Normandy opposed this and attacked. Harold of Norway was defeated, but the Conqueror beat King Harold's troops at the Battle of Hastings, killing Harold in the process (arrow through the eye). (Norman Conquest is portrayed on the Bayeux Tapestry).

The Normans were actually Scandinavians who had settled in France in the ninth and tenth century, they had assimilated to the French culture (unlike the Scandinavians in northern England).

The Establishment of French

William replaced most of the English nobility with Normans; for a while there were close connections between England and France. For about 200 years, the rulers of England were mainly French speakers. It seems they couldn't really be bothered with learning the language. Nevertheless 90% of the population continued speaking English, which was allowed. This two-level situation is known as a diglossic effect. For business purposes some bilingual speakers existed (think knights, merchants etc.).

There were three languages in use: Latin (for official stuff); French (for nobles and less official writings); and English (mainly spoken). Spoken languages tend to change much faster than written languages, thus that was one of the strongest forces of change.

Also, no standard dialect existed, which made for grammatical change. Later on, the Norman dialect of French the rulers of England spoke became stigmatised. Central French was found superior.

The Re-establishment of English

King John lost control of Normandy to King Philip in 1204; thus the nobles were forced to declare their allegiance. A second influx of French nobles into the court caused resentment due to favouritism; and slowly Central French became acquired as a second language, leaving Anglo-Norman French behind. The increasingly nationalistic population did not like French anymore. Mid-fourteenth century, the Hundred Years War broke out between England and France, causing a bigger rift than ever. The Black Death swept through England, killing up to 40% of the population, mostly labourers. As the political power and social status of English speakers increased, so did the status of their language. It became a sign of solidarity. The restoration of English was complete by the reign of Henry V (1413 - 1422).

The Word Stock of Middle English

Middle English looks very different from Old English. Most striking is the word stock.

French Influence

Before 1250 borrowings were mostly cultural. About 45% of French loan words entered the language between 1250 and 1400; a period which saw greatest bilingualism. The words were a wide variety of everyday objects and concept, as well as more specialised items. Words were borrowed from both Norman French and Central French. The way to distinguish between the two is to look at phonetic differences. For example [k] before a in NF remains [k], whereas in CF it is [ç]. Likewise, Latin [w] appears as [w] in NF and as [g] in CF.

Sound changes allow us to date when a word was borrowed. Such as the loss of [s] in French caused English to have several doublets borrowed before and after the shift. Position of stress also indicates how long a word has been borrowed; in French stress falls on a syllable other than the first, in English either on the first or the root syllable. The longer words exist in a language, the more likely they are to be assimilated.

Latin Influence

Words borrowed from this period constitute a fourth borrowing. We assume the more learned words come directly from Latin. These also tend to date from a later period (fifteenth century in particular); writers used extremely artificial words (aureate 'gilded' terms). Most of these did not survive in ModE. A consequence of borrowing from French and Latin was the creation of two or three levels of synonyms. The English tends to be colloquial, French literary and Latin learned.

The Written Records of Middle English

ME existed in a number of regional dialects: Northern, spoken north of the Humber (corresponds to OE Northumbrian); West Midland and East Midland accent, spoken in the region between the Humber and the Thames (correspond to OE Mercian); Kentish, spoken in Kent and part of Sussex (OE Kentish); and Southwestern, spoken in the area south of the Thames (OE West-Saxon). The Northern dialect is the most innovative; the Southern accent most conservative. Only at the very end of the ME period an attempt at a unified standard emerges. There was some speculation about the diversity of the dialects. John of Trevisa ascribes it to the settlement patterns of the Germanic tribes and mingling with the Scandinavians and the Normans. He also speaks of the strange dialect of the North, attributing it to the distance from the political centre of power in the south. The Northern dialect was stigmatised whereas the Southern dialect carried prestige.

Middle English Literature

There are several periods in ME literature:

1. Between 1100 and 1250, literature was primarily religious.
2. Between 1250 and 1350, both religious and secular literature was produced.
3. Between 1350 and 1400, the great writers were at work, and poets began to use rhymed metrical verse and revived the native alliterative verse. (think Chaucer, the *Gawain* poet)
4. Between 1400 and 1500, the literature was mainly derivative of the fourteenth century works. Someone who marks the end of the Middle English period is sir Thomas Malory.

Orthographic Changes

French scribes introduced a few changes into English spelling. The important ones are wynn (written as uu or w), eth ð or þ (th), c as [k] or as [ç]. H came to indicate the fricative qualities of s, t, c and w. These are all spelling changes, not sound changes. See table 8.2.

Early loans:

- affricates /tsj/ and /dzj/
- St or sp
- English stress pattern (1st syllable)

Late loans:

- fricatives /sj/ or /zj/
- Lost the s
- French stress pattern (2nd syllable)

Latin or French loans?

- French direct descendent from Latin
- Depends when word was borrowed
- Separate borrowing in Middle Ages from Latin; academic

Upshot of borrowing:

- synonyms
- Original English; colloquial
 - French: formal/literary
 - Latin: more learned

Consonant Changes

In the consonant inventory of ME there was an increase in the number of distinctive sounds. This happened through phonemicisation. [s] and [z], [f] and [v], and [ð] and [ð̥] were all allophones, but for several reason one could not rely on environment anymore.

- words were borrowed from French with initial [z] and [v]
- Loss of final -e caused [z], [v] and [ð̥] to occur in final position.
- Simplification of the pronunciation of the double consonants [ff, ss, ðð > f, s, ð] led to the voiceless variants in medial position.
- [ð] in initial position in unstressed words became voiced to [ð̥].

One change had very important consequences for ME; the loss of the unstressed final n. This absolutely influenced inflections. See table 8.3 for consonant changes.

Vowel Changes

Qualitative Changes

- OE long /a/ becomes long /ɔ/ (spelled o or oo)
- OE /o/ did not change

Loot /lu:t/

Look /lʊk/

Blood /blʌd/ All from OE long o

Moat /məʊt/

Boat /bəʊt/

Road /rəʊd/ All from OE long o

OE diphthongs: breaking of a number of vowels + r or l + consonant

Diphthongs became monophthongs again

New diphthongs arrive (from French)

Vocalisation of /w/ /j/ and /yogh/

Development of glide before /x/ (which stands for h for some reason)

Quantitative Changes

Results of changes in stress

French compared to English

ME both lengthening and shortening processes

Some lengthening already happening in OE; before a nasal or a liquid plus stop (-nd, -mb, -rd, -ld).

Short stressed vowel in an open syllable (= ends in a vowel) of a two-syllable word is lengthened. First affects a, æ, e, o, and then i and u. This led to some irregularities between singular and plural forms, which were removed by analogy.

3 shortening processes

- Unstressed long vowels become shortened
- Stressed long vowels before a consonant cluster
- Stressed long vowels before two or more unstressed syllables (this accounts for a lot of irregularities)

Chapter 9 The Grammar of Middle English and Rise of a Written Standard

Vowel Reduction and Its Effects

Vowel reduction is the most important sound change we find in ME. Reduction is the centralisation and laxing of vowels to schwa in many syllables other than those with primary stress. Verbal prefixes and some nominal prefixes; every syllable other than the first in a polysyllabic word; unstressed grammatical words; all inflectional are all unstressed in Germanic. Another important factor is analogy. Both reduction and analogy caused 'inflection levelling'.

There is no specific reason for reduction to take place, but there is a correlation between stressed sequences and higher or more fronted vowels and between unstressed sequences and lower or more centralised vowels.

Inflection levelling happened in two stages:

1. The merger of a, o, and u with e and their reduction to schwa
2. The silencing of the final e's and loss of medial e's.

Tables 9.1 and 9.2 show the effect of reduction on OE and ME forms and inflections.

The loss of final n is morphologically conditioned; it is retained in part participles, weak noun plurals and verb plurals.

First the final -e's went, and, by analogy, then all the other inflectional endings consisting of a vowel, and those that had a final -n before, went. (sometimes a poet would add an -e for the metre. This is called an inorganic e). Medial e's went next. Most everywhere the e's disappeared, except after sibilants (kept -es ending); or past participles after [t,d]; in -er and -est; and in -en. Analogy is a conscious cause for loss of inflections, it spreads and removes all anomalies.

Grammatical Developments in Middle English

Adjectives

Adjectives probably show greatest change in their inflectional system from OE to ME. The only inflectional endings left in ME after reduction and analogy are \emptyset in the singular and -e in the plural. In short, adjectives in ME are still marked for number, but not for case or gender. Furthermore, only monosyllabic adjectives ending in a consonant are inflected, all the others are not. After the thirteenth century all inflection was lost when the final e's were lost.

Superlatives and comparatives have not changed as much. They kept their -er and -est endings; the umlauted forms are generally retained and we find doubling of the last consonant of the root in order to shorten the root vowel. This is later eliminated by analogy. Comparisons using most and more are becoming more common, which may have been reinforced by similar phrases in French and Latin. Common in ME was the absolute superlative, consisting of an intensifying adverb with the adjective in the positive degree (e.g. Ful good)

Nouns

The inflectional system of OE was reduced to either no ending, or -es, or -e. (Table 9.4) The e's later disappeared, as they do. The singular genitive -(e)s became analogical for all noun classes. A few remnant forms stayed behind, such as s-less genitives.

The spread of the analogical plural marker -(e)s was slowed because of a rival plural marker -en. In the end -(e)s won.

Personal Pronouns

These became increasingly important, due to the loss of personal inflections on the verb. They became obligatory in ME.

- Three distinct case forms: nominative, objective and genitive.
- Loss of dual number was complete by early ME.
- Variant forms of the third-person singular feminine pronoun: he/ho (Southern dialect), scho (Northern) and finally sche/she (East Midlands) which became the source of the ModE she.
- Scandinavian third-person plural th-forms appear.
- Unstressed variant of the first-person singular developed (i or y). It also grew dominant during the ME period.
- Third-person singular neuter is his in ME, its is a later development.
- Besides min and thin, mi and thi are also found (depends on whether a word starts with a vowel or a consonant). To other genitive forms an -s is added.

Demonstrative Pronouns

Under the influence of other th-demonstratives, se, the OE masculine singular nominative of the 'that' demonstrative develops into the and becomes indeclinable. It is not deictic anymore, but a definite article. Now the use of articles is obligatory.

Interrogative Pronouns

Apart from a spelling change hw > wh, and some phonetic changes, interrogative pronouns changed little in ME. The most common relative pronoun in ME was 'that', as it is in ModE now. A common occurrence in ME is a compound relative pronoun. (who that, whom that, whose that etc.)

Loss of Grammatical Gender

There are inherent difficulties between natural and grammatical gender, and eventually natural gender won. Phonetic weakening also contributed to the loss of grammatical gender; it prompted the collapse of noun classes (which were based on gender); the loss of gender distinctions in adjectives and the reduction of demonstratives. Externally, the

dual gender system of French also caused confusion for English speakers; French synonyms to English words would not always have the same gender.

Verb Classes

The seven strong verb classes remained intact, affected only by vowel shifts and open syllable lengthening. (Table 9.7) Ablaut still works the same way, although analogy is working to regularise things. The tendency of strong forms to take weak endings is increasing. There are two classes of weak verbs left, the anomalous verbs remain irregular; preterit-present are increasingly being used as auxiliary verbs; impersonal verbs remain quite common in ME.

Inflectional Endings

Different dialects used different endings. The innovative Northern dialect adopted -es everywhere but the first-person singular; the Midlands dialect used both the Northern and the OE ending in third-person singular; and the conservative Southern dialect stayed closed to OE endings.

Syntax

Typical of the shift from a synthetic to an analytic language, ME showed an increased use of periphrasis and the development of a more fixed word order.

Periphrasis

Inflected nouns gave way to constructions that used prepositions, or to a particular word order. The word order became more fixedly SVO. Dative case was no longer marked, so texts show either use of the to-dative or the positioning of the indirect object after the verb and before the DO. The of-genitive became increasingly common, especially to express the subjective, objective and partitive genitive. Weorðan was lost as an auxiliary, leaving only be. Agents are introduced by prepositions; there is a dramatic increase of the use of the perfect. Future (expressed by will and shall), progressive and modal subjunctive develop during the ME period. Preterit-present verbs became more important for expressing non-fact, functioning as auxiliaries in combination with the infinitive.

Word Order in Main Clauses

Word order is SVO, more fixed than in OE but more flexible than in ModE. We find some remnant OV order with object pronouns and impersonal verbs (with which a dummy it is starting to appear).

Word Order in Negative Clauses

In early ME ne or na was placed before the verb, or contracted with it. In late ME it was common to use a reinforcing particle nat, after the verb or auxiliary. This is an emphatic marker. By mid-fourteenth century the pre-verbal negative was omitted.

Inverted Word Order and Questions

We find adverb + verb + subject. Inversion happens when the sentence begins with an adverb of time, or with a directional adverb or when an object is moved to the beginning of a sentence for emphasis. This is a tendency rather than a rule. Same order goes for questions; note that an auxiliary verb is not obligatory.

Word Order in Subordinate Clauses

That is generally SVO, sometimes a verb final order can still be found.

Word Order in Imperative Sentences

Imperative sentences begin with the verb, as they did in OE and still do in ModE.

Change from Synthetic to Analytic

The inflections started disappearing first, as a result of phonetic change (i.e. Vowel reduction in unstressed syllables). There are different views on the exact order; it could be a drag chain or a push chain. The drag chain is problematic because that suggests there was a time when neither inflections, nor periphrastic constructions were available. In a

push chain it would mean that the inflections were no longer functional because periphrastic constructions were available. M.L. Samuels suggests there were 4 stages of shift: (1) pure inflections (pre-OE) (2) weakening of inflections (OE) (3) ambiguity created by levelled inflections prompted speakers to rely on periphrases; use of reduced inflections (late OE/early ME) (4) inflections have been driven out; fixed word order and periphrases (late ME/EModE). This is a conservative change, because the same grammatical distinctions are expressed, even though different means are used. However, there were some innovative bits: loss of dual number, grammatical gender, noun classes and two declensions of the adjective; gain of an article system and obligatory subject place holders (it and there).

Middle English as a Creole?

Some people propose that Middle English is a hybrid language, a creole of French and English, whose phonology and syntax are Germanic but whose lexicon is French. The simplification of the grammar resulted from interference between French and English inflections; a result of the creolisation is the extensive borrowing of vocabulary from French. This is not widely accepted. Most of these changes were already underway in OE; French did not make a difference in structure, but mainly vocabulary; the effects on English phonology were minimal. What happened between English and French was intensive language contact only.

The Rise of a Standard Dialect

In 1476, William Caxton brought the printing press to England. This allowed for the spread of books throughout England, printed in a mutually intelligible dialect and spelling. The Protestant Reformation also created the need for a standard dialect; they were translating the Bible for people who could not read Latin. A sense of patriotism after the Hundred Years war also called for a national language. It was strongly suggested that the East Midlands dialect, especially that of London, became the standard. London was politically, commercially, socially and intellectually strong. A standard is not usually one dialect, but a compromise dialect, comprised of linguistic elements from different areas and widely intelligible. It does not have extreme features and is associated with prestige. Leith identifies 4 stages in the process of standardisation: (1) selection of a dialect (2) acceptance of the dialect (3) elaboration of the dialect's functions (4) fixing of the dialect in dictionaries and grammars. Standard English probably consists of the early London dialect (mainly Essex features); a later London dialect (incorporating dialects from immigrant groups); Central Midlands variety (used by Bible-distributors); and the Chancery standard, used in state documents.

Chapter 10 The Sounds and Inflections of Early Modern English

The great writer of this period is William Shakespeare (1564 - 1616), but the King James Bible also had quite the influence. There was an expansion of literacy in this period, especially to the lower classes.

The Great Vowel Shift

Nature of the Shift

The Great Vowel Shift was unconditioned; all long or lengthened (stressed) vowels were raised in articulation or, if already high vowels, were diphthongised. It is uncertain whether the shift was a drag chain or a push chain. Traditionally it has been described as the former; [ī] and [ū] were first to change, when these were diphthongised, there were gaps at the top of the vowel grid which the lower vowels could take up. More recently a different scenario has been described; [ē] and perhaps [ō] were first to change, as they were raised they set in motion simultaneously a drag chain and a push chain. Its causes were probably inherent to the language; similar vowel shifts occurred in other Low West Germanic languages and to a lesser extent in High German. What we do know is that it all happened

together, because otherwise there would have been mergers. The changes probably began in the fifteenth century in southern England, but the entire thing stretched over the fifteenth, sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. We cannot rely on orthography, because spelling has been fixed for a long time, and did not register the sound changes. Like all sound changes, the Shift was incomplete.

Details of the Shift

(Table 10.1) The diphthongisation of the high vowels goes as follows: a schwa glide developed in the fifteenth century before the vowel, producing the rising diphthongs [əi] and [əʊ], which later transformed into falling diphthongs at which point the schwa was replaced with [a], creating [ai] and [aʊ].

The shift of [ɔ̄] to [ō] and of [ō] to [ū] occurred in the sixteenth century. Since EModE, the pure [o] has diphthongised to [oʊ] for most speakers. Two changes have affected the [u] in some words: it has been lax to [ʊ], or further centralised and unrounded to [ə] in some words. The tense vowel is present especially in the presence of labials.

Middle English [ā] went forward and up; it shifted to [ǣ] by 1500, then to [ɛ̄] by 1600 and finally to [ē] by 1700.

The pure [e] is diphthongised to [ei].

ME [ē] shifted very early to [i] (it may have been the first long vowel to shift).

ME [ē] became [ē̄] in the sixteenth century, then later it became [ei] or [i].

Two important results of the Great Vowel Shift:

1. It eliminated the distinction between long and short vowels that had characterised both the OE and the ME phonological systems. Long vowels were either diphthongs or tense vowels, and the short vowels were lax. Thus it went from distinction of quantity to distinction of quality. ModE does have long and short vowels, but it is merely an allophonic difference.
2. The Great Vowel Shift further confused English spelling. Spelling did not change to record the new pronunciations. The spelling we now use is the one for unshifted vowels.

Changes in the Short Vowels and Diphthongs

The short vowels of ME have remained stable (figure 10.2).

Lots of stuff happened, but fortunately we don't need the specifics, that's for next year.

Spelling-pronunciation is when the word is pronounced the way it is written rather than the way it is conventionally pronounced. Some people now pronounce the l in words which lost the l in speech, but kept it in writing.

As for diphthongs, a few smoothed/monophthongised. Some resulting monophthong then merged with other monophthongs. Note that diphthongs are not smoothed after labials or velars or word initially.

Changes in Consonants

Early Modern English sees the addition of [ŋ] and [ʒ] and the loss of [x] and [ç]; all that remains of that is the unpronounced gh. To compensate for the loss of [ç], the preceding monophthong lengthened, making it subject to the effects of the GVS. A variant of [x] was the labiodental fricative [f], which can be found in words such as rough. The [f] shortened the preceding vowel. By analogy, some words acquired gh in their spelling (e.g. haughty), this is called unetymological respelling.

Consonant clusters were simplified; liquids were lost ([r]); the [w] glide in [wr] sequences. Certain sound combinations, such as [gn] or [mb] became impossible, where others like [nds] remained possible at certain points. These are called phonotactic constraints. Unetymological respellings have added b's where there weren't b's before. A

different phenomenon is the excrescent d, which was added to words such as sound or horehound. This changed spelling as well as pronunciation.

An important simplification occurred in the cluster [ŋg]; in stressed syllables at the end of words this cluster was simplified to [ŋ], but in the middle of words [g] was retained. Because [ŋ] can occur in the same environments as [n], they are no longer allophones, but separate phonemes. When a derivational suffix is added to a root ending in -ng it is pronounced just [ŋ], when the -er is part of the word itself, the [g] is pronounced.

In Early Modern English the -in pronunciation is standard, now it is stigmatised. Palatalisation became more widespread in Modern English, affecting a greater number of consonants; alveolar stops and fricatives became alveopalatal affricates and fricatives in combination with a following palatal glide. Palatalisation can occur in the middle of a word, between a stressed syllable and an unstressed one, but dialectal variation exists. It can also occur between words. It also added the allophone [ʒ] to the language. The existence in French as well as its occurrence in French borrowings led to its becoming a full-fledged English phoneme.

Renaissance Respellings

Interest in the Greek and Latin origins of words led to respellings of borrowed words to make them correspond more closely to their etymology. Sometimes these were mistaken. The h was systematically restored to words which seemed liked they needed one. This was occasionally unetymological. H was also inserted where a word came from a Greek word beginning with th. Words with f were spelled with ph if they derived from Greek. Table 10.2 gives a variety of examples.

Changes in Nominal Inflected Forms

There was a further loss of inflections; so new grammatical constructions were needed.

Nouns

There were still some endingless genitives floating around in EModE. Three new developments in the marking of genitive:

1. The his-genitive. An uninflected noun followed by a third-person genitive pronoun (e.g. The count his gallies). Over time, people started to regard the inherited -s genitive as a reduced form of his. That is reflected in the apostrophe found in all noun possessives.
2. The group genitive. The genitive inflection is attached to the last element of the group rather than to the head noun or pronoun (e.g. The man in the back's question). In ME and OE the genitive ending would have been attached to the head of the group. No idea where it came from, but the agreement is that it was from an 'enclitic' (like 'll or 'd).
3. The double genitive. Contains both an inflected genitive and a periphrastic genitive with of (e.g. A friend of my sister's).

Demonstratives and Articles

In EModE the indefinite article marks the first mention of a referent, and the definite article refers to something already mentioned or know (like in PDE). Sometimes it is omitted, or has the meaning 'one'. Demonstratives are being used with possessives (this your perfectness), which does not happen in PDE anymore.

Personal Pronouns

By the end of the medieval period, there was no distinction left between direct and indirect objects. In EModE, we can observe the following changes:

- my and mine were used indiscriminately, no matter if it was followed by a vowel or not. By 1700 it was decided my was to be used before the noun and mine following a preposition or the verb to be.
- Development of royal we (king/queen is embodiment of the community) and authorial we (to include the readers).

- Honorifics. Second-person singular (thou) and plural (you) forms began to be used to make social distinctions. (mark of politeness). You gradually became the neutral form of address.
- In the early stages of EModE, there was a clear distinction between second-person nominative (ye) and second-person objective (you). These forms were often confused and in the end ye was lost.
- It without h became standard by about 1600. Sometimes we find a reduced version: 't. His is also about, but slowly loses to its in 1598.

Interrogative and Relative Pronouns

Who, whom, what, whose, why, when, where, which and whether were all inherited from Old and Middle English. Whether was used then as 'which of two' and what had a greater range of meaning: 'why' and 'who' as well as 'what'. EModE also used wherein, wherefore, whereof, whereon and whereupon, this can still be found in legal documents.

The relative pronoun in OE was *pe*; in ME it's *that*, but it also used *who*, *what*, and *what* as indefinite relatives (today they contain *-ever*). In EModE these started to be used as regular relatives as well.

1. Which with animate nouns and inanimate nouns. (PDE it's just inanimate)
2. Who with animate noun and inanimate nouns. (PDE just animate)
3. That in restrictive and unrestrictive relative clauses. (PDE just restrictive)
4. That became more colloquial (e.g. The book that I read)
5. Use of the *which*, *that which* and *as* as relative pronouns.
6. Compound relatives forms such as *who(m)*, *what*, *which*, or *whose plus that* or *so*.
7. Relative pronouns may be omitted.

Case Usage

The only forms showing distinction between a nominative and objective case are *who* and *whom* and most of the personal pronouns (*I*, *we*, *she*, *he*, *they* vs *me*, *us*, *her*, *him*, *them*).

There were a number of differences:

1. Tendency to use nominative after *and* or *but*.
2. Objective case found after *as* or *than*.
3. Objective case in complement of *be* (PDE only allows nominative).
4. *Who* is used where we would use *whom*.

In spoken English we often violate the prescribed rules of the eighteenth century.

Changes in Verbal Inflected Forms

Verb Classes

Erosion of the seven classes of verbs. We now call strong verbs irregular.

1. Many strong verb became weak by analogy.
2. Distinction between singular and plural past in the strong verb was eliminated. In OE and ME there was an ablaut difference between singular and plural past. This was reduced by generalising the vowel of the singular past; generalising the vowel of the plural past; and using the vowel of the past participle in the past.
3. Verner's law alternation was removed (*s/r* alternation).
4. Certain strong past participles were retained as adjectives.
5. A few weak verbs became strong by analogy. (This has been reversed in some cases; borrowed Scandinavian verbs, if strong there, remain strong)

The transition is a gradual process, thus many different forms can be found in sixteenth and seventeenth century texts.

The anomalous verbs; the forms of *be* developed by analogy; the suppletive past of *go* was replaced with *went*.

Inflectional Endings

The -e of the first-person singular was lost before the end of the ME period. Second-person singular -est was also lost when thou fell in disuse. Third-person singular had the norm -es by the beginning of the seventeenth century. A zero ending is characteristic of the plural form from early in the modern period. The distinctive ending in the preterit in second-person singular -est was also lost as thou was lost. Present participle ending -ing remained; -ind and -and died out. The -e(n) ending of the infinitive had disappeared completely by the end of the ME period.

Early Modern English Verbal Constructions and Eighteenth-Century Prescriptivism

Early Modern English Syntax

EModE saw the loss of reflexive and impersonal verbs. In PDE, if there is a reflexive verb, it appears in a form with -self. Compound pronouns with -self also began to appear in these constructions. Impersonal verbs developed a dummy it subject (e.g. it seems to me) and slowly they ceased to be impersonal. The transition of impersonal to personal verb has been described as reanalysis: speakers interpreted the objective noun or pronoun as the personal subject of the verb.

There was a strong tendency in EModE to use intransitive verbs as if they were transitive.

The Subjunctive and the Modal Auxiliaries

There was a loss of the inflected subjunctive (but it was still used in subordinate clauses instead of the indicative). This was accompanied by the rise in importance of the modal auxiliaries (continuation of the preterit-present forms). They expressed all the notions originally expressed by the subjunctive: possibility, probability, obligation and so on.

Verbal Periphrases

Passive Constructions

The only change has been the preposition used to mark the agent of the passive verb: OE uses þurh, fram and mid; ME uses through and from as well as of, with and by; EModE shows by, of and with and from more sporadically. By won.

The Perfect

In ME have appears with transitive verbs and be with intransitive verbs. The range of verbs using be narrowed; EModE uses be with verbs of motion and verbs denoting a change of state but have was gradually replacing be as the auxiliary of the perfect. (might have to do with the overlap of be with the passives)

Verb phrases became more complex in the ME period, creating the possibility to combine the perfect and the passive as well as the perfect and the progressive along with modal auxiliaries.

The Progressive

The progressive is rare in OE and became common toward the end of ME. It might derive from the OE construction with be and the present participle (ending in -ende) or from the OE construction with be followed by the preposition on and a gerund (verbal noun ending in -ung). Scholars now believe the progressive owes its form to both and was reinforced by similar constructions in French and in Celtic.

The Progressive Plus Passive

This is not found in EModE; instead, the simple progressive is used, passive must be interpreted from context. In EModE there might have been a restriction on two auxiliary be's in one sentence, which could be an explanation for why it did not occur.

Future Constructions

Future using shall and will developed in ME. They first indicated obligation and volition, now they just have a pure predictive meaning.

Do

The most important structural change was the development of the dummy do. Do-support happens when do is inserted as a lexically empty placeholder. Its origin is uncertain, there are two main sources:

1. A causative verb do meaning 'cause' or 'make'.
2. A vicarious or substitute do used in place of another verb.

It first appears in ME, but mainly restricted to the Southern and West Midlands dialect occurring mostly in poetry. In EModE it became extremely common in non-poetic writing, court trials and sermons. It seemed a matter of stylistic variation. The strikingly different use was its occurrence in non-emphatic affirmative declarative sentences; this was later lost, perhaps by dictate of the prescriptivists. Over the course of the seventeenth century the use of do became regulated, confined to emphatic sentences, negative sentences (incl. questions and imperatives), and interrogative sentences.

Word Order

SVO word order was established, but inverted word order was possible after a greater number of initial adverbs or in conditional clauses. In PDE these would be translated with addition of if. Sometimes in EModE the verb moves to the end of the subordinate clause; the auxiliary may be split around an object or an object may be moved to the front of the clause for emphasis.

The Rise of Prescriptivism

In the period immediately following EModE, most change came from linguistic engineering. In the eighteenth century arose a powerful concern for the state of the language, leading to publication of over 200 grammars of English.

Renaissance Concerns about the Language

Before the eighteenth century concerns focussed on spelling reform and vocabulary enrichment. Starting in the sixteenth century, scholars noticed the disparity between spelling and sound after the GVS; radical revisions were suggested but they were discarded because they departed so far from the standard; Richard Mulcaster suggested a consistent spelling for every word and got his way, mostly. Spelling in printed texts became fixed by about the mid-seventeenth century.

There was also a debate between people who wanted to enlarge the vocabulary (by borrowings from Latin and Greek) and those who thought the monosyllabic words of Germanic were sufficient to express the writer's meaning. They wanted to revive archaic words; in the end, innovation won and an immense number of Latin words were borrowed. Some thought these words were incredibly pedantic and ridiculed them as 'inkhorn terms'. In the end, a large number was retained, but a lot was also dropped.

Social, Linguistic, and Philosophical Reasons for Prescriptivism

It was matters of usage and grammar that concerned society in the eighteenth century. The Industrial Revolution brought social mobility; the early grammars were written for the upper class to help them maintain social distance; the later grammars were written for the lower class speakers who wanted to rise socially. The grammars seemed based on the common assumption that language mattered and that people should be given guidance.

The eighteenth century was the Age of Reason, and people believed that language, like everything else, ought to be logical, orderly and symmetrical.

Important Prescriptive Grammarians of the Eighteenth Century

The prescriptive grammarians were self-appointed experts, people of privilege and power and that linguistic authority linked to social hierarchy. Influential was Lowth, whose

approach is conservative and generally prescriptive. Samuel Johnson was undoubtedly the supreme authority; in the US the leading figure was Noah Webster.

Aims of the Eighteenth-Century Grammarians

Ascertainment

The grammarians thought English was neglected and imperfect; they set out to give it a grammar. They realised that change endangers the integrity of language and looked back nostalgically to an earlier Golden Age. They undertook the process of ascertainment, which entailed ridding the English language of doubts and uncertainties. First, they wished to standardise the language, codify the rules, settle disputed points and establish a standard of good usage. Second, they wanted to refine the language, remove supposed defects and common errors, halt certain bad tendencies, and introduce improvements if necessary. Finally, they wanted to fix the language permanently in the desired form and prevent further changes.

An Academy

For about 50 years, it was believed that the best way to achieve ascertainment was to establish an academy to regulate the language, based on examples in France and Italy. The Academy idea never took off; France's academy had dubious results and more importantly, Samuel Johnson realised that language change cannot be stopped, because sounds are too volatile.

Methods of the Eighteenth-Century Grammarians

Authority

The prescriptions embodied the individual's preconceptions, prejudices and preferences, because he based his grammar on his own beliefs. Because there was no academy to give their preferences weight, they often referred to classical languages, history and logic. It was not uncommon for grammarians to violate their own dicta; and they loved pointing out each other's mistakes. They did not really agree on anything, though most conflicts resolved themselves in time.

Model of Latin

The grammarians valued synthetic languages, thus they gave great credit to the classical languages. Latin served as a model for most prescriptions.

Etymology

The grammarians believed that the etymological meaning of a word possessed a certain authority over the current meaning due to their opposition of language change. Thus they attributed the wrong meanings to some words and determined the use of particular prepositions with verbs by appeals to etymology. They were, however, ambivalent about the importance of the older forms of the language.

Reason

Logic and reason resulted in prescriptions such as the following:

1. Do not use a double negative (they seem to add up to a positive).
2. Do not use a double comparative or superlative form.
3. Do not compare 'incomparables' such as unique, round, and perfect.
4. Use the comparative degree for two things, the superlative degree for more than two.
5. Place only before the word it modifies.
6. Do not split an infinitive.
7. Do not end a sentence with a preposition.

They believed a language should be absolutely regular, or grammatically analogous and maximally transparent, with one meaning to one form and vice versa. If there are two forms in the language, they set about finding a distinction between them. Sometimes they revived historical distinctions, sometimes they introduced artificial distinctions.

The Question of Usage

Usage is an ambiguous term, referring in a prescriptive sense to the forms that should be used and in a descriptive sense to the forms that are actually used. Regulation arises out of the forms in use and cannot be imposed from the outside. The grammarians distrusting the usage of the majority (because it was the usage of the majority (hipsters!)) and set out to establish a norm of correctness and impose that on speakers. Priestley and Webster were the only grammarians to follow usage with any consistency. Priestley had preferences for certain structures, and the others he called 'disagreeable' but not wrong. Webster asserted that following custom was like 'fixing a light house on a floating island'.

Dictionaries

Robert Cawdrey's *A Table Alphabetical* (1604) was a list of 'hard words', intended to help ordinary people read the Bible. More and more features came to be included as time went on. John Kersey's dictionary included a list of definitions of common words. The culmination was Samuel Johnson's *Dictionary of the English Language* (1755). He aimed to settle orthography, display analogy, regulate the structure of words, and ascertain the signification of words. The American counterpart was Noah Webster's *An American Dictionary of the English Language* (1828).

Chapter 12 Modern English

Grammatical and Lexical Changes Since Early Modern English

The Progressive Passive

The grammarians were outraged at the first use of the progressive passive (be+being +participle) but it entered general usage nonetheless. It first appeared in 1795.

Progressives with 'be'

This construction was possible with state verbs as early as ME, and it slowly gained more options (+predicate adjective/+ predicate noun etc.).

The 'Get'-Passive

Became usual in the nineteenth century. Focus in the get-passive is on an action rather than on a resulting state as in the be-passive. So it has restored a distinction that has been impossible since 'weorthan' died.

The Indirect Passive

Arose after the sixteenth century. The original indirect object becomes the subject in this passive.

The Prepositional Passive

Occurred as early as the OE period. In this passivisation the object of the preposition becomes the subject of the sentence. The preposition moves to the end of the sentence.

Biggest grammatical change is the passive.

Phrasal Verbs

These are constructions consisting of a verb and a post-verbal particle. In phrasal verbs the particle can appear before or after the direct object in transitive phrasal constructions. Particles no longer have their specific spatial meaning (e.g. Someone can drink up or drink down).

Composite Predicates

Simple verbs could be replaced by composite predicates, which consist of a quasi-auxiliary in combination with a noun that has been formed from a verb (e.g. Give a call).

The development of phrasal verbs and composite predicates shows the increasing analyticity of the English language.

Modal Auxiliaries

The modern period has seen the demise of the subjunctive and its replacement by modal auxiliaries. The subjunctive only occurs in random independent clauses (think “Suffice it to say” “If I were you”).

‘Stacked Noun’ Constructions

Modern English has a tendency to form these constructions, which consist of a string of nouns functioning adjectivally, rather like super-compounds (air-traffic-control officer).

Modern Borrowings

English has borrowed from all around the globe. Borrowings from Latin and Greek have continued but they are neo-Latin and neo-Greek words, meaning they have been formed from classical morphemes but did not exist back then. They constitute a large part of technical vocabulary. The Latin words were formed with a complete disregard for the inflections of Latin forms.

Borrowings from French are still common, but they are less assimilated into the language; they often keep their original accented syllable. Borrowings from Celtic usually refer to the Celtic culture. Scandinavian loan words are also referent to the culture, and borrowings from Dutch, Flemish and German refer mainly to food, art and sailing. There are lots of other IE borrowings, as well as non-IE borrowings.

English also translates compound words or phrase in the process known as calquing, or loan translation. Joseph Williams suggested there are two categories of borrowed words in English, and consequently two reasons for borrowing. First, the words may name objects or activities associated with another culture. Second, borrowed words may capture a concept already existing in our culture but not previously distinguished by a name.

The Oxford English Dictionary

In 1858, a group of philologists (people who study languages) proposed a book that they intended to call *New English Dictionary on Historical Principles*, and entered into an agreement with the Clarendon Press, part of Oxford University. Their aim was to record every word since 1000 CE to trace its history, with a full selection of quotations. Volunteers were asked to read books and write quotations on slips of paper, which were then collected. It started in 1884 and was finished in 1928, a phenomenal work.

The Development of National Varieties

English spread, as a result of extensive colonisation, through the British Empire producing the varieties we know today. (table 12.1) Colonisation started with Elizabeth I. High point in early 20th society. A national variety can be defined as a kind of large-scale regional dialect. They develop for a number of reasons:

- separation from the mother tongue (both space and time) engendering linguistic conservatism
- Features brought over at the time of settlement being preserved
- Regional or social dialects spoken by the immigrants (usually not prestigious) shaping the new national dialect
- Language contact with other immigrant groups
- Language contact with indigenous languages
- New landforms, foods, flora, fauna etc. requiring new vocabulary

National varieties differ mainly in their phonological features and the lexicon. Phonological differences are significant, but the difference in lexicon is usually quite colloquial and does not affect the structure.

There are second-language varieties of English, also found all over the world.

British versus North American English

The supranational varieties are British English and North American English.

NAE: conservative: preserved features and did not undergo sound changes. I did not summarise these as it seems too detailed for it to matter.

Canadian English

Canadian English is an amalgam of British and American English dialects. Distinguished for its rising intonation in all sentence types. Most typical is the narrative eh? at the end of sentences.

Newfoundland English

Newfoundland English is very much shaped by the West Country British speech.

Australian English

Australian English is very close to RP, with some allophonic variation. Aussie English was influenced by Aboriginal language up to a point.

New Zealand English

Sounds a lot like Australian English, does have some phonetic differences. Many Maori words made their way into NZE.

African English

Characterised by reduced vowel systems. English was the language of the social elite in South Africa; nowadays it is perceived as politically more neutral than Afrikaans. There are many borrowings from Afrikaans flying about. About 2.5% of the Liberian population speaks Liberian Standard English as a first language.

Caribbean English

Many creoles in the Caribbean have undergone decreolisation and are now closer to English; we find in the Caribbean a creole continuum now, which is a spread of dialects ranging from the 'deepest' creole to something approximating standard English. The one closest to the standard is called the acrolect; the one showing the most creole features is the basilect. Metathesis can occur in Caribbean English, especially with [sk]/[ks] and [sp]/[ps]. The language is syllable-timed, with syllables occurring at regular intervals. Other examples of syllable-timed languages are French or Italian. Stress-timed languages have stressed syllables occurring at regular intervals, some examples of those are Dutch and English.

Important Regional Varieties

Welsh English

Welsh, Irish and Scottish English all developed along separate paths but they all show some Gaelic influence. A diglossic situation remained in Wales for a while, where Welsh was the 'lower' and English the 'upper' language. Then English started to replace Welsh. Recently there have been attempts to revive it, by teaching it in schools for example.

Standard Scottish English

English only became dominant over Scots Gaelic in the Highlands about 200 years ago. Scots has been replaced by Scottish Standard English (SSE), which began to be used at the start of the eighteenth century. A Scottish accent can also carry prestige. SSE has a fairly distinctive vocabulary, widely known outside of Scotland.

Hiberno-English

Irish Gaelic retained its dominance until the 1600s. Also has loan words from Gaelic, particularly in an official state capacity (government). The influence of Irish Gaelic can be seen in a number of syntactic calques. The Gaeltacht is the Irish Gaelic-speaking region in Ireland.

English in the United States

General American

Spreads over southeastern New York state, most of New Jersey, eastern Pennsylvania, Delaware and Maryland.

Northern

Minnesota, Wisconsin, northern Illinois, northern Indiana, northern Ohio, northern Pennsylvania, northwestern New York and west Vermont. A significant sound shift is going on at the moment, concerning [ɑ], [æ] and [ɛ]. This shift is also happening in the General American dialect.

Midland

Nebraska, Kansas, western Iowa, most of Missouri, southern Illinois, southern Indiana, southern Ohio, and southwestern Pennsylvania. This does not experience the Northern vowel shift.

Western

Through the Rocky Mountains, into the Dakotas. There are two sound mergers occurring there now, which already happened in the other parts of North America. This area is so vast, it contains several separate dialect features. There are plenty of Spanish loan words here, because it was once territory of Mexico.

Northeastern

In Eastern New England and New York City we hear the subregional speech of the two main Northeastern dialects. In ENE we find a similarity to British English, but the younger generations are beginning to conform to General American. In NYC we find many different speech patterns due to its rich settlement pattern of the past. It is affected by the Northern shift thing. Accents here are socially stratified.

Southern

Can be divided into Coastal Southern (eastern Virginia to the gulf coast of Texas) and the Inland dialect (West Virginia, Kentucky, Tennessee, western Virginia, western North Carolina, western South Carolina, northern Georgia, northern Alabama, Arkansas, southwestern Missouri, Oklahoma, and most of Texas). Inland speech may preserve features which were lost by Coastal speech due to trade with London. Many of the stereotypes are true.

African American Vernacular English

AAVE is a continuum of English vernaculars spoken by African Americans. A scholar has pointed out that AAVE must have started with the colonisation of South Carolina in 1670. AAVE uses 'counterlanguage', camouflaged constructions meant to disguise intended meaning from outsiders.

Changes in Progress

Neologisms

We can borrow words, we can invent them and we can (most common) modify existing words. There is a new kind of compound called verb-verb combination. This gained acceptance in the twentieth century and is becoming more productive. There are other ways to create new words:

- A functional shift is the conversion of one part of speech to another without the addition of a suffix.
- A special kind of functional shift is what we may call commonisation, in which a proper noun is converted into a common noun (e.g. china), verb (lynch), or adjective (frank).
- A clipping is the result of deliberately dropping part of a word (fax < facsimile).
- In an acronym the initial letters of words in a phrase are pronounced as a word (NASA).
- In a blend, two free words are combined and merged phonologically (smoke + fog = smog)
- Reduplication is a process in which the initial syllable or the entire word is doubled, exactly or with a slight phonological change (ping-pong).

- A retronym is a word or phrase created because an existing term once used alone needs to be modified to distinguish it from a term referring to a new development (email > snail mail).

Grammatical Changes

- Quotative constructions: 'go' and 'be like' and 'be all'.
- Increased use of more/most in place of the inflected comparative or superlative.
- Conflation of the past tense and the past participle form ("I would have came").
- Reduction in the use of the objective form of the interrogative/relative pronoun whom. Generally survives in formal speech and writing.
- Use of the third person plural pronoun to refer back to a grammatically singular indefinite or generic subject, especially with everyone or everybody ("everyone has to take their seat now").
- Confusion about 's and -s.
- Intensifiers such as very are continually in need of replacement by stronger and more expressive forms such as absolutely, awfully, terribly. We also see new discourse markers: like, well, y'know, I mean.

There is an increased tolerance of non-standard usage and grammar, and we see no need for the prescriptive rules anymore. We might well find the written and spoken forms coming closer together in the future.

REMEMBER; it is helpful to draw a vowel diagram, when explaining stuff about vowels and Grimm's Law and stuff. There will be a question about the GVS, probably the French and Viking invasion/borrowing stuff, maybe umlaut ablaut.