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Preface to Historical Linguistics of English

The study of the English language has a lengthy history. The second half of the 18th century saw a phenomenal increase in the number of published grammars of the vernacular language, while the field of comparative linguistics arising in the 19th century was concerned in large part with the Germanic languages, including English. However, it is in the field of theoretical linguistics that English has played a truly central role. While there are no reliable statistics, it seems safe to say that the majority of studies in contemporary linguistics deal at least in part with English, and are also written in English.

During the 20th century, monumental works concerned with the English language, both synchronic and diachronic, were produced, following historical/comparative and more contemporary linguistic approaches. In keeping with developments in the field of general linguistics, today it is possible to find descriptions and analyses of the history and development of English from virtually any linguistic perspective: external, internal, generative, functional, sociolinguistic, pragmatic, comparative, phonological, morphological, syntactic, lexical, semantic. There are numerous "Histories of English" to cater to just about every (theoretical) taste, as well as detailed descriptions of historical periods, language levels, or theoretical frameworks of English and specialized studies of individual topics in the development of the language. Work on the history of English has culminated most recently in the seven-volume *Cambridge History of the English Language*, edited by Richard M. Hogg (1992–2001).

Study of the history of any language begins with its texts. Increasingly, however, scholars are turning to dictionaries and corpora of English that are available online or electronically. The pioneer historical corpus of English, the *Helsinki Corpus of English Texts*, was first released to scholars in 1991. The third edition of the *Oxford English Dictionary* online is now fully integrated with the *Historical Thesaurus*. The searchable *Middle English Dictionary*, completed in 2003, is available online along with the *Corpus of Middle English Prose and Verse*. The *Dictionary of Old English Web Corpus* is also searchable online. ARCHER, *A Representative Corpus of Historical English Registers 1650–1990*, accessible at a number of universities, provides a balanced selection of historical texts in electronic form. COHA, a 400-million-word, balanced *Corpus of Historical American English 1810–2009*, was launched online in 2010. Smaller corpora, such as the *Corpus of English Dialogues 1560–1760*, the *Lampeter Corpus of Early Modern English Tracts*, the *Corpus of Early English Correspondence,* the *Corpus of Early English Medical Writing*, and the *Old Bailey Corpus*, have made more specialized corpora available to scholars. Archives of historical newspapers online, including the *Zurich English Newspaper Corpus*, provide another source of electronic data. Finally, syntactically annotated corpora for historical stages of English are being produced, including the *The York-Helsinki Parsed Corpus of Old English Poetry*, *The York-Toronto-Helsinki Parsed Corpus of Old English Prose*, *The Penn-Helsinki Parsed Corpus of Middle English*, and *The Penn-Helsinki Parsed Corpus of Early Modern English.*

Taking into account the important developments in the study of English effected by the availability of electronic corpora, this *Handbook of English Historical Linguistics* offers a comprehensive, interdisciplinary, and theory-neutral synopsis of the field. It is meant to facilitate research by offering overviews of all the relevant aspects of the historical linguistics of English and by referring scholars and students to more in-depth coverage. The handbook is intended primarily for researchers in the field of (historical) linguistics generally, as well as for researchers in allied fields (such as history, literature, and culture). The handbook comprises two volumes, each volume consisting of approximately 70 articles written by a wide variety of authors from a number of different countries world-wide, representing a variety of theoretical approaches, and including both younger scholars as well as more established experts.

Volumes 1 and 2

The sequencing of material in the two volumes of the *Handbook of English Historical Linguistics* is bottom-up, beginning with detailed studies of the periods, levels, and linguistic components of each period. The second volume moves to a higher level, with a focus on general underlying concepts, theories, and methods as well as new and hitherto rather neglected approaches to the history of English. While the two volumes form a set, with cross-reference as far as possible in order to facilitate reader-guidance, they are also capable of standing alone.

Following this essentially inductive approach, then, the first volume (edited by Laurel J. Brinton) is focused on the details of English language history. After overviews of the recognized periods of English (Section I), the volume then treats the linguistic levels. These are broadly understood to include newer components such as prosody, pragmatics, phraseology, discourse, styles, registers, and text types as well as more traditional areas such as orthography and onomastics in addition to the fully acknowledged areas of phonology, morphology, syntax, and semantics (Section II). These summaries will be useful both to students and to those not working directly in the field of English historical linguistics, such as typologists. Sections III–VI contain detailed descriptions of the different periods – Old English, Middle English, Early Modern English, and Late Modern English – in respect to the range of linguistic levels; discussions of language contact, standardization, sociolinguistics, and literary language are included for most periods. Moreover, for each period, selected important phenomena (such as the development of *do*-periphrasis, the Great Vowel Shift, pronoun usage, or relativization) have been chosen for more detailed study. Following the treatment of the different periods, the volume addresses a variety of questions of standardization (Section VII), such as the effects that dictionaries, the Bible, language attitudes, and codifiers have on normalizing the language. The last section (VIII) brings the handbook into the 21st century by treating the effects of new media (radio, television, computer) on forms of the language, as well as the longer established effects of newspapers.

The second volume (edited by Alexander Bergs) then abstracts away from these details and moves outward to address theoretical concerns raised by the topics covered in Volume 1. Volume 2 first surveys resources for the studying and teaching of English (Section IX). Section X on interdisciplinarity (in particular literature and music) and historiography explores some of the debates involved in writing a history of English, questioning, for example, how the continuum of history is divided into accepted "periods", how oral and written forms of the language are accommodated in a history of English, and how new and perhaps "alternative histories" relate to the more established stories. This is followed by a history of the discipline of English historical linguistics itself, as it has developed in different parts of the world (Section XI). A significant part of Volume 2 covers changes in the English language as they have been theorized in various linguistic fields in the 20th century (Section XII). As Neogrammarian and Structuralist approaches are, to a great extent, embodied in the treatment of topics in Volume 1, this volume begins with later 20th century theories, including Generative Grammar, Construction Grammar, Lexical Functional Grammar, Rates of Change, Frequency, Lexical Diffusion, Grammaticalization, Lexicalization, and Language Acquisition. Related to the theoretical perspectives are new approaches which have been developed in the analysis of the history of English, including Historical Dialectology, Historical Sociolinguistics, Historical Pragmatics, Corpus Linguistics, Information Structuring, and Actuation/ Change from Below. Another important aspect of Volume 2 is its focus on the effects of language contact and the often neglected history of different varieties of English. It offers a section on language contact in the history of English, organized by contact languages, and supplemented by discussions of pidginization and creolization in the history of English and its varieties (Section XIII). Section XIV comprises historical sketches of more than ten varieties of English, and complementary theoretical discussions of dialect contact, diffusion, and supra-regionalization. The history of several second-language varieties is treated in Section XV, ending with a discussion of Global English.

The beginning of a new millennium seems the right time for taking stock of the long span of scholarship in English historical linguistics and for surveying the field as a whole. Furthermore, the availability of electronic resources has changed the study of the history of English in fundamental ways, and it is important that a new handbook recognize this turning point in the study of English.

Alexander Bergs, Osnabrück (Germany)
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In memoriam

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General abbreviations

ACC	accusative case
ACT	active
ADJ	adjective
ADV	adverb
AN	Anglo-Norman
Angl.	Anglian
AUX	auxiliary
AP	adjective phrase
C	consonant
C	complementizer
COMPR	comparative
DAT	dative case
CP	complementizer phrase
DEM	demonstrative
DM	discourse marker
DU	dual
EModE	Early Modern English
EWSax.	Early West Saxon
FEM	feminine
Fr.	French
GEN	genitive case
Ger.	German
Gk.	Greek
Go.	Gothic
Grmc.	Germanic
IE	Indo-European
IMP	imperative
IND	indicative
INF	infinitive
INFL	inflected
INSTR	instrumental case
IP	inflection phrase
Kent.	Kentish
Lt.	Latin
LModE	Late Modern English
LWSax.	Late West Saxon
MASC	masculine
ME	Middle English
MED	*Middle English Dictionary*
ModE	Modern English
NEG	negative
NEUT	neuter

N	noun
NOM	nominative case
NP	noun phrase
O	object
OBJ	objective case
OE	Old English
OED	*Oxford English Dictionary*
OFr.	Old French
OFris.	Old Frisian
OHG	Old High German
ON	Old Norse
OSax.	Old Saxon
OV	object-verb word order
P	person
PASS	passive
PAST	past
PDE	Present-day English
PGrmc.	Proto-Germanic
PIE	Proto-Indo-European
PL	plural
PP	prepositional phrase
PREP	preposition
PRON	pronoun
PRTC	participle
PRES	present
PRET	preterit
S	subject
SG	singular
SUBJ	subjunctive mood
SUP	superlative
SOV	subject-object-verb word order
SV	subject-verb word order
SVO	subject-verb-object word order
SVX	subject-verb-other parts of sentence word order
T	tense
THM	thematic vowel
TMA	tense-modality-aspect
TVX	topic-verb-other parts of sentence word order
V	verb
V2	verb second
V	vowel
VO	verb-object word order
VP	verb phrase
WGrmc.	West Germanic
WSax.	West Saxon
XP	variable phrase
XSV	others parts of sentence-subject-verb word order

XVS	other parts of sentence-verb-subject word order
>	changes to, becomes
<	derives from
Ø	no ending
*	reconstructed form, ungrammatical form
< >	spelling

I Periods

1 Periods: Pre-Old English

Abstract

The topic of this chapter is the pre-historic stage of English as it developed between the 5th-century Germanic migrations to Britain and its first attestations in the 7th century. The beginnings of Old English are situated with respect to the language's closest West Germanic relatives as well as to its Indo-European linguistic heritage. The phonological system is traced from Indo-European through Proto-Germanic and West Germanic stages with a focus on those innovations that occurred during the pre-Old English period. Brief descriptions of Indo-European and Proto-Germanic morphological structure provide the basis of the sketch of pre-Old English morphology, while both phonological and morphological changes that later obscured these systems in the early development of English are illustrated. The chapter ends with a brief discussion of the development of pre-Old English syntax.

1 Introduction

Though this chapter is titled "Pre-Old English", there was, of course, no clear-cut division between the attested Old English (OE) language and what came before. What is meant by "Pre-Old English" here is the pre-historic stages of English, that is, the Germanic language spoken in Britain after the migrations of Germanic speakers (Germani) from their continental home, but prior to the language's first textual transmission, i.e. from the 5th to the 7th century. The Northwest branch of Germanic from which English descends is only meagerly attested prior to and during this period in the form of runic inscriptions. We must therefore base our sketch of pre-Old English on comparative reconstruction of other Germanic and even Indo-European languages and then interpolate the specific features of this stage of the language using the first attestations of Old English. Thus the role of the Germanic linguistic inheritance on Old English will figure prominently in this chapter.

2 Origins of English

The English language owes much of its character to its ancestry in the Indo-European (IE) family of languages. The Germani's ultimate homeland is attested by a number of classical sources including Caesar, Tacitus, and Jordanes, all of whom describe Germanic tribes living in northern Europe and along the North Sea coast. The Goths' late 2nd century migration toward the Black Sea left the remaining northern and western branches of Germanic to develop separately. It was the tribes that remained along the shores of present-day Germany, southern Denmark, and the Netherlands after more southerly West Germanic tribes had pushed toward the Danube and the Alps that formed the linguistic stock of what would become Old English, Old Frisian (first attested from the 13th century), and probably some of Old Saxon as well (attested from the 9th century). This broad dialect group is referred to as North Sea Germanic or Ingvaeonic and the term "Anglo-Frisian" refers to the Ingvaeonic sub-grouping from which English, or at least dialects of it, derived.

Archaeologists have observed a continuity of cultural artifacts between areas of Germanic settlement in Britain and those in the settlers' original homelands on the continent and there are linguistic parallels as well which link Anglian, Kentish, and, to a lesser degree, Northumbrian dialects with Old Frisian (see Nielsen 1989: 53–65 for an overview of scholarship on these parallels). Generally speaking, this group of dialects was more innovative than the rest of West Germanic, likely due, at least in part, to the social upheaval and ensuing linguistic contact that was precipitated by the migrations and subsequent settlement of Britain.

While the North Sea linguistic ancestry of the OE dialects is undisputed, there has been a more recent scholarly movement to trace some of the innovations seen in OE and Middle English (ME) texts to Celtic influence in Britain. Only about a dozen Celtic loanwords survive in Old English, these being mostly place names and names of geographical features. Traditional scholarship held that it was only under limited linguistic contact that Celtic could have had so little influence on the Grmc. dialects. But new scholarship suggests that Romanized Celts and Germanic people probably lived in close contact, sharing cultural items and communicating with each other in the languages of the invading Germanic tribes.

Some scholars propose a contact situation in which the Celts, though far outnumbering the Germanic settlers, learned the language of the Germanic speakers imperfectly. The large ratio of bilingual Celts to invading Germanic speakers, in conjunction with the Celts' limited access to Germanic, would have resulted in the Celts imposing a number of features of their native language onto their second language (pre-Old English) (see, for example, van Coetsem 1988: 7–45, 83–91; Thomason and Kaufman 1988: 35–63; Guy 1990: 48–54, for discussions of the social and linguistic circumstances that foster imposition of first-language features onto the second language, instead of borrowing). The sheer number of partially bilingual Celts would have nearly ensured transmission of those features into the following generations of British Germanic speakers. For an introduction to the current scholarship in this area, see Flippula et al. (2002: 5–26).

Many of the Old English grammatical handbooks treat the phonological and morphological development of Germanic from its IE ancestor. Among these are Luick (1964a [1914–21], 1964b [1929–40]), Wright and Wright (1925), Campbell (1959), Brunner (1965), Hogg (1992), and Hogg and Fulk (2011). More detail on the sound changes and morphological structures of the early Germanic stages are presented in Prokosch (1939), Krahe and Meid (1969), the essays in van Coetsem and Kufner (1972), and, more recently, in Ringe (2006). In the sections to follow we present an overview of both the features that English inherited from its Germanic ancestors and the changes which occurred in the intervening periods that gave Old English its particular character. The phonology section consists of a description of the features which West Germanic inherited from its IE ancestor, followed by a description of the specific developments which occurred during the pre-OE period. Since changes in the phonology also had an impact on the morphology of the language, those changes will be introduced in the phonology section. The morphology section will provide an overview of the development of morphological categories and structure from the ancestors of Old English. Syntax, being considerably more difficult to reconstruct without substantial attestation, will comprise a final, brief, section of the chapter.

3 The phonology of Proto-Germanic

3.1 The consonant system

The linguistic change that is most commonly used as a marker of the Germanic (Grmc.) language family is the First Germanic Consonant Shift – also referred to as Grimm's Law – in which the entire system of IE stop consonants is alleged to have shifted. The version of the shift presented here is the traditional one and that most commonly assumed today. For details of an alternative reconstruction of the IE stop system and its ensuing shift into Germanic, the reader is referred to the Glottalic Theory proposed separately by Gamkrelidze and Ivanov (1995) and by Hopper (1973). The consonant system of late western Indo-European is traditionally reconstructed as having had the stops shown in Table 1.1.

Table 1.1: Late western Indo-European stops

	labials	coronals	velars	labiovelars
voiceless	p	t	k	k^w
voiced	(b)	d	g	g^w
voiced aspirates	bh	dh	gh	g^wh

The First Germanic Consonant Shift shifted the IE voiceless stops, **p, *t, *k, *k^w*, to fricatives, *f, θ, x, x^w*. The IE voiced stops, **b, *d, *g, *g^w*, then shifted into the vacated position of the voiceless stops, *p, t, k, k^w*, and the voiced aspirates, **bh, *dh, *gh, *g^{w}h*, shifted to voiced fricatives, *β, ð, ɣ, ɣ^w*. The consonants of later Latin loanwords did not undergo the same shifts as the native Grmc. consonants and therefore often demonstrate a more transparent reflex of the original IE stop. For example, the native Germanic development of the IE roots **dékm* 'ten' and **bhrā́ter* 'brother' illustrate the Germanic consonant shift, while Latinate loanwords from these same roots do not show these shifts: IE **dékm* > PGrmc.**texun* (OE *tīen*) vs. Latin *decimal*; IE **bhrā́ter* > PGrmc. **brṓθar* (OE *brōþor*) vs. *fraternity* (< Old French < Latin, in which IE **bh* > Lt. *f*).

The accent of Indo-European was a pitch accent whose placement was morphologically and lexically determined. When the original IE pitch accent had preceded a medial voiceless stop, the stop spirantized to a voiceless fricative as predicted by Grimm's Law, e.g. IE **bhrā́ter* > PGrmc. **brṓθar*. But when a high pitch accent had followed the stop, a major exception to the expected outcome occurred. Presumably due to the slack vocal folds and comparatively low pitch of the preceding unaccented syllable (D'Alquen 1988: 17–20; Page 1998: 186–188; Petrova 2004: 376–381), the fricative was perceived as voiced instead of voiceless as in IE **patḗr* > PGrmc. **fáðēr*. This exceptional voicing, known as Verner's Law, affected all voiceless fricatives including */s/. Thus, IE **géus* appears in OE *cēosan* 'to choose' (with /s/), but in the PGrmc. 1P PL PRET **gusúm*, where the accent had followed the fricative, the /s/ was voiced to /z/ and ultimately rhotacized to /r/ in Northwest Grmc. (cf. Section 4.1.5), thus OE *curon* 'we chose'. The effects of Verner's Law are evident in all of the Grmc. languages, though its appearance is much more restricted in Gothic. The resulting system is shown in Table 1.2. Following the application of Verner's Law, the IE accent shifted to the root syllable. This increase in energy and duration of the root syllable would be responsible for enormous changes from the inception of the Grmc. languages through the Modern period. A number of these are described in the sections which follow.

Table 1.2: The early Germanic consonant system

	labial	dental	alveolar	palatal	velar
stops, voiceless	p		t		k
fricatives	f	θ	s		x
voiceless					
voiced	b		ð		ɣ
nasals	m		n		
liquids			l, r		
glides				j	w (labiovelar)

In addition to the singleton consonants, geminate consonants could also appear in post-vocalic environments. These developed in Proto-Germanic through contact assimilations of adjacent consonants and resulted in a system that included geminate versions of all of the stops, nasals, liquids, /s/, and probably of both of the glides as well.

The voiced fricatives that developed from both IE voiced aspirated stops and from the voiced output of IE voiceless stops through Verner's Law hardened into voiced stops (*b, d, g,* g^w) at various times according to dialect and phonological environment. When following nasals, *β* and *ð* probably became stops within the Grmc. period. The process would have continued in later periods with word-initial and perhaps post-liquid environments. The fricative articulation was preserved the longest for **ɣ*, while **ð* eventually developed a stop articulation in all environments in the West Grmc. branch of languages. Goblirsch (2003: 111–119) provides a detailed review of the scholarship on the development of the voiced fricatives in English and Frisian.

3.2 Indo-European to Proto-Germanic vowels

The late IE vowel system consisted of long and short *i*, *e*, *a*, *o* and *u*. Non-syllabic high vowels could combine with preceding vowels to produce the diphthongs *ă̄i*, *ă̄u*, *ĕ̄i*, *ĕ̄u*, *ŏ̄i*, and *ŏ̄u*. Liquids and nasals could also function as syllabic nuclei in Indo-European but were reinterpreted by the early Germanic speakers as short *u* + resonant, e.g. IE **wr̥g-* > PGrmc. **wurk-*. These reflexes are highly visible in the third and fourth principal parts of Grmc. strong verb classes III and IV where *u* + resonant developed from the earlier syllabic resonant of the root syllable (Murray, Chapter 17: Section 2.4).

3.2.1 Long vowels

Germanic preserved the distinction between long and short vowels from Indo-European with some shifting of the quality of those vowels within their respective systems. In the long vowel system Indo-European **ā* moved up to merge with the existing **ō* and IE **ē* moved downward toward [ǣ] (also called "$\bar{e}_1$"). The vacated *ē* position was filled in Germanic by a monophthongization of IE **ēi* and by a front vowel with a relatively limited distribution that demonstrated **ī*~**ē* alternations in North Sea and North Germanic. The resulting *ē* is often referred to as $\bar{e}_2$. Original IE **ī*, **ō*, and **ū* remained as phonemes into Proto-Germanic. Original **ī* was reinforced by a monophthongization of IE **ei*. Thus the PGrmc. long vowel system was as in Figure 1.1.

ī	ū
$\bar{e}_2$	ō
ǣ($\bar{e}_1$)	

Figure 1.1: Proto-Germanic long vowels

3.2.2 Short vowels

In the short vowel system, movement was in the other direction so that IE **o* and **a* merged unconditionally into the existing **a*, which continued into West Germanic. IE **e* shifted to **i*, and **u* to **o* in Proto-Germanic, but the application of these shifts was dependent on the following segments, demonstrating the developing preference for harmony between the stressed root vowel and the following vowels. Clusters of nasal + C preferred preceding high vowels, so nasal clusters facilitated the shift of **e* to **i*, but blocked the fall of **u* to **o*. We also see the effect of two kinds of distance vowel assimilations at this stage, a raising umlaut, "*i*-umlaut", conditioned by a following high vowel or glide and a lowering umlaut (often called "*a*-umlaut") conditioned by non-high back vowels. Thus the PGrmc. shift of **e* to **i* occurred unless an **a* or **o* followed in the next syllable. PGrmc. **u* shifted to **o* unless a nasal or **i* followed and PGrmc. **i* sometimes shifted to **e* under similar conditions. The outcomes of some of these shifts are particularly evident in the principal parts of the OE strong class III verb. When a nasal follows the root vowel, as in PGrmc. **bendan-*, **band*, **bundun*, **bundan*, it is responsible for raising the **e* of the present stem to *i* as well as for preventing the *u* of the past participle from being pulled to *o* by the *a* in the following syllable. Thus class III pre-OE principal parts *bindan*, *band*, *bundun*, *bundan,* but *helpan* (with no raising of *e* to *i* before *l*), *healp* (cf. Section 4.2.3 for a discussion of the diphthongized vowel), *hulpun*, *holpan* (with lowered root vowel). The resulting system of short vowel phonemes appears in Figure 1.2.

Figure 1.2: Proto-Germanic short vowels

3.2.3 Diphthongs

The Grmc. reflexes of the IE diphthongs suggest that the first element of the IE long diphthongs had generally shortened prior to subsequent Grmc. developments. Both IE _*ōi_ and _*oi_, for instance, developed into PGrmc. _*ai_. IE _*ēi_ and _ei_ are exceptions to this pattern. As described above, _*ēi_ became $\bar{e}_2$ and _*ei_ became PGrmc. _*ī_. IE _*eu_ was retained into Proto-Germanic and was joined by a new diphthong, _*iu_. Thus, the PGrmc. diphthongs were _*ai_, _*au_, _*eu_, and _*iu_.

4 Phonology: Proto-Germanic to Pre-Old English

The North Sea Germanic dialect which would develop into English and Frisian was differentiated from surrounding dialects by a number of phonological and morphological features. The consonantal features of the North Sea dialects that differentiated them from the rest of Germanic were the seeds of velar palatalization and a generalized loss of nasals before voiceless fricatives. The vowel system of this group also developed differently both through shifts in the quality of inherited vowels and in how vowels were affected by neighboring sounds. The most significant of these developments are outlined below.

4.1 Consonantal changes

4.1.1 Geminates

The Grmc. inventory of geminate consonants was bolstered by the output of West Germanic consonant gemination, an innovation of the West Grmc. branch (with traces in North Germanic) that resulted from the effects of the resonants _*j_, _*w_, _*l_, and _*r_, on preceding consonants (except _*r_) following a short vowel, e.g. PGrmc. _*lagjan_ > West Grmc. _*laggjan_; _*wilja_ > _*willja_; _*bitr-_ > _*bittr-_; _*apl-_ > _*appl-_; _*nakw-_ > _*nakk-_. As unstressed final vowels were reduced and lost, some originally medial geminates came to be word final. These tended to be simplified gradually in the early West Grmc. dialects. Degemination continues throughout the OE period where we find doublets with both geminate and simple final consonants, e.g., _cynn_ ~ _cyn_, _will_ ~ _wil_.

4.1.2 Palatalization

Palatalization of velar consonants in the environment of adjacent (originally) front vowels is a feature shared by all of the North Sea Grmc. dialects, but whether the process began during an early period of their relative unity continues to be debated. If it did, then it is probable that pre-palatal _*k_ developed an allophonically palatalized articulation during this period and only later developed fully phonemicized assibilated phonemes in Old English, Old Frisian, and Old Saxon. (The reader is referred to the discussion of the OE palatalization of velars in Murray, Chapter 17: Section 3.3.)

4.1.3 The Pre-Old English consonant inventory

PGrmc. *ð* was closed to *d* in all of West Germanic and *β* had become a stop in most positions by prehistoric English, while the fricative articulation of *ɣ* persisted intervocalically. Thus, the PGrmc series of voiced fricatives had become a series of voiced stops at this stage. The voiceless velar fricative had also begun to change. It had weakened to [h] word-initially and between sonorants and vowels, where it ultimately was lost. Its effect on preceding vowels (described in Section 4.2.3) suggests that it may also have been weakening in other coda positions during this period. The early English inventory had been enriched by West Germanic consonant gemination which produced geminates of all original (i.e. non-palatalized) stops, fricatives, nasals, and liquids except *r*. Geminate *f* appeared as <bb> in Old English and geminate glides usually combined with the preceding vowel to form sequences of diphthong + singleton glide. Thus the pre-OE system would have had the singleton consonants shown in Table 1.3.

Table 1.3: Pre-Old English simple consonants

	labial	dental	alveolar	palatal	velar
stops					
voiceless	p		t		k
voiced	b		d		g
fricatives	f	θ	s		x
nasals	m		n		
liquids			l, r		
glides				j	w (labiovelar)

4.1.4 Nasal loss and compensatory lengthening

All of West Germanic underwent a loss of postvocalic nasals before PGrmc. **x* (< IE **k*). The North Sea dialects extended it to apply to postvocalic nasals before any voiceless fricative. The nasal cluster had the usual raising effect on preceding vowels, but the loss of the nasal conditioned a compensatory lengthening of the preceding short vowel. In Old English the nasalized, now lengthened, *ā̃* appears as *ō*. Thus we have from late PGrmc. **sanft*, *gans*, *kunþs* > OE *sōft*, *gōs*, and *cūþ* with nasal loss, compensatory lengthening, and raising of the original *a* to *ō*. This change is responsible for the now opaque relationship between PDE *bring* and *brought*, the latter having gone through the intermediary stages PGrmc. **branx-te* > West Grmc. **brā̃xte* > OE *brōhte*.

4.1.5 Rhotics and their effects

West Grmc. languages are also marked by a rhotacism of the IE **s* that had undergone voicing to /z/ as a result of Verner's Law. Proto-Germanic already had a rhotic which was presumably coronal in articulation (see Denton 2003: 15–16, 19–30 for a discussion of the articulatory qualities of early Grmc. rhotics and their articulatory effects in OE dialects). The rhotacism of *z* eventually led to a merger with the original *r* which is visible in the third and fourth principal parts of strong verbs that had originally had medial *s* voiced through Verner's Law (see examples in Section 3.1). But in word-final or unstressed position, rhotacized *z* was lost. This loss makes for a difference between the 1/2P SG personal pronouns in North Sea Germanic and those in the rest of West Germanic: OE DAT SG *me*, *þe* compared to OHG *mir* and *dir*.

4.2 The vowel system

By the end of the Grmc. period, the short vowel system had only one low vowel phoneme and the mid back vowel only existed as an umlauted allophone of /u/ before mid and low vowels. Following this period the short vowels were further modified by their phonological environments and the long vowel system was enriched by the monophthongization of the PGrmc. diphthongs. By the start of the OE period PGrmc. **ai* had become long *ā* and **au* had become long *ǣa*, written <ea>. Reflexes of PGrmc. **eu* and **iu* (long or short) remained largely distinct in Mercian and Northumbrian dialects (appearing as *eo* and *io*, respectively), but had merged in most environments in the earliest West Saxon (WSax.) texts, though both spellings remained.

The long high and mid vowels (*ī*, $\bar{e}_2$, *ū*, and *ō*) continued into the Pre-OE period, but $\bar{e}_1$ underwent different developments in the various OE dialects, appearing as *ǣ* in West Saxon and as *ē* elsewhere. When followed by a nasal, it appeared as *ō* in all of Old English. The WSax. *ǣ* was irregularly retracted before mid and high back vowels in the following syllable (referred to as *u*-umlaut), but otherwise continued as a front vowel.

4.2.1 Anglo-Frisian brightening and retraction

A similar process of allophonic split before nasals occurred with PGrmc. short **a* (< IE **a* and **o*). While it shows up as *a* in the rest of West Germanic, in the Anglo-Frisian area it originally developed two allophones, a back variant before nasals and a front variant everywhere else. The back variant is alternately spelled either <a> or <o> in Old English as in the doublet *mann* ~ *monn*. Since this nasalized vowel was distinct from the existing *o* and eventually merged with *a* in most of Old English, it probably had a quality similar to [ɔ]. The non-nasalized variant, [æ], is the output of the process called "Anglo-Frisian brightening" (AFB) or "First Fronting" in the entire Ingvaeonic area. This variant behaved as a true front vowel, diphthongizing in Old English breaking environments (cf. Section 4.2.3) and palatalizing some velar consonants, e.g. PGrmc. *gastiz* > (AFB) *gæste* > (palatalization) *ġeaste* > (*i*-umlaut, cf. Section 4.2.4) *ġieste*. A subsequent process of retraction, however, pulled the front vowel back to *a* before an immediately following *w* in all dialects, while Anglian also retracted the front vowel before *r*C, and Northumbrian before *l*C.

4.2.2 Restoration of *a*

The result of Anglo-Frisian brightening was subject to the early mutating effects of back vowels in the following syllable. This process, known as "restoration of *a*", foreshadows the back vowel umlauts of the early OE period and is visible in the OE masculine and neuter *a*-stem paradigms. When the root vowel of the nominative/accusative, genitive, and dative singular is *æ*, as in *dæġ* 'day', *dæġes*, *dæġe*, it appears as *a* in the plural due to the retracting effect of the suffixes' back vowels: NOM/ACC *dagas*, GEN *daga*, DAT *dagum*. The phonological conditioning and particular interactions of Anglo-Frisian brightening, retraction, restoration of *a*, and breaking are responsible for much of the dialectal variation in Old English and are discussed in detail, in the modern Old English grammatical handbooks (e.g. Brunner 1965: 38–46, 54–60; Luick 1964a [1914–21]: 122–166; Campbell 1959: 50–64; Hogg 1992: 76–101; Lass and Anderson 1975: 59–69; Lass 1994: 39–44; Wright and Wright 1925: 38–68).

4.2.3 Breaking

Breaking was a process of front vowel mutations conditioned by the following consonantism. Though preserved in its most regular form in the WSax. dialect of Old English, breaking appears to have applied with slight variation in all of pre-Old English and was even shared, in part, by Old Frisian and Old Norse. The graphic realization of the output of breaking in Old English was <ie>, <eo>, and <ea> from the high, mid, and low front vowels, respectively. Prior to breaking, the Grmc. languages had no short diphthongs which are typologically marked. Whether those sounds represented by short digraphs in Old English were true short diphthongs phonemically is part of a larger controversy, though OE metrics confirm that they were indeed distinguished from long diphthongs quantitatively. Stockwell and Barritt (1951: 14) first questioned the literal reading of these digraphs and many scholars since have argued that the output of breaking was monophthongal and that the addition of a central or back vowel grapheme indicated either a retraction of the original vowel quality or a secondary articulation on the following consonant. The entire controversy is nicely presented in brief in Lass and Anderson (1975: 75–83) (see also Murray, Chapter 17: Section 3.2), while more recently, White (2004: 58–59) takes up Daunt's (1939) argument that the OE spelling pattern had Irish origins. Breaking appears to have applied only in stressed syllables in the pre-OE period and was more regular the lower and the shorter the vowel. Early textual evidence suggests that the breaking environments originally caused the front vowels to develop central- or back-vowel off-glides at the corresponding height, /i/ > [iu], /e/ > [eo], /æ/ > [æa]. The factors which conditioned breaking were the reflex of PGrmc. /x/, whether alone or followed by another consonant, *r* + C, *w*, and, to a lesser degree, *l* + C.

The conditioning factors of breaking are generally assumed to have had back articulations that spurred a transitional glide between the palatal front vowel and the following consonant. Thus *x* and *w* are velar, the *l* of *l*C clusters are presumed velarized, and the *r* in *r*C clusters were also presumed to have had a back articulation similar, perhaps, to the Scots "burred" *r*. Howell (1991: 83–105) has refuted this assumption, demonstrating that the kinds of diphthongizations seen in breaking rarely occur with sequences of stressed front vowel + velar liquid or *x* in modern Grmc. dialects, though analogous diphthongizations are quite common when the coda contains a weakened, non-velar, articulation of these same segments. Howell adduces dialectal evidence that all breaking factors had less constricted, even vocalic, articulations in coda positions and Denton (2003: 21–30) makes a similar argument about OE *r* on articulatory grounds.

The preserved effects of breaking with limited retraction and restoration of *a* in West Saxon contribute to the marked difference in sound and appearance of this dialect compared to that of Anglian and Northumbrian. This fact was compounded by Anglian's later monophthongization or "smoothing" of many of these diphthongs. The output of breaking has morphological consequences, perhaps the most obvious being the subclass of class III strong verbs which are characterized by a short root vowel followed by a liquid-consonant cluster, e.g., Pre-OE. **werþan*, **wærþ*; **helpan*, **hælp* > OE *weorþan*, *wearþ*; *helpan*, *h(e)alp*. Breaking before *h* (<**x*) is visible in the PRET SG of strong class V contracted verbs, e.g., *seah* (INF *sēon*) as well as in other verbal roots and stems ending in *-w* and *-l*.

4.2.4 *i*-umlaut

i-umlaut, like the restoration of *a* (cf. Section 4.2.2) and the even earlier developments of PGrmc. mid vowels discussed in Section 3.2.2, was a kind of vowel harmony conditioned by the quality of the vowel in an immediately following syllable. Conditioned by both **i* and **j*, *i*-umlaut was the most widespread and general of the umlauts, affecting all of North and West Germanic, though its application occurred in stages that varied according to geography and dialect. In Pre-Old English its action was most regular in the fronting of both long and short back vowels to the corresponding front vowels, i.e. *u* > *y*, *o* > *œ*, *a* > *æ*, though it also raised the low and mid front vowels with less regularity. (See Section 5.1 in Murray, Chapter 17 as well as the OE grammatical handbooks for a description of the conditioning and output of *i*-umlaut in Old English).

The effects of *i*-umlaut are responsible for the root vowel change in the mutated plurals: NOM SG *mann*, *gōs*, *mūs*; NOM PL *menn*, *gœ̄s* ~ *gēs*, *mȳs* < earlier **mann-i, gōs-i*, *mūs-i* Even more visible are the mutated vowels in the 2/3P PRES IND of strong verbs which originally had the suffixes *-is* and *-iþ*, respectively: *ċēosan* 2/3P SG PRES IND *ċīest* < **cēosis*, **cēosiþ*; *faran, færst* < **farist*, *færþ* < **fariþ*. The entire system of class I weak verbs is subject to *i*-umlaut from the *j* of the *-jan* suffix that had originally marked the class. This fact is only evident when compared to the unumlauted root from which a class I weak verb was derived, e.g., early OE *dœ̄man* 'to judge' < early West Grmc. **dōm-jan-*.

4.2.5 Stress and its immediate effects

A dominating stress accent on the root syllable was one of the hallmarks of the Grmc. languages, but a secondary stress accent on polysyllabic words was also likely, though scholars don't agree on the rules of its placement. What we can surmise about the placement of all stresses in early Germanic comes from the metrics of the first attested languages and from the manner and order in which medial and final syllables were reduced in the period prior to the first transmission of texts. This reduction began in word-final position with the loss of short unstressed vowels. Final unstressed diphthongs were monophthongized and unstressed medial vowels in open syllables were often lost prior to the earliest OE texts. Final nasals were also lost eventually, leaving the nuclear vowels exposed to a new round of reductions. Generally more resistant to loss were unstressed high vowels. Their ultimate loss in both unstressed final and medial syllables was usually conditioned by a preceding heavy foot, i.e. a single stressed heavy syllable (CV̄, CVV, or CVC(C)) or a stressed light syllable followed by another syllable. This conditioned loss was responsible for *-u*~-Ø and *-i*~-Ø alternations in the West Grmc. *u*- and *i*-stem nominal paradigms as illustrated by the OE examples in Table 1.4. The nominative singular of feminine *ō*-stems also shows an alternation between *-u* after light stems and -Ø after heavy, e.g. *giefu* vs. *lār*.

Table 1.4: High vowel loss in nominal paradigms

	i-stem, MASC		*u*-stem, MASC	
	light	heavy	light	heavy
SG NOM	win-e (< -i)	giest (< -i)	sun-u	feld (< -u)
ACC	win-e (< -i)	giest (< -i)	sun-u	feld (< -u)
GEN	win-es	giest-es	sun-a	feld-a
DAT	win-e	giest-e	sun-a	feld-a
PL NOM/ACC	win-e, -as	giest-as	sun-a	feld-a
GEN	win-e, -as	giest-as	sun-a	feld-a
DAT	win-um	giest-um	sun-um	feld-um

While unstressed vowels tended toward reduction, the stressed root vowels of the North Sea Grmc. and pre-OE periods were affected in a different manner, being further differentiated through the assimilatory effects of following sounds. Sound changes of this type included breaking, retraction, and the umlauts described above.

5 Morphology

5.1 Morphological structure

Pre-Old English inherited a large percentage of its word stock from Indo-European, though at least 30% of its lexicon may have come from other sources. Vennemann (2003: xiii–20) provides an introduction to some of the issues inherent in identifying IE origins for both Germanic lexemes and morphosyntactic structures while he provides background for innovative theories of early Germanic contact with non-IE languages. Germanic did inherit much of its morphological structure from its IE ancestor along with its primary word-formation processes of compounding and derivation. IE roots were monosyllabic CVC structures with slots for a nasal, liquid, or glide on either side of the vowel. While the consonants of the root remained fairly stable across morphological categories, the radical vowel could vary between the *e*- or "full" grade, the *o*-grade, and the zero-grade, according to the word's function. This kind of vowel alternation is the source of many of the ablaut, or root vowel substitution, patterns in the Grmc. languages. Various types of suffixes could be added to the root and these also could display different vowel grades within the same consonantal context. The position of the IE accent was partially dependent on the grade of the root and of its suffix. Thus, the overall structure of all IE morphology was that of root + suffix + inflectional ending, the combination of root + suffix constituting the stem. This structure continued to be the foundation of the nominal, adjectival, and verbal classes of the Grmc. languages.

5.2 Nominal morphology

5.2.1 The case system

The IE nominal categories were of three types: the nouns and adjectives, the demonstrative pronouns, and the personal pronouns. All of these were marked for case and number. Indo-European probably had eight cases which indicated the relationship of the noun phrases in the sentence both to each other and to the action of the verb. These cases were the nominative, accusative, dative, ablative, locative, instrumental, and vocative. Four cases were preserved in West Germanic with a vestige of a fifth. The nominative remained the case of the subject of the sentence (as well as of predicate nominals), but was also used for direct address. The accusative remained for the direct object, duration of time, and extent of space. The dative expressed a less direct impact or reference of the action of the verb on a noun such as with the indirect object, motion-toward, and many of the functions of the original locative and often the instrumental. The genitive was used for possession, for a part of a larger whole, and with certain adjectives and prepositions. In Old English and Old Frisian the instrumental forms were only preserved in the demonstrative and interrogative pronouns and in the strong adjective declension.

5.2.2 Gender

Late Indo-European had three genders which were preserved into the OE period: masculine, feminine, and neuter. While these categories probably had some connection to real-world physical and/or cultural characteristics at one time, by early Germanic they largely served only a grammatical function. Masculine and neuter nouns, pronouns, and adjectives are closely related and always share a number of endings. The difference between the two genders often lies in the way in which the nominative and accusative singular are marked. While these categories may be formally differentiated in the masculine, they are always identical in the neuter singular, a feature that goes back to Indo-European (e.g. NEUT NOM and ACC SG *hit* 'it', *scip* 'ship'). In the most common declensions the IE feminine differed from the masculine and neuter in the presence of the feminine's **ā* theme vowel, which developed into PGrmc. **ō*. Forms of other feminine declensions were also heavily influenced by the **ō*-stem endings. Though in the earliest OE paradigms the endings of the feminine are wholly different from those of the masculine and neuter, the endings of all three genders of all stem types derived from a single set of inflectional endings.

5.2.3 Nouns and adjectives

Nouns and adjectives were indistinguishable in Indo-European and continued to share many of their endings into the OE period. It was the particular quality of the theme or stem vowel (or the lack thereof) which determined a noun's or adjective's class. Each class had a particular set of inflectional endings associated with it which likely derived from a single set of endings for all noun classes in Indo-European. The differences in inflectional endings that we see across the early Grmc. paradigms are the result of a combination of factors among which are

(1) variations in the original placement of the IE accent which resulted in different grades of the stem vowel and different developments of IE **s* (which could appear as either OE *s* or *r*, depending on the application of Verner's Law) (cf. Section 3.1);
(2) the coalescence of stem vowels with the endings; and
(3) the Grmc. reductions of final syllables. An example of the masculine *a*-stems, feminine *o*-stems and masculine and feminine *n*-stems illustrate this development below. The reconstructions have been simplified somewhat for clarity in Table 1.5.

Table 1.5: Reflexes of the Proto-Germanic case inflections in Old English declensions

	PGrmc.	*a*-stem	*o*-stem	*i*-stem	*u*-stem	*n*-stem
SG	MASC	MASC	FEM	MASC	MASC	MASC
NOM	-V-z	stan < az	gief-u < ṓ	win-e < iz	sun-u < uz	nam-a < ōn
ACC	-V-m	stan < am	gief-e < ṓn	win-e < im	sun-u < um	nam-an < anam
GEN	-V-so	stan-es < áso	gief-e < ōz	win-es < iza	sun-a < auz	nam-an < in(e/a)z
DAT	-V-i	stane- < ai	gief-e < ai	win-e < ī	sun-a < au	nam-an < ini
PL						
NOM	-V-z(ez)	stan-as < ōz(ez)	gief-e < ōz	win-e < īz	sun-a < iuiz	nam-an < anez
ACC	-V-nz	stan-as < (NOM PL)	gief-e < ṓnz	win-e < (NOM PL)	sun-a < uns	nam-an < anunz
GEN	-V-n	stan-a < ōn	gief-e < ōn	win-a < iōn	sun-a < ōn	nam-an < anon
DAT	-V-miz	stan-um < amiz	gief-um < ōmiz	win-um < imiz	sun-um < umiz	nam-um < anmiz

The classes that became dominant in Germanic were the *a*-stems, *ō*-stems, and the weak *n*-stems. The Grmc. *i*- and *u*-stems, though still viable, were no longer robust since many of their former members had moved over to *a*- and *ō*-stem declensions. Other minor classes could be marked by reflexes of a consonantal suffix added to the root or by a lack of theme as in the *athematic* or root nouns, the latter marked in Old English by *i*-umlauted root vowels. (See von Mengden, Chapter 18: Section 1.2.8 for a description of these.) The adjectives originally had the same thematic classes as the nouns, including *a*- and *ō*-stems (as well as *ja*- and *jō*-stem subtypes), *i*-stem, and *u*-stems, but these were heavily influenced by the pronominal declension in the transition from Indo-European to Germanic. The resulting strong adjectival endings are consequently a mixture of the strong nominal and the demonstrative pronominal declensions. By the early OE period most adjectives of the minor declensions, as well as many nouns of the minor declensions, had moved over to those of the *a*- and *ō*-stems and the *ja*- and *jō*-stems.

A major innovation of the Grmc. languages was the development of a weak adjectival declension similar in form to the weak *n*-stems nouns. The weak adjectival suffix derived from IE **-en-*/*-on-* which appears in Latin and Greek nicknames *Cato* (GEN *Catonis*) 'smart/shrewd (one)' < *catus* 'smart, shrewd' and Greek *Strabōn* 'squint-eyed (one)' < *strabos* 'squint-eyed'. This suffix was probably used in Grmc. phrases like the precursor of OE *se blinda mann* to mean 'the blind one, a man'. The individualizing character of this suffix was gradually grammaticalized into the form of the adjective that appeared with definite noun phrases, while the strong adjectival suffixes came to be used with indefinite noun phrases (Jasanoff 2008: 205; Krause 1968: 175; Osthoff 1876: 120–133). All nominal elements of the noun phrase agreed in case, number, and gender.

Comparative and superlative adjectives were formed from suffixation to the adjectival stem. Two West Grmc. suffixes, **-iz-* and **-ōz-*, were responsible for the OE comparatives which both developed into OE *-r-* via Verner's Law and subsequent rhotacism (cf. Section 3.1 and Section 4.1.5). The original *-i-* of the first of these caused umlaut of the preceding vowel. The OE superlatives *-est* and *-ost*/*-ast* also developed from two different suffixes, **-ist-* and **-ōst-*, respectively, the first of which also caused *i*-umlaut of the preceding vowel. Thus Old English has root vowel alternations in some adjectives like *eald/ieldra/ieldest* and *long/lengra/lengest*, but not in others *earm/earmra/earmost*. Adverbs were also derived from adjectives. (See von Mengden, Chapter 18: Section 1.3.4 for an overview of these and for a description of numerals.)

5.2.4 Pronouns

Old English had two demonstrative pronouns and an interrogative pronoun that agreed with the other members of their noun phrase in case, number, and gender, though there was no gender distinction in the plural. These three pronominal paradigms derive from demonstrative pronouns in the earlier IE language and show substantial similarities in their endings. The main demonstrative was the *se/þæt/sēo* 'the, that (one)' paradigm which served as both definite article and the unmarked demonstrative pronoun. Its suppletive merging of the IE **s-* and **t-* pronominal bases in a single paradigm was evident as far back as Greek and Sanskrit. A second, derivative, pronoun came to serve as the proximal demonstrative, *þes/þis/þēos* 'this (one)', which derived from the same IE **t-* base as the other demonstrative, but with the addition of an **-s(s)-* suffix following the vowel. This pronoun could also function both pronominally and as a determiner. Only Northwest Germanic has a paradigm of this particular construction.

Both demonstratives preserved a fifth case form in the masculine and neuter singulars only. This was *þȳ~þon* in the *se/þæt/sēo* paradigm and *þȳs* in the *þes/þis/þēos* paradigm. These forms, though labeled "instrumental" in the grammars and handbooks, neither derive directly from an earlier instrumental case nor are they used only to express instrumentality. Rather they are used for adverbial and idiomatic expressions such as *þȳ geare* 'in that year', *þȳ lǣs* 'lest', *ǣr þon* 'before that', *þȳ māre þȳ …* 'the more, the…' The Grmc. interrogatives have clear cognates in other IE languages, descending from IE roots in *k^w-. Though the inflectional endings of this paradigm are quite similar to those of the demonstrative pronouns, the interrogatives differ in that they have no plural forms and the singular forms combine the masculine and feminine into a single, animate, category. Outside of the nominative in *hwā*, the endings of the masculine/feminine forms resemble those of the demonstratives. The neuter has a separate nominative/accusative singular form, but is otherwise identical to the masculine-feminine paradigm.

The Grmc. first and second personal pronouns are also derived from IE material. Though Gothic demonstrates that the dual pronouns originally required agreement with dual verbal forms in early Germanic, by Old English the dual forms of verbs had been lost and dual pronouns therefore agreed only with plural verbs. Unlike the first and second person pronouns, the Grmc. third person pronouns are marked for gender as well as for case and number. This fact may be due to their origins in demonstrative bases that were, themselves, marked for gender. Indeed, the personal pronouns' heritage is heterogeneous. Four separate bases fed into the development of the various Grmc. third person pronominal paradigms. Those responsible for the English system were first the IE deictic in **k-* (PGrmc. **x*), which developed into the OE singular forms in *h-*, i.e. *he*, *hine*, *heo*, *his*, etc. The second base derived from an IE demonstrative pronoun in **ei- ~ -i-* that formed the base of the OE plurals in *h-* (the initial *h-* was probably added later by analogy to the singular forms in *h-*) (Lass 1994: 141). Proto-Germanic had no common pronoun for introducing relative clauses, but the indeclinable pronoun *þe* developed as the most common means of expressing this kind of syntactic relationship in Old English.

5.3 Verbal morphology

The ablauting verbs of Indo-European are divided into seven classes of strong verbs in Old English, all of which employ ablaut in conjunction with suffixation to express differences in tense, mood, and number. A small group of anomalous verbs also derived from IE origins. Perhaps the most significant innovation in the Grmc. verbs was the shift of what was primarily an aspectual system to a binary one of present versus past tense. As with the nouns, the dual was lost from the verbs. The indicative was preserved as the mood of declaratives and the second person imperatives continued to express commands, but only in the present tense. The infinitive was a present tense verbal noun which retained case marking in the early Grmc. inflected infinitive forms of which Old English preserves the original dative case. The present participle was a verbal adjective whose form is cognate with that of other IE languages. A Grmc. subjunctive, used in both present and preterit tenses, was formed from the IE optative, which had expressed the wish of the speaker. In the Ingvaeonic languages the three persons of the indicative plural were collapsed into one and the subjunctive had only a single form in each of the singular and plural of both tenses. West Germanic retained only the active voice with vestiges of the passive. The passive/past participle was a passive adjective when transitive, but was simply preterit when intransitive. OE *hātte/hātton* 'is or was/are or were called' preserves the original passive, while all other uses of a passive in Old English were periphrastic constructions using *weorþan* or *bēon/wesan* with the passive participle.

5.3.1 Strong verbs

In the West Grmc. languages each strong verb had four principal parts: a present stem, a preterit first and third person singular stem, a preterit plural and second person singular stem, and a passive participle stem. For at least the first five classes it is presumed that there was root stress on the first two principal parts and suffix stress on the third and fourth. This assumption is supported by the output of Verner's Law visible in the alternation between root-final voiceless fricatives in the first two principal parts and voiced fricatives or stops in the third and fourth (Section 3.1). For a detailed discussion of the development of the PGrmc. strong verbs from both Indo-European and non-IE origins, the reader is referred to Mailhammer (2007).

5.3.2 Weak verbs

The weak verbs, though an innovation of the Grmc. languages, formed their stems from the same morphological material as the strong verbs, i.e. a root – often in the *o*-grade – followed by a stressed suffix. What identified the weak verbs was a dental suffix marking the preterit rather than a root vowel alternation. One of the more popular hypotheses regarding the origin of the dental suffix was that it was a grammaticalization of the preterit forms of the verb *to do* suffixed to the verbal stem. The formal similarity between the Gothic forms of the weak preterit suffix and those of the PGrmc. verb **don* constitute the basis for this claim, e.g. PGrmc. 3P PL **dādun/dedun* 'they did' compared to the Go. 3P PL PRET IND suffix *-dēdun*.

Germanic probably had four classes of weak verbs all of which contained verbs derived from other categories. The first class suffix was from IE **-eja-* which became **-ja* in Germanic. The palatal glide was responsible for both *i*-umlaut of the root vowel and for gemination of the preceding consonant (cf. Section 4.2.4 and Section 4.1.1, respectively) when the *j* was preserved into West Germanic. In the second and third singular present indicative, the imperative, and the entirety of the preterit system, the original glide merged with following vowels to form a high front vowel rather than a glide. Because *i* did not spur gemination of a preceding consonant as *j* did, we find no gemination in these forms of the verb, though *i*-umlaut is present in all forms of the weak class *i*.

In the second class the suffix derived from IE **-āje-/-ājo-* which developed to **-ōi-* in Germanic. At this stage there was no longer a trigger for gemination of the root consonant since the original **j* had collapsed into a diphthong with the preceding vowel. Unlike in class one, there is therefore no gemination in class two and also no *i*-umlaut in the root. If the following inflection began with a vowel, then the thematic *-ōi-* sequence generally became *-ia-* in Old English as in the infinitive PGrmc.**luf-āje-onom* > OE *lufian*. If the suffix were followed by a consonant, the glide of the diphthong was lost and the long, unstressed, *ō* developed regularly to *a*. Thus we find 2/3P SG PRES IND *lufast*, *lufaþ* in class two where we found *fremest*, *fremeþ* in class one.

OE class three verbs have no reflex of a stem vowel, though one does appear in this class elsewhere in Germanic. Thus, the OE personal endings are added directly to the root. There is no trace of a fourth class of weak verbs in Old English and even the third class has been reduced through the migration of its verbs into the first two classes.

5.3.3 Preterit-present verbs

The preterit-present verbs constitute a third system of verbs in the Grmc. languages. They began as strong verbs whose past tense forms developed stative, present-tense, meaning. The strong class I preterit singular, *wāt* < **wītan* 'to see' (cf. Lt. *vīdere*), for instance, came to mean 'I know' (presumably through the development 'I saw' > 'I saw, therefore I know'). In order to express a past tense of this new meaning, speakers created a new preterit form using a dental suffix which has sometimes been associated with the dental preterit marker of the weak verbs, though there are other theories of its origin (see, for example, Prokosch 1927: 334–335). Thus the preterit-presents have a present tense which resembles a strong preterit and a new weak preterit tense. It preserves some of the more archaic endings of the IE perfect seen in the present singular forms in which the earlier *-e* of the 1/3P SG was lost in West Grmc., e.g., *sceal*, and in the *-t* of the 2P SG which predated the *-st* that predominates elsewhere, e.g., *scealt*. The preterit marker was added to the original perfect stem with no intervening stem vowel: *wiste*/*wisse* and *wiston* (< **wit-te and *wit-ton*, respectively). Old English had preterit-present verbs for each of the first six classes of strong verbs.

6 Syntax

Though case marking on noun phrases allowed early Grmc. word order considerable flexibility, the unmarked word order for main clauses was OV, an order inherited from Indo-European. Modifiers most commonly occurred after the phrasal heads. Prepositions far outnumbered postpositions and were closely related to verbal particles which also preceded their heads. In Pre-Old English and later these particles were often written as separate words, although by the OE period we consider them verbal prefixes. Between the Northwest Grmc. runic inscriptions of the 3rd-7th centuries and the first OE texts, SVO word order became somewhat more common and modifiers also commonly appeared before their heads (Lass 1994: 218–222). Pre-Old English must have experienced substantial variation in word order as the language shifted from OV, which dominated the Northwest Grmc. runic inscriptions, to allowing verb-second order, which was quite common in Old English (Lass 1994: 225).

7 Summary

The history of the Germanic speakers who migrated to Britain is characterized by migration, ongoing social upheaval, and heavy linguistic contact. It is therefore not surprising that the Pre-OE period was one of substantial linguistic change. Indeed, Old English may be the most innovative of the early Grmc. languages in terms of sound change alone. Though social instability and linguistic contact continued to spur innovation in the history of English, the process of rapid differentiation began with the first waves of migration to Britain and can be seen in the first OE texts.

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2 Periods: Old English

Abstract

This chapter offers a survey of the main linguistic changes that took place during the Old English period – from the Anglo-Saxon migration around 450 CE to the beginning of the Norman rule of England. Considering that the major features and developments on all linguistic levels will be presented in Section III in more detail, the present article sketches the most salient and important linguistic features of Old English and otherwise focuses on political and cultural events of the period, which had an impact on the development of the English language. Predominantly, these are events that lead to the emergence of new contact situations – such as the Christianization (Latin), the Viking raids (Old Norse) and the emerging Norman influence on the English court in the 11th century (French) – and the most important waves of literary productivity – e.g. King Alfred's educational program and the increasing book production following the Benedictine Reform.

1 Preliminaries

The term "Old English" refers to those varieties of Germanic which were spoken in Great Britain from the Anglo-Saxon migration around 450 up until the end of the 11th century. While the geographical delimitation of the Old English language is unproblematic, the chronological limits are more difficult to determine and to some degree based on convention. Before I describe some of the main developments and characteristics of the Old English period, the most relevant approaches to and motivations for defining a chronological starting point and end point of Old English will be discussed briefly (Section 2).

Taking into consideration that the main characteristics of the different domains of linguistic description are discussed in more detail in Section III, they will remain in the background in this article. The largest part of this chapter (Section 3) will focus on those aspects or developments of Old English that are related with or influenced by the non-linguistic history of its speakers. However, Section 4 will deal with language-internal developments. It will be shown in this context that, while the choice of external dates for period boundaries may of course be associated with salient linguistic features during the development of a language, the relation between the internal and external factors is nevertheless mutual: once a choice of period boundaries has become conventional, the typological characterization of a language (in a given period) is dependent on this choice, which may be useful, but by no means necessary (cf. Curzan, Volume 2, Chapter 79).

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2 A chronological delimitation of Old English

2.1 The beginning of Old English

In the case of Old English, it is easier to determine the beginning of the period than its end. Nevertheless, there are three historical events that can reasonably be interpreted as starting points in different respects. One is the settlement of Germanic tribes in England in the middle of the 5th century, the second is their Christianization around 600, and the third is the date of the earliest surviving written records around 700.

With the arrival of Germanic settlers in England in the middle of the 5th century, their varieties of Germanic develop independently from the varieties of the cognate tribes that have remained on the Continent. Although the differences between the varieties of the settlers and those on the Continent cannot have been too great at the time of the migration, it is the settlers' geographic and political independence as a consequence of the migration which constitutes the basis for the development of English as a variety distinct and independent from the continental varieties of the West Germanic speech community (cf. Section 3.1).

Because close relations with the Continent persist for a relatively long time after the arrival of the Anglo-Saxons, it takes another one and a half centuries until their conversion to the Christian religion constitutes the first landmark of an independent Anglo-Saxon history. The Christianization and its impact on the Old English language will be discussed below in Section 3.2. At this point it may suffice to mention that, because the conversion is the first major change in the society and culture of the Anglo-Saxons that is not shared by the related tribes on the Continent, it is similarly significant for (the beginning of) an independent linguistic history of English as the settlement in Britain. Moreover, the immediate impact of the conversion on the language of the Anglo-Saxons is much more obvious than that of the migration: first, the Latin influence on English grows in intensity and, perhaps more crucially, enters new domains of social life; second, a new writing system, the Latin alphabet, is introduced, and third, a new medium of (linguistic) communication comes to be used – the book.

Finally, one could approach the question of the starting point of Old English from a modern perspective. It is only indirect evidence that gives us a clue about the linguistic consequences of the two aforementioned events. Our direct evidence of any characteristic of (Old) English begins with the oldest surviving written sources containing Old English. Apart from onomastic material in Latin texts and short inscriptions, the earliest documents written in Old English date from the early 8th century. A distinction between a reconstructed "pre-Old English" before 700 and an attested "Old English" after 700, as drawn e.g. in Thomason and Kaufman (1988: 265), therefore does not seem implausible.

While this criterion for determining the beginning of Old English is mainly based on a change in our modern access to the earliest stages of English (reconstruction vs. written evidence), some aspects of Anglo-Saxon history may in fact play a role here: as Hogg (1992b: 6) points out, it is feasible that the shift from a heptarchy of more or less equally influential Anglo-Saxon kingdoms to the cultural dominance of Northumbria in the time after Christianization may be connected with the fact that texts are produced not exclusively in Latin, but also in the vernacular. In other words, we may speculate (but no more than that) that the emergence of the earliest Anglo-Saxon cultural and political centre in Northumbria in the 8th century may lead the Anglo-Saxons to view themselves as one people rather than as different Germanic tribes, and, accordingly, to view their language as English (or, Anglo-Saxon) rather than as the Saxon, Anglian, Kentish, Jutish, etc. varieties of Germanic (but cf. an opposing point raised below in Section 3.1). Evidence for this change in attitude may be the composition of the *Historia ecclesiastica gentis anglorum* by Bede in 731, in which the *gens anglorum* of the title comprises all Germanic inhabitants of Britain and not only the Angles. Yet, as we can see from the earliest written evidence, the English language is not only sufficiently distinct from its closest cognates on the Continent around the year 700 with respect to its structure, its lexicon, and its phonology, it is at this point also considerably heterogeneous in itself – and continues to be so.

I would therefore propose that, whatever happens to the language of the Anglo-Saxon settlers in Britain and for whatever reason it happens, any development after 450 should be taken as specifically English and before 450 should be taken as common (West) Germanic. That our knowledge of the underlying developments is necessarily based on a different method of access before and after around 700 is ultimately secondary to the relevant linguistic changes themselves and for any categorization of Old English.

2.2 The end of Old English

The end point of Old English is marked by the Norman Conquest of 1066. The accession to the throne by William of Normandy in December of that year is considered a landmark in the history of England and, thus, of the community of speakers of English. It should, however, be questioned whether, or to what extent, the events of the year 1066 have only a symbolic value for the history of England rather than constituting an actual break. As will be discussed below (Section 3.6), in terms of the development of the contact situation between (Norman) French and English, the immediate relevance of the Norman Conquest is by far smaller than the prominence of this date in both the history books and in the handbooks on the history of English might suggest.

The major linguistic changes that may be taken as relevant for a distinction between Old and Middle English take place in different linguistic domains – and, accordingly, at different times. The prototypical morphosyntactic features of Middle English – increasing syncretism of inflectional distinctions – begin to emerge as early as in the 10th century, whereas the typical Old English lexicon – largely Germanic with a moderate share of Latin borrowings but hardly any Romance elements – continues to exist up until the end of the 12th century and is attested even in Early Middle English texts such as *The Owl and the Nightingale* or Lagamon's *Brut*; cf. Lutz (2002).

In sum, if we define the Old English period as ranging from 450 to 1100 we mainly follow conventions. The distinction between Old and Middle English cannot be said to be motivated by sufficiently significant linguistic criteria and it is largely arbitrary to refer to the Norman Conquest in this context. Whether we determine 1066, 1100, or 1150 as the endpoint of Old English, it has become conventional to draw the line between Old and Middle English around this time. Strictly speaking, i.e. if we follow purely linguistic criteria, the transition from Old to Middle English expands over the period from the end of the 10th century to the end of the 12th century.

3 The external history and internal development of Old English

3.1 The Anglo-Saxon migration

The 7th-century historian Bede reports that in the year 449 Angles, Saxons, and Jutes, "de tribus Germaniae populis fortioribus" – 'from the strongest tribes of the Germanic people' (Bede, *Historia Ecclesiastica* 1.15; see Colgrave and Mynors [eds.] 1969: 50) – come to Britain and settle there. It has been mentioned above that the migration of the Anglo-Saxons means the beginning of a new speech community whose linguistic and non-linguistic history is now independent of the related tribes and their language(s).

The main significance of the Anglo-Saxon migration therefore lies in the geographical reorganization of the Germanic speech community leading to the emergence of a new society and hence to a new, separate continuum of varieties. Although we do not know much about the social and political organization of these early Germanic settlers, some considerations are possible in this context. It is, on the one hand, reasonable to assume that the people involved in the migration speak varieties that originate in one and the same Continental Germanic dialect continuum. On the other hand, we do not know how close their varieties are or even to what extent there is mutual intelligibility among the settlers. But it is largely irrelevant how heterogeneous the language(s) of the Anglo-Saxons are at the time of their conquest. What we can reasonably assume is that, upon arrival in Britain, all the different groups involved in the settlement view themselves as speaking the same language in contradistinction to the Celtic inhabitants they encounter on the island. The identity of the settlers in their new homelands is necessarily based, among other things, on their common (albeit probably not quite uniform) linguistic background. The migration leads, moreover, to a new group identity of a subset of speakers of Germanic, who, irrespective of the heterogeneity of their own language(s), distinguish themselves both from the earlier inhabitants of Britain and from their relatives on the Continent. It is plausible to argue that it is this socio-psychological aspect which, more than anything else, constitutes the birth of the English language. Accepting this, we can assume, in turn, that it does not take too long after the settlement before the Anglo-Saxons view their version of Germanic as noticeably distinct from other Germanic varieties spoken by those who have stayed behind on the Continent.

The migration itself does not immediately trigger any major change in the linguistic system. The earliest linguistic changes that English does not share with the cognate Germanic languages seem to be, at a first glance, independent of non-linguistic events. In the earliest period of Old English, a larger rearrangement of the phonological system takes place that affects mainly, but not exclusively, stressed vowels. (For a detailed description see Murray, Chapter 17; also cf. Campbell [1959: 50–112] and Hogg [1992a: 76–218] and for a shorter overview cf. Hogg [1992c: 100–119].) Two circumstances are employed in dating these sound changes. One is that other Germanic languages do not seem to have been affected by these changes. And secondly, the earliest written sources of Old English provide evidence that the relevant sound changes must have been completed by the date of their composition. Both these facts together suggest that all these sound changes take place in the time between 450 and 700.

Although this dating is undisputed, the question nevertheless arises whether it is plausible to assume that, within the relatively narrow time frame between 450 and 700, the phonological system is considerably rearranged whereas it remains relatively stable for significantly more than 250 years both before and after this period. Any attempt to answer this question would have to remain speculative to some degree. But it is feasible to assume that the new social and political identity of the settlers leads to some cross-adaptations in the linguistic usage of the settlers. That dialectal differences among the settlers persist and, as we know, never cease to exist, does not exclude the possibility that some of the heterogeneity of these dialects is levelled out as a consequence of the formation of a new community. And since many of the obvious dialectal differences of a continuum are phonological, it is plausible that these adjustments take place predominantly on the phonological level. Bearing in mind the narrow time frame of the early Old English sound changes, it is therefore not implausible to assume that they have been enforced, if not triggered, by the formation of a new speech community as a consequence of the migration.

3.2 Christianization

From around 600 onward, the Christian religion is spread quickly across the country both from the north, under the influence of the Irish Church, and from the south, by St. Augustine of Canterbury and his missionaries, sent to England by Pope Gregory I in 597. As indicated above, the Christianization of the Anglo-Saxons has immediate consequences on two domains of the English language – the lexicon and the writing system.

Language contact with Latin is not a new phenomenon in those days. There has always been a moderate-to-intensive exchange of words between Latin and Germanic, ever since the two languages were neighbors on the Continent. Even after the migrationto England, the Anglo-Saxons adopt some Latin words, although the exact settings of these bilingual contacts are unclear. Plausible contexts are continuing relations with the other Germanic tribes on the continent, scattered speakers of Latin who have stayed in Britain after the Roman armies withdrew in 410, or speakers of Celtic who either use Latin as a *lingua franca* in communication with the Anglo-Saxons or whose language contains itself words borrowed from Latin which are then passed on to the Anglo-Saxons. But the words that are imported into the English language in the course of and after Christianization are of a considerably different kind than earlier, predominantly common-Germanic loans from Latin.

While earlier Latin loans are words related to trading, to the military, or expressions for every-day concepts like household devices, the vocabulary imported with Christianization mostly denotes either concepts immediately related to the new religion and its institutions (e.g. *abbod* ‘abbot’, *alter* ‘altar’, *munuc* ‘monk’) or, generally, more abstract concepts. Another difference from earlier Latin loanwords is the medium through which they are introduced. Because many words come into English via books rather than via oral communication, the words are transferred from written registers of Medieval Latin rather than from Vulgar Latin, which is the source language of the pre-Christian borrowings. For the linguistic observer (rather than for the speaker of Old English), there is another notable difference. Earlier loanwords participate in most or all of the major sound changes that take place in the earliest period of Old English. That is, with respect to their phonology, the pre-Christian words from Latin have adapted to the phonological system of Old English in their written attestations. By contrast, the more recent Latin words, introduced through Christianization, often retain a Latinate shape. The different phonological characteristics are best exemplified by Latin words that are borrowed both in the early and in the later period and that, accordingly appear in different forms in the Old English records. Thus, Lt. *calix* 'chalice' occurs in Old English in an older form, *celc* and a later form, *calic*. Likewise, OE *leahtrice* and OE *lactuce* are both borrowed from Lt. *lactuca* 'lettuce' at different times. (See Wieland, Chapter 23.)

A far-reaching side-effect of Christianization is the introduction of the Latin alphabet in Anglo-Saxon England. Originally introduced as the medium on which the new religion is based, it soon comes to be used for the composition of other texts not immediately related to the Christian faith. Moreover, from about 700 onwards texts written in Latin script are composed in or translated into the English vernacular. Although never widespread in the early Middle Ages, through the introduction of the book and of Latin writing literacy enters new domains of social life which have not been reached by the use of the older writing system, the runic Futhorc.

The first vernacular texts are mostly written in the north of England, in the monastic centers of Northumbria and Mercia. More than in the south, Christianity in the north is influenced by its Irish variety. The Irish use the Latin script themselves, although with a considerable number of stylistic alterations. Consequently, some of the Latin characters used in England in the early Middle Ages are of a slightly different shape than those used on the Continent. The 'yogh' or 'insular G', shaped ⟨ʒ⟩, is used in Anglo-Saxon manuscripts to represent the voiced velar stop /g/, the velar fricative /ɣ/ and the glide /j/. Only in the late Old English literature do we find instances of the 'Carolingian G', shaped ⟨g⟩, then used to distinguish the stop from the fricative. The phonemes /æ/ and /æː/ are represented by an 'ash' ⟨æ⟩, a character shaped as a ligature of Latin ⟨a⟩ and ⟨e⟩. Other Latin letters used in Anglo-Saxon manuscripts differ considerably in shape from the variants we use today in printing.

Three other characters are either not or indirectly taken from the Latin alphabet. Two of them certainly originate in the Futhorc, the set of Runic letters that is used by the Anglo-Saxons before the introduction of Latin writing: ⟨ƿ⟩ ('wynn') represents the bilabial glide /w/. Although the character ⟨w⟩ is usually employed in modern editions of Old English texts, Anglo-Saxon manuscripts use ⟨ƿ⟩ almost throughout, and only occasionally ⟨u⟩ or ⟨uu⟩ for /w/. When Old English is represented by the Latin alphabet, 'thorn' ⟨þ⟩ and 'eth' ⟨ð⟩ are used indistinguishably as allographs for both the voiced and the unvoiced dental fricatives, /θ/ and /ð/. While the former is also adopted from the Futhorc, the origin of the latter is uncertain (cf. Hogg 1992c: 75).

3.3 The Vikings in England

The raid on the Lindisfarne monastery in 793 is the first known instance of a series of increasingly intense attacks on England by Vikings. While initially local plundering rather than attempts at gaining political influence motivates the raids, their quality and purpose change, and by the middle of the 9th century, a large area of England comprising almost all parts of Northumbria and Mercia is under Danish control. When King Alfred of Wessex comes to the throne in 871, his West Saxon kingdom is the only autonomous area of what once used to be the Anglo-Saxon heptarchy. Alfred succeeds in protecting his own territory from Danish rule and also in re-conquering the western parts of Mercia. Moreover, as a consequence of his military success he manages to negotiate a truce resulting in the Treaty of Wedmore in 878. In this treaty Alfred and the Danish leader Guthrum agree on a borderline between an area of Danish legislation (the *Danelaw*) and an independent Wessex.

The linguistic consequences of the Viking rule in England are difficult to measure. Because of the division of England into a Danish and an English political sphere, the situation in the 10th century is as follows: in the south, a relatively stable and peaceful political situation allows Alfred to instigate an educational reform. He supports the import of new books from the continent and the production of new books in England, and he also initiates the translation of Latin books into English and the production of books written in the vernacular. Thus, for the remaining two centuries of the Anglo-Saxon period, the vast majority of sources comes from the area of the West Saxon kingdom.

In the north, by contrast, Viking influence on English is naturally much stronger. Therefore, judging from surviving Old English texts alone, the evidence of language contact between Old Norse and Old English in England is quite small – about 150 words of Scandinavian origin are attested in the Old English sources. Judging however from Middle English evidence, we may assume that there must have been a very intensive contact situation, at least in the area of the Danelaw (cf. Kastovsky 1992: 320). This can be seen from the type of loanwords and their features, rather than from the mere number of words of Scandinavian origin in the English of today. In contrast to the Latin loanwords introduced through the influence of Christianization, Scandinavian loanwords in English are less technical and much more part of the basic vocabulary of English. Words like *skirt*, *egg*, or *sky*, for example, denote everyday concepts rather than more abstract and learned concepts as represented by the Latin borrowings.

Much more efficiently than Latin words, Old Norse loanwords seem to have been integrated into the basic vocabulary with a high token frequency. An example is Old Norse *tacan* 'take' which replaces the highly frequent Old English *niman* and which is one of the few borrowed verbs that is (even today) inflected as a strong verb. Similarly, the verb *get* is, if not borrowed from Old Norse, at least influenced in its phonological shape, as the Old English equivalent *gietan* was pronounced with an initial glide, i.e. /ˈjetɑn/, and would have resulted in PDE **yet* rather than *get*. Moreover, more than the French influence during the Middle English period, Old Norse at some points enters grammatical structures of English, as we have traces of Old Norse in the pronominal paradigms (e.g. *they*, *them*, *their*) and in the inflectional paradigms (e.g. *-s* 3P SG for southern *-[e]þ*).

It should also be noted that Old Norse and Old English are quite close cognates. It is impossible to say whether or to what extent the two languages are mutually intelligible in the 9th and 10th centuries, but many words seem close enough. Townend argues that there is no full comprehensibility between Old Norse and Old English, but that there is what he calls "adequate" or "pragmatic intelligibility" (Townend 2002: 181–183), i.e. a degree of comprehension that allows for basic conversation, but that does not cover the full morphosyntactic complexities of the two systems. Whether or not two etymologically equivalent lexemes can be confused, it is more crucial that, in some cases, their phonological differences cannot be distinguished by the spelling conventions of Old English. What matters therefore is to what degree, given the close relatedness of the two languages, the spelling conventions of Old English allow us to identify traces of linguistic transfer. In other words: how can an Old Norse loanword be distinguished from its Old English cognate in a nearly contemporary source? For instance, the fricative /ʃ/ is represented in Old English manuscripts by the digraph ⟨sc⟩, but this is at the same time the combination of letters which serves best to represent the Old Norse cluster /sk-/. As a consequence cognate pairs like Old Norse /'skyrte/ (PDE *skirt*) and Old English /'ʃyrte/ (PDE *shirt*) are impossible to distinguish by the Old English spelling: both forms would appear as ⟨scyrte⟩, and it is therefore impossible to say when the Scandinavian loanword *skirt* entered the English language.

3.4 Alfred's educational reform

King Alfred's contribution to the history of the English language is twofold. One aspect is that, as a result of his military success, the Danish conquest of England comes to a halt (Section 3.3). The claim that Old Norse would have become the major language of England if the Danish troops had also occupied the south of the country must necessarily remain speculative, but it can at least be assumed that Old English would have been a threatened language and that, had Alfred not defended a stable (in political and military terms) English-speaking area, English would have lost its role as a predominant language in England.

There is another achievement of King Alfred which may not influence the development of English with the same intensity as the contact with Old Norse does, but which influences considerably our knowledge of the English language in the early Middle Ages. Alfred's educational reform is the impetus for a considerable increase in the production (and import) of books in general, and in the production of written literature in Old English in particular. Alfred himself initiates the translation of a number of important and influential Latin texts: Gregory the Great's *Cura Pastoralis* and *Dialogi*, Augustine of Hippo's *Soliloquia*, Boethius's *De consolatione philosophiae*, Paulus Orosius's *Historiae adversus paganos* and, perhaps most important of all, Bede's *Historia ecclesiastica*. The degree of Alfred's personal participation in the translation process varies (and remains disputed), but it can be said that all these translations result from his education policy. Moreover, a number of vernacular texts are composed in the same context, again with varying degrees of Alfred's personal involvement, e.g. the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, which is continued in several versions up until the 12th century, and a *Martyrology.*

As a result, up until the end of the Anglo-Saxon period the vast majority of texts of various genres is produced in the royal court or in the monastic centers of the West Saxon kingdom, most of all in the capital Winchester. For the first time in the history of Old English a large corpus of long prose texts is produced, and for the first time there is evidence of a more standardized written language mainly based on features of the West Saxon dialect, but not without traces from the variety attributed to Mercia (cf. Section 3.5). Up to the end of the Old English period, a large number of Old English documents originate in West Saxon or are heavily infiltrated by features of the West Saxon dialect. The evidence from the Old English sources for our knowledge of the history of the English (spoken) language is therefore clearly misleading, because the varieties spoken in the Midlands (i.e. what in Anglo-Saxon times was the Mercian variety) contribute much more to the development of Present Day (Standard) English than those of West Saxon do.

3.5 The Cluniac reform

Half a century after Alfred's reign, the flourishing book production receives a further impulse. This is triggered by a movement that affects the ecclesiastical history of England rather than, as in the case of Alfred's contribution, the political history, although the two are tightly connected. A monastic reform movement aiming for a stricter and more ascetic interpretation of the Benedictine Rule initiated in the monasteries of Cluny and Fleury (later Saint-Benoît-sur-Loire) in France spreads to England in the middle of the 10th century. One of the central figures in the Cluniac reform movement in England is Æthelwold, Bishop of Winchester 963–984. Educated at the court of King Æthelstan (reigned 921–939), one of Alfred's brothers and successors on the West Saxon throne, Æthelwold continues what Alfred has begun. Although Alfred and Æthelwold carry out two different reform projects, both instigate a revival of literary and intellectual productivity after a period of a constant Viking threat has, at least in this region of England, come to an end. While Æthelwold's commitment is religious rather than political, he can be sure of royal support for his work.

The school founded by Æthelwold at the New Minster in Winchester produces not only books in high numbers. The texts that emerge from the scriptorium at Winchester also have a remarkable stability in orthography and also, as far as we can judge, in their vocabulary. From this, it has been deduced that the language of many documents composed or copied in Winchester and in related scriptoria represents the first attempt at a standardization of the English language. It is, on the one hand, obvious that West Saxon texts from the end of the 10th century onwards often show a remarkable uniformity in the choice and orthographic form of words. But it should also be taken into consideration that we are dealing with a set of texts covering a limited range of scholarly fields. It would be problematic to deduce the existence of a genuine standard language from the relative homogeneity of the Winchester texts alone. Indeed, the very fact that the documents representing "Standard Old English" all derive from a tight network of authors and instigators in a predominantly monastic context – all in all a rather small, albeit influential, group of people – speaks against rather than in favor of the wider use of their linguistic features outside these circles. It is therefore justified to speak of orthographic conventions characteristic of the Winchester school, perhaps of a West Saxon *Schriftsprache*, but it is difficult, if not impossible to make judgments about the scope and influence of the Winchester conventions. The impression that the "Winchester standard" spread widely is not only owed to the political situation described in the Section 3.4, i.e. to the fact that other dialect areas were to a larger or smaller extent excluded from the production of books – at least judging from the material that has survived until today – it is also due to the fact that the most productive single author of the Anglo-Saxon period, Ælfric of Eynsham (c.955–c.1010), is a disciple of Æthelwold. Therefore, it is perhaps more appropriate to say that a large share of West Saxon texts of the later Old English period (and thus of the corpus of Old English texts in general) has some roots in the Winchester tradition rather than that the Winchester tradition contributes to the standardization of Old English.

A few general caveats should be expressed in this context. First, not many of the texts that have survived until today can be said to be pure representatives of one specific variety. Perhaps such a statement would apply most to prototypical representatives of the variety of 10th century Northumbria, such as the *Lindisfarne Gospels* and the

Durham Ritual. But pure West Saxon texts are rare, for several reasons, such as the fact that many of the West Saxon texts, including Winchester documents, are copies of older, lost versions and attest to an earlier layer of Mercian linguistic features. Second, West Saxon cannot have been a dialect as uniform as the descriptions of the Old English dialects often suggest. Kastovsky (1992: 346) points out that the traditional distinction between "Early West Saxon" for the language prototypically represented by the Alfredian translations and "Late West Saxon", prototypically represented by Ælfric's texts, is misleading, as it suggests a mere diachronic distinction between two varieties within only a little more than a hundred years. Rather, it should be assumed that the differences between the two groups of documents are diatopic at least to the same extent as they are diachronic. Third, as indicated above, the idea of an Old English standard language presupposes not only a process of deliberate regulation; it also requires a broader distribution of a standard language in larger parts of the population.

As to the last point it should be noted that perhaps the term "standard", introduced in this context by Gneuss (1972), is the main problem in this context. If a standard is understood as an institutionalized variety that, among other things, serves as a means of communication bridging several local and social differences in the usage of a language, the hypothesis of a Late West Saxon standard involves two problems. First, it is not falsifiable, because we have no clues as to how widely a deliberately regulated variety may have made its way outside the scriptoria. And second, the idea is implausible because it is not clear how a variety attested in a number of specialized scholarly texts should have spread into other areas of society given that literacy was limited to a rather small elite. What is plausible, though, and for this we do have evidence, is that there is an influential intellectual elite which has an enormous impact on the literary productivity in late Anglo-Saxon England, and who seem to have used the language of their works in a deliberate and comparatively uniform way. (See further Kornexl, Chapter 24.).

3.6 Old English and Old French

In addition to the impetus for the production of literature, the import of the Cluniac reform into England must also be seen in a different context of the history of English. It has briefly been discussed earlier (Section 2.2), that French influence on English begins gradually and not abruptly with the Norman Conquest. The monastic reform is in fact the first instance of contact between speakers of French and English. That the Gallo-Romance vernacular is perceived as sufficiently distinct from Latin can be deduced from the explicitly trilingual character of the Oaths of Strasbourg of 842. Although the Oaths can hardly be employed as a data source for the Old French language, it nevertheless attests to the fact that the French vernacular is considered an idiom independent from any variety of Medieval Latin. That this applies not only to the perspective of the speakers of early Old French but also to that of the Anglo-Saxons around the turn of the millennium is confirmed by an English source composed in 1011 by Byrhtferth of Ramsey, i.e. his *Manual* or *Enchiridion*, in which Byrhtferth makes a remark on the correct use of Latin versus French (Byrhtferth, *Enchiridion* 2.1. 449–454; see Baker and Lapidge [eds.] 1995: 88–90).

In spite of the fact that French and Latin were without doubt two distinct idioms in the late 10th century, it is nevertheless impossible in many cases to distinguish clearly whether Romance material in English documents is of Latin or of French origin. For this reason alone there are hardly any clear traces of contact between French and English. Yet, traces do exist: particularly in 11th-century (but pre-Conquest) glossaries, we do occasionally find French words among the Old English interpretations. Most of them, provided they are unambiguously of French rather than of Latin origin, are attested only once, so that we cannot assume that they have ever been part of the English lexicon. Only two such words are clearly French and are attested more than once: *capun* 'capon' in the Antwerpen and Brussels glossaries and *iugelere* 'magician' occurring several times in different glossaries to Aldhelm's *De laude virginitatis* and, notably, once with a different spelling in an anonymous homiletic text, i.e. not as a gloss but in a prose text (cf. von Mengden 1999).

The period of the monastic reform is certainly the earliest date from which contact between speakers of the two languages is attested. It is plausible, therefore, to assume at least a slight degree of lexical transfer. The contact situation continues in the early 11th century when the relations of the Crown with the Duke of Normandy intensify, at the latest under the reign of Æthelred II (reigned 978–1016), who married Emma, the sister of Richard II, Duke of Normandy. That is, in both royal and ecclesiastical circles, there are tight connections between French and English speaking people around the year 1000.

It is difficult to determine how far-reaching and how widespread contacts between these two groups are in England in the first half of the 11th century. But there is some evidence of Norman influence in pre-Conquest England. The occupation of official positions by native speakers of (Norman) French began, albeit on a small scale, as early as the 1040s, with Robert of Jumièges being appointed Bishop of London in 1044 (and promoted to Archbishop of Canterbury in 1051). And both of the two separate entries for the year 1052 in the *Worcester Chronicle* refer to a Norman castle in England (ChronD 1052.1 15 and 1052.2 2; see Cubbin [ed.] 1996: 70, l. 19 and 71, l. 6). These passages clearly imply that the Normans must have been numerous and powerful enough to erect their own military fortifications on English soil – some fifteen years before the Conquest.

But this passage in the *Chronicle* at the same time attests to ongoing language contact: the expression used to refer to the fortification is in fact the first instance of the English word *castle*, in its Old English form *castel*. Its meaning and its grammatical gender (MASC) reveal that it must be a borrowing from Norman French and that it cannot be identical with the homonymous Latin loanword *castel* (NEUT) 'town, village'.

One should, of course, not overstate the linguistic transfer between French and English before the Conquest. But these aspects may suffice to support the point made above in Section 2.2, i.e. that the Norman Conquest as such did not have any immediate consequences for the English language. The events of the year 1066 seem to have been the consequence of a series of steps by the Norman nobility to gain political influence in England – a development always accompanied by support from an influential pro-Norman party in the Anglo-Saxon aristocracy. It is therefore feasible to assume that the intensity of French influence, although traceable, is not considerably greater in the years immediately following the Norman Conquest than it is before. From this perspective, the Norman Conquest stabilizes, but by no means ignites or reinforces, the growing intensity of Anglo-Norman relations. As such, William's victory at Hastings may be seen as one of several important events that pave the way for the enormous influence that French exerts on English in the 13th and 14th centuries. The beginnings of this development are clearly part of the history of Old English rather than of Middle English.

4 Language-internal development: the decline of inflections

The previous section focused on those developments that were either triggered by language-external events or, at least, should be seen and explained in the context of the history of the speech community. A selection of instances of internal change taking place during the Old English period will be discussed briefly in the following.

Old English is often described as an inflecting language. This label follows a particular classification according to morphosyntactic types of languages, which can be observed cross-linguistically. It is particularly prominent in the descriptions of Old English because it is motivated by the contrast with the analytic character of Present Day English. In this context, the classification goes back to Henry Sweet (1874: 160) who took the "full inflections" of Old English as the main defining criterion for his periodization of the English language (cf. the discussion in Curzan, Volume 2, Chapter 79). According to this approach, Middle English is the period with a "limited" set of inflectional categories.

The decline of a complex system of case inflections begins, however, long before the period that we have defined as Old English. During Old English times, the dual number is retained only in some pronominal forms and disappears almost completely by the end of the Old English period. Case syncretism has been a continuous process at all times. While for Proto-Indo-European eight cases are reconstructed, all daughter languages of Indo-European have less than eight cases even in their earliest attested stages. At the beginning of the literary period of Old English, the merger of instrumental and dative has almost been completed, with distinctions retained only in some pronominal forms and in a few adjectives. But to say that during the Old English period a system of formerly five cases reduces to four cases, would again be a simplification, because in many forms of masculine and feminine nouns (neuter nouns never encode the distinction), nominative and accusative are not any longer distinguishable in 11th-century sources. Thus, in spite of the categorization as the "period of full inflections", during the Old English period as many distinctively encoded case values get lost as in Middle English.

The causes of this particular stage in the reduction of the case system are predominantly phonological. The fixed, initial stress characteristic of the Germanic languages generally entails unstressed final syllables. The result is that first front vowels begin to merge in final syllables in the earlier stages of Old English, a process naturally affecting many inflectional endings. Only in the 11th century does the phonetic reduction also affect back vowels. Thus the dative plural suffix *-um* is comparatively stable and even in its reduced forms /-on/ or /-ən/, it is still distinguishable from the other case/gender suffixes in most noun classes because of the nasal; cf. Hogg (1992a: 3n. 2).

If we consider that the loss of case distinctions necessitates the (ultimately Middle English) replacement of the predominant V2 word order in Old English by a rigid SVO order, we can observe a long term development of cross-influences of various linguistic domains: intonation (Germanic initial stress) → phonology → inflectional morphology → syntax. Of these, Old English particularly observes the phonological changes, the syncretism of some of the inflectional markers and also the reduction (or loss) of some inflectional categories.

The decline of morphological values during the Old English period is more substantial in the nominal paradigms than in the verbal forms. While verbal endings are affected by the phonological reduction too, the main difference between the nominal and the verbal system is that the reduction of verb endings does not result in a syncretism of inflectional values to the same extent to which it does in the nominal paradigms. Throughout the Old English period three person values are distinguished in the singular, but not in the plural. There is a general tense distinction between past and present. Finally an indicative and a subjunctive mood are distinguished morphologically.

The most salient feature of the Old English verbal system is shared with all other Germanic languages: the distinction between strong and weak verbs. While weak verbs mark their inflectional values by suffixes, strong verbs use a combination of suffixes and systematic vowel alternations. In this context, the typical descriptions are again more idealized for Old English than they are for later stages of English. The relatively clear set of seven classes of strong verbs that we often find in handbook descriptions is, naturally, full of idiosyncrasies. Moreover, the traditional class distinctions are based on a set of criteria which are not completely consistent (cf. the more detailed discussion in von Mengden, Chapter 18, Morphology, Section 2.4). Again, the impression that the Old English system of strong verbs appears to be more regular and systematic than the Middle English system is certainly not wrong. Yet, it should be noted that handbook descriptions of the verbal system of Middle English tend to include variation among and within the paradigms of the verb classes, whereas equivalent descriptions of Old English focus more on their regularity.

Therefore, although we can generally assign the label 'inflectional language' to Old English – irrespective of its wide diachronic and diatopic variation – it should at the same time be borne in mind that the decline of inflectional categories has been a continuous process since long before the Anglo-Saxon migration. If we refer to Old English as the period of "full inflections" (Sweet 1874: 160), the attribute "full" wrongly implies that the Old English system has reached the highest possible degree of morphological complexity – both from the point of view of the history of English and from a cross-linguistic perspective. Rather, the factors which justify assigning a new label – "English" – to a language whose history does not really have a beginning, and on the basis of which we have defined a starting point of Old English in Section 2.1, are of a sociolinguistic nature. But neither the beginning nor the end of Old English coincide with any salient changes in the inflectional system (cf. the discussion in Curzan, Volume 2, Chapter 79).

5 Summary

Bearing in mind the various problems involved in both periodization and categorization discussed above, we may say that Old English is, particularly in contrast to later stages of English, a typically Germanic language in many respects. The share of inherited Germanic words in the vocabulary is much greater than it is today, and even the moderate share of Latin loanwords is a feature that applies to all Germanic languages in the early Middle Ages. Its syntactic (V2) and morphological (inflectional) features are similarly characteristic of Germanic. Finally, in spite of a major rearrangement of stressed vowels at an early stage of the Old English period, the phoneme inventory, too, is basically the same as that of the other early Germanic languages.

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3 Periods: Middle English

Abstract

Middle English is the period in the history of English when variation is most thoroughly recorded in the spoken mode, and the body of surviving material is very large. In this chapter, the extralinguistic reasons for the survival of variation in Middle English are *given, focusing on the relationship between linguistic form and socio-cultural function. Middle English has come down to us directly through manuscripts, and indirectly through reconstruction and through the study of residualisms in Present-day English; the reliability of the evidence for Middle English is assessed. Each level of language in turn is then discussed: writing- and speech-systems (= transmission), grammar and lexicon. New resources (especially online) for the study of Middle English are flagged, offering exciting possibilities for future research. The aim of the article is to offer both a characterization of Middle English itself and a sketch of the resources available for its study.*

1 What is Middle English?

Middle English is the form of English spoken and written roughly between 1100 and 1500 CE. Its beginning roughly corresponds to the Norman Conquest of 1066, while its end roughly corresponds to the first book printed in English (1475) and the arrival of printing in England (1476): these two historical events, though of very different kinds, have implications for the status of the language during the Middle English period. Up until the Norman Conquest, English (i.e. Old English) had a distinct status as a language of record and for literary expression; it developed a written standardized form, classical Late West Saxon, which was used by scribes outside its area of origin, i.e. Wessex in south-west England (see Kornexl, Chapter 24). After the Norman Conquest, Middle English was displaced in prestige for literary and documentary manuscripts by Latin, and as a language of literary culture (and later record) by varieties of French: by Norman French (which in England developed into Anglo-Norman) up to the middle of the 13th century, and by Central French after that. English remained the speech of the majority of the population and continued to be widely written; but the written mode had a restricted function. If writers wished to communicate beyond their area of origin, or wished to leave a record for subsequent generations, they tended to use other languages than English. These restricted functions for English had linguistic implications, as we shall see.

Towards the end of the Middle English period, English became more elaborated in social function, i.e. used more commonly as a language of record and literary function. The process was gradual: Latin remained common as a language of record and of "serious" literature well into the Early Modern period, and there are still remnants of Anglo-Norman in certain set phrases in the British parliament, e.g. *La Reyne le veult* 'the Queen wishes it' for public bills on receiving royal assent (even though parliamentarians began using English from the middle of the 14th century). But the efflorescence of English literature which we associate with (say) the Elizabethan and Jacobean theater could only have come about because it became possible to use English in a more elaborated way. Reasons for this change include the Reformation, which gave the vernacular a new role in religious expression, and the rise in power of the "middling" classes, notably the bourgeoisie, for whom English was the usual mode of expression (see Schendl, Chapter 32).

Defining Middle English in linguistic terms is in some ways straightforward, with reference to every level of language traditionally identified: in lexicon, in grammar, in sound-system, in writing-system (see Section IV). Middle English differs from Old English in that it manifests large-scale borrowing of vocabulary from French, and in that Norse vocabulary, which had been mostly a feature of the spoken language in

Old English, appears in the written record. In grammar, Middle English is often referred to as the period of "reduced" inflexion, whereby the relationship between words and phrases is expressed to a greater extent than in Old English through element order, the use of prepositions, and through markedly distinctive pronouns; however, there is a wider range of inflexions than in Present-day English, notably with regard to the verb but also (in many varieties) in the adjective. A phonological distinction between voiced and voiceless fricatives, not made in Old English, appears in Middle English; and there are changes in the vowel-system, most notably in the loss of quantity as a feature distinguishing "short" and "long" vowels and in the configuration of the system of diphthongs. These developments are in many cases reflected in the writing system of Middle English, which is highly variable, in that spelling usages seem to have varied from parish to parish; variation in every level of language is reflected in writing. The variety of written Middle English clearly relates to its social function; if English had a local rather than a national function, it makes sense for written forms of Middle English to reflect the spoken mode quite closely, to help readers who would encounter it primarily at the first stage of literacy.

Middle English similarly differs from Modern English. In vocabulary, the transition from Middle to Modern English saw the transfer of large numbers of items not only from French and Latin but also the beginnings of a flood of words from non-European languages, the result of trade and the beginnings of imperial expansion. During the transition from Middle English to the Early Modern English period, usually dated 1500–1700, the present-day pattern of inflexion emerged, while the sound-system underwent a radical change, most notably with regard to the long vowels of late Middle English: the Great Vowel Shift (see Krug, Chapter 48). Finally, variety in writing systems was gradually suppressed as the Middle English period segued into Early Modern English, first of all in writings designed for public consumption and eventually in private letters as well. Again, this suppression of variety related to the changing function of English; it made sense for a written language used for the purposes of record or national communication to develop a form which was less prone to variation.

But such a straightforward characterization of Middle English, though useful as an initial outline, is a massive over-simplification of a highly complex period in the evolution of the English language, omitting the extralinguistic contexts which triggered these changes and the dynamic interaction of levels of language which took place at different speeds, and for different reasons, in different parts of the country. Old English did not become Middle English at midnight in the year 1100; Middle English did not become Modern English at midnight in the year 1500. Moreover, it is in many ways more accurate to consider the history of Middle English – as arguably of all English – as the history of *Englishes*, the history of (in Roger Lass's useful phrase) "a population of variants moving through time" (Lass 2006: 45).

The over-simple characterization offered at the beginning of this section also omits something else crucial: the fact that the primary evidence for Middle English is, though extensive, nevertheless limited. We know a great deal about Middle English – indeed, we are learning more about this state (these states?) of the language all the time – but there is also a great deal which we clearly do not know, and which it is likely we never will. In sum, the characterization just offered is a useful listing of prototypical features but not a *history*, i.e. a narrative which offers at least a partial explanation for – or, in April McMahon's phrase, a "relief from puzzlement" about – the phenomena described

(McMahon 1994: 45). This chapter is designed to engage with current research in this field.

2 Issues of evidence

The primary evidence for Middle English is much restricted in comparison with the massive resources available for students of Modern English. There are, of course, no sound-recordings of Middle English speech, which have been available to students only since the end of the 19th century; and there are no contemporary attempts at structured linguistic descriptions, as are available for scholars working in the Early Modern period. Students of Middle English interested in engaging with contemporary linguistic scholarship on the English language have to make do with the somewhat vague and general comments about linguistic differences made by literary authors, mocking the usages of folk from parts of the country other than their own, e.g. Chaucer's representation of Northern speech in the *Reeve's Tale*, or the humorous representation of Southern speech in the *Wakefield Second Shepherd's Play*. There is, unfortunately, nothing in Middle English equivalent to the Old Icelandic *First Grammatical Treatise*, the sophisticated treatise on pronunciation of the vernacular produced in Iceland in the 13th century.

Evidence for Middle English consists of material remains, most notably manuscripts written by scribes on parchment and latterly on paper, and (at the very end of the Middle English period) early printed books. Some texts – more than have until recently been recognized – were written on the walls of churches, especially towards the end of the period. Thousands of these objects have survived, even though it is likely that very many have been lost. Such texts were produced not only in the scriptoria of monasteries or cathedrals but also in private households, country vicarages and – increasingly so towards the end of the period – in workshops in towns, notably London. Many are now stored in the great libraries of the world: the British Library in London; the college libraries of Oxford and Cambridge; the Bodleian Library in Oxford and Cambridge University Library; the great private libraries of the United States, such as the Huntington and the Pierpont Morgan, and the libraries of universities such as Princeton and Yale; the libraries of Trinity College Dublin and the University of Durham; the John Rylands and Chetham Libraries in Manchester; the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris; Glasgow's Hunterian Collection and Edinburgh's National Library of Scotland. But there are also many manuscripts in less obvious places: in (e.g.) the private Takamiya collection in Tokyo, or in the muniment rooms of local councils, or, even today, of "great houses" such as Alnwick or Petworth.

These manuscripts and early printed books contain texts ranging from major literary works (poems such as Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* or Langland's *Piers Plowman*, or works of religious instruction such as sermons and saints' lives) to more pragmatic and/or ephemeral material (e.g. works of medical reference, wills, letters). Such texts, of course, survive not through conscious selection of representative material, but by chance, often because of the idiosyncratic interests of the 16th- or 17th-century antiquaries who collected them, such as Sir Robert Cotton (whose manuscripts are now in the British Library) or Franciscus Junius (whose collection is now in the Bodleian). Whereas modern sociolinguists or dialectologists can select their informants on the basis of age or social class or precise locality, students of Middle English have to make do with what the vagaries of time have bequeathed to them.

Thus, the first task for any student of Middle English is always to assess the status of the primary evidence presented: the philological enterprise of textual analysis must precede engagement with larger questions of linguistic enquiry. Traditionally the philological study of Old and Middle English has been expressed through the editing of texts: "critical" and "diplomatic". The critical edition has dominated textual scholarship since at least the middle of the 19th century, notably in the editing of Biblical and classical texts, and is generally referred to as "textual criticism". The goal of textual criticism was the creation of the "critical edition", whereby the "threads of transmission" were "follow[ed] back […] to restore the texts as closely as possible to the form which they originally had" (Reynolds and Wilson 1974: 186). The principles of textual criticism, which emerged first in the editing of Biblical and classical texts, were transferred to the editing of vernaculars, and some of the most sophisticated textual criticism has been carried out by editors of Middle English texts. Thus, the editors of the great Athlone edition of *Piers Plowman*, one of the principal (if controversial) achievements of 20th-century Middle English editorial scholarship, refer to the outcome of their enterprise as follows: "a theoretical structure, a complex hypothesis designed to account for a body of phenomena in the light of knowledge about the circumstances which generate them" (Kane and Donaldson 1974: 212).

The focus of the critical edition, therefore, is the author's intention; it is no coincidence that textual criticism flourished as the authorial voice became reified in Romantic and Victorian cultures, and critical editions, published in prestigious series such as those issued by the Early English and Scottish Text Societies (EETS, STS), continue to dominate medieval English literary studies. Textual criticism has developed a battery of techniques whereby extant materials are compared ("collation"), and whereby putative errors – more properly, non-original readings – are identified and used to establish relationships between texts. Once these relationships have been expressed through an appropriate modeling process, traditionally the "stemma", the archetypal text is deemed to be established and can then be corrected in the light of the critical editors' judgement, based on their knowledge of the linguistic and cultural contexts of the period in question. There is, of course, a clear parallel with the tree-diagrams of the 19th-century historical linguists, and it is no surprise that many such linguists combined the editorial and linguistic enterprise (thus the traditional meaning of the term "philology" in Anglophone countries).

With the rise of new approaches to literary criticism from the 1930s onwards, however, there was a decoupling of the literary and linguistic traditions, and most recent EETS and STS publications are critical editions (albeit "conservative" ones), designed primarily for literary scholars and focused on the authorial intention for the work in question. Such editions are potentially problematic for the linguistic student of Middle English, since they are avowedly an abstraction from the surviving data, which is in almost all cases mediated through scribes.

It is therefore often necessary for linguists to return to the original materials, but medieval manuscripts are of course restricted in terms of access; their fragility means that they cannot be easily transported from place to place, and there are also conservation issues to which librarians are rightly sensitive. Photographic images are thus commonly used, traditionally on microfilm or in published facsimiles but increasingly on the internet (for a useful resource, see the relevant section of the Middle English Compendium [McSparran (ed.) 2006]). However, photographic reproductions present linguists with further problems. Publication of images, however accurate, does not offer any interpretation of the facts presented. For such an interpretation, "diplomatic" editing, demanding high-level hermeneutic skills (paleographical, codicological, linguistic) are needed: "What is necessary is that a single editor should spend the time necessary to solve the problems of the manuscript, even those that are themselves trivial and unimportant, and should find a means of presenting his [*sic*] results so that others may benefit from his [*sic*] pains; the job should be done thoroughly once, not superficially by each individual user of a facsimile" (Dobson 1972: xii–xiii). Diplomatic editions, especially when presented in machine-readable form, also allow for "text-mining", whereby texts are searched for forms of interest and the results analysed using various statistical tools.

Diplomatic editions are not often favored by literary scholars, and it is noticeable that EETS, for instance, has not produced diplomatic editions to follow on from the *Ancrene Riwle* series. Yet there are modern developments in what might be termed "computational philology" which are beginning to recuperate the diplomatic edition in Middle English studies, at least for those whose scholarly orientation is primarily linguistic. Computational philology applied to English historical linguistics has become particularly associated with the University of Helsinki, whose VARIENG project (Nevalainen, Taavitsainen, and Leppänen 1998–) continues to make a massive contribution to the historical study of English and related languages, particularly in the area of grammar, and with the University of Michigan, whose *Middle English Compendium* (McSparran [ed.] 2006) is a text-resource linked to the *Middle English Dictionary* (Kurath et al. 1952–2001). But the Helsinki and Michigan projects have tended to utilise critically edited rather than diplomatic texts, which – though often suitable for broad-brush syntactic studies, or for establishing the Middle English lexicon – have limitations when used for detailed study of, say, spelling practices. It is therefore no coincidence that the most significant study yet published of written language usage during the Middle English period, the *Linguistic Atlas of Late Mediaeval English* (LALME) (McIntosh et al. 1986), derived its information not from critical editions but largely directly from manuscript sources, supported where possible by input from diplomatic editions (an online and revised version of the *Linguistic Atlas*, e-LALME is forthcoming; see http://www.ling.ed.ac.uk/research/ihd/index.shtml).

Perhaps the most impressive new direction in fresh diplomatic editing in relation to computational philology is *The Canterbury Tales Project* (Robinson and Bordalejo 1996–), which began as an attempt to develop a new kind of critical edition but which ended up with arguably a much more valuable resource: not only up-to-date transcriptions and bodies of associated apparatus, which have replaced the old Chaucer Society diplomatic editions produced by F. J. Furnivall and his Victorian associates, but also their presentation in machine-readable form. Because machine-readable, such editions allow for highly sophisticated text-mining, identifying spelling-systems and systems of punctuation which are of interest not just for linguists but also for book historians and students of changing literacy practices. Such online electronic corpora, based on diplomatic editing, are now an established part of linguistic enquiry, underpinning (e.g.) the Edinburgh *Linguistic Atlas of Early Middle English* (Laing and Lass 2007) and *Linguistic Atlas of Older Scots* (Williamson 2007), more recent Helsinki initiatives such as the online *Corpus of Early English Correspondence* (Nevalainen et al. 1998) and *Corpus of Scottish Correspondence* (Meurman-Solin 2007), or the Stavanger-Glasgow *Middle English Grammar Corpus* (Stenroos et al. 2011).

Diplomatic editions of Middle English texts are focused not so much on the author of the text as on the transmission of the text; i.e. they engage with scribes as informants. This focus on scribal output underpinned the development of the LALME, for instance. Researchers have showed that texts, when appropriately analysed, can be used as evidence for the language not of authors but of scribes, and, since scribes are, like authors, native users of Middle English, and of course comparatively much more numerous, the information they provide can be investigated for the purposes of linguistic (as opposed to literary) study.

3 Writing and speech

The textual resources described at the end of the previous section are, and will continue to be, invaluable for the study of what might be termed the "transmission" of Middle English, viz. the systems of writing and speech.

The mapping between writing and speech has been a concern of scholars since antiquity. In the classical and medieval west, authorities such as Donatus and Priscian adopted the "doctrine of *littera*", which was developed to correlate speech with alphabetic writing-systems of the kind used for Greek or Latin. This doctrine distinguished between *nomen* ('name [of the letter]'), *potestas* ('power' = 'sound-value'), *figura* ('representation' = 'written-symbol'), with the term *littera* ('letter') as a superordinate classificatory term.

Although this ancient usage has been recently recuperated, most notably by scholars associated with LALME and its successor-projects, most students of Middle English use the accepted terminology to discuss transmission which has been developed in the 20th century. Broadly speaking, written languages are either "phonographic", where there is a mapping (however conventional) between grapheme and phoneme, or "logographic", where there is a mapping between a conventional symbol and a word or morpheme. The relationship between these different systems is of course clinal. Towards the logographic end is Chinese, whose conventionalized characters derive ultimately from pictorial representations of certain key concrete concepts, though this practice was rapidly modified to deal with more abstract notions: "Modern Chinese characters hold few really firm clues as to their pronunciation" (Newnham 1971: 44). Written Middle English, on the other hand, represents the opposite end of the cline, whereas Present-day English, with its various conventionalizations, is, while remaining broadly phonographic, rather closer to the logographic pole (see Rutkowska, Chapter 15).

It is sometimes said that Middle English was written at a time when folk "wrote as they spoke". Such a statement, of course, oversimplifies a complex situation; given that writing-systems are designed to give comparative permanence to something evanescent, i.e. speech, a degree of conventionalisation is to be expected. Nevertheless, the statement does summarise, albeit in broad terms, the phonographic status of Middle English.

Given the historic primacy of speech over writing, it is no surprise that, until comparatively recently, the focus of scholarship has been on the reconstruction of Middle English speech-systems, i.e. the phonology of Middle English. Significant recent discussions include survey articles written for the relevant volumes of the *Cambridge History of the English Language*, especially the second volume (Blake 1992), and there are also useful introductory outlines in (e.g.) Horobin and Smith (2002) or Wright and Wright (1923). The most comprehensive outlines remain those by Luick (1964) and Jordan

(1974); however, both of these date in their essentials from the early 20th century, and both are seriously in need of updating.

Despite this established scholarly tradition, there are approaches which have focused on the written mode as an object of enquiry in its own right. The best-known of these approaches is associated with the creation and exploitation of LALME and its successor projects, treating graphological features as objects of study without necessary reference to their spoken-language equivalents.

A simple example makes the point. There is some evidence, supplied by LALME, that the form *itt* 'it' has a geographical distribution in Middle English; it is a dominant form in several texts localized to northern England, notably Cumberland. But it seems very doubtful that the <tt>-spelling signifies any sound-difference from <t>.

A more subtle difference, again identified as a result of work for the *Linguistic Atlas* (Benskin 1982), is to do with the allographic representation of the grapheme <þ>. (In this context, the term "grapheme" is used as the written language equivalent of the phoneme, i.e. the symbolic unit being aimed at by the scribe, while an "allograph" is the realisation of the grapheme in writing. Replacement of one grapheme by another changes the meaning of the word in which it occurs, but replacement of one allograph by another realisation of the same grapheme does not change the word's meaning. It is conventional to place graphemes in angle brackets, thus: <.>.) In general terms, in northern varieties of Middle English, <þ> seems to have been written identically with <y>, whereas in southern varieties the two graphemes are realized distinctly. Again, there does not seem to be a sound-difference here, although the restriction of <þ> = <y> in some northern texts to "function" words such as *yat* 'that', *ye* 'the' (cf. southern *þat*, *þe*) may correlate with the development of initial-fricative voicing in such cases. Another example of a spelling-usage which can be localized dialectally is initial <x> in *xal* 'shall', *xuld* 'should', which is diagnostically East Anglian. How this feature maps onto pronunciation is again problematic; a plausible argument can be made that such forms represent a pronunciation-difference, but alternatively the usage could simply be a convention with only a local currency.

The "<þ> = <y>" example, of course, problematizes some of the conventional terminology used for the discussion of the writing/speech relationship. Briefly put, the problem is as follows: assignment of the allograph *y* to either the grapheme <þ> or the grapheme <y> depends on the mapping of the allograph onto the sound-equivalent: is the form in question, in context, to be interpreted as a vowel or a semi-vowel, or is it to be interpreted as a fricative? Seeing *y* and *þ* as allographs of a grapheme <þ> raises some theoretical issues about the assignment of allographs to graphemes: can one allograph, in this case *y*, belong to two different graphemes? It is an axiom of phonological theory, of course, that by definition one allophone cannot belong to two different phonemes (although cf. neutralization of phonemes, for which see e.g. Gimson 1989: 50).

Similar problems arise with (e.g.) <u> and <v>; as is well-known, <u> is used prototypically, in Middle English texts, to map onto either a vowel or a consonant when in medial position, whereas <v> is used initially, e.g. *vpon* 'upon', *loue* 'love'. Which mapping is made is determined by context. In Present-day English, the grapheme <y> is similarly differentiated, mapping onto a consonant [j] in initial position but a vowel in final position, cf. *yacht*, *dizzy*.

Michael Benskin (1982) simplifies this problem of categorization by recuperating the ancient doctrine of *littera*, and setting aside as unnecessarily complex the apparently obvious parallelisms between grapheme/phoneme, allograph/allophone. According to Benskin's approach, the *figura* <y>, in some varieties, may be assumed simply to map onto two *potestates*, or sound-equivalents, with the *nomen* "thorn". Developed discussions of these issues, using this terminology, have been adopted by others working in the LALME tradition (e.g. Laing and Lass 2009).

Although it is true that there are many features of Middle English writing-systems which do not seem to map onto sound-differences, there are also features where such a mapping is much more likely. When a Northern scribe writes *stane* for 'stone' and a Southern or Midland scribe writes *stone* it seems likely that some sound-difference is being addressed; when a Southern scribe writes *voules* 'birds' (cf. PDE *fowls*) and a Northern or Midland scribe writes *foules*, again it seems likely that a sound-difference is being flagged.

The issue, of course, is what these sound-differences really are. Our understanding of Middle English phonology is based on the interpretation of the following:

a) "reconstruction", both comparative (dealing with cognate languages) and internal (dealing with paradigmatic variation);
b) analysis of "residualisms" surviving in modern accents of English;
c) analysis of the writings of spelling-reformers and phoneticians from the Early Modern English period, supplying information about usages closer to the Middle English period than now;
d) analysis of contemporary verse-practices, based on the analysis of rhyme, alliteration and meter; and
e) analysis of spellings.

None of these approaches, of course, provides direct evidence – there are no tape-recordings from the Middle Ages – but they allow for the recuperation of the phonologies of Middle English in fairly broad terms. Details are given in standard handbooks on the subject, to which further reference should be made (e.g. Jordan 1974; see also Horobin and Smith 2002 and references there cited). Given the restrictions of space, an example might suffice to show not only what can be achieved using these various resources, but also the kind of problems faced by students of Middle English interested in reconstructing the sound-systems of the period. The example chosen here is from a 14th-century Middle English romance, *Sir Orfeo*. *Sir Orfeo* survives in three medieval manuscripts, of which the best known and the most authoritative is the Auchinleck Manuscript (Burnley and Wiggins [eds.] 2003); a facsimile, transcription and associated apparatus are available as an online resource. The Auchinleck Manuscript is a large miscellany in several hands; *Sir Orfeo* is now the thirty-eighth item contained within it.

There is good evidence from external sources that the Auchinleck Manuscript was copied in London, but the rhyming practices in *Sir Orfeo* indicate that it was composed in the West Midlands. Evidence for such a localization includes "mistaken" rhymes such as *frut* 'fruit' (from Anglo-Norman *frūt*): *lite* 'little' (from OE *lȳt*), *man* 'man' (OE *mann*): *opan* (OE *uppon*). The form *opan* seems to be an artificial formation, not attested elsewhere in Middle English and used here to sustain the eye-rhyme with the form *man*; forms for 'upon' all otherwise end in *–on*, and the rhyme would only work where 'man' appears as *mon*, prototypically a Western form. With the rhyme *frut:*

lite, the scribe has not bothered to sustain the eye-rhyme, and this too is suggestive. Old English *lȳt* is reflected in *lute*, again, in Western dialects.

A. J. Bliss, in his edition of *Sir Orfeo*, argues against a West Midland provenance for the poem on the basis of the form *owy* 'away' rhyming with *cri* 'cry' and *fairy* 'fairy'; cf. mid-line *oway* elsewhere in the text; Bliss considers the form *owy* to be "unmistakably Kentish" (Bliss [ed.] 1966: lii). However, the Kentish associations of the form *owy* have been challenged (see comments by E. G. Stanley, cited by Bliss), and the remaining rhyming evidence, along with certain literary characteristics in the text, suggests a West Midland association. (See further Samuels 1955: 59.)

The mapping of these rhymes onto speech can be reconstructed from an examination of residualisms in later accents of English. For instance, a rounded back vowel in 'man' was recorded in (inter alia) Warwickshire, Worcestershire, Shropshire, etc., by Joseph Wright, an excellent observer, at the beginning of the 20th century (see Wright 1905: 520); similar usages are noted in the mid-20th century (see e.g. Wakelin 1977: 96), where the form is seen as characteristic of the West Midlands. It therefore seems to be reasonable to suppose that this situation also applied in Middle English times, as suggested by spellings such as *mon* 'man'. Such complex interpretative strategies as the one just illustrated exemplify the procedures used for reconstructing Middle English pronunciation; current developments in Middle English studies, most notably the completion of LALME and its successor projects, make, as indicated above, a comprehensive new interpretative survey a major scholarly desideratum.

4 Grammar

Just as Middle English accents vary diatopically and diachronically, so do Middle English grammars. In broad terms, northern grammars tend to early innovation, while southern grammars tend to be more conservative, but this broad characterization misses the complex set of grammatical systems which existed in Middle English, and the various constraints which underpin them.

Traditionally, the history of English grammar has been described in terms of the shift from synthesis to analysis, i.e. from a language which expresses the relationship between words by means of inflexional endings joined to lexical stems to one which maps such relationships by means of function-words such as prepositions. This broad characterization, of course, needs considerable nuancing, and can better be expressed as a comparatively short shift along a cline. Old English, in comparison with Present-day English, is comparatively synthetic, but nowhere near as synthetic as (say) non-Indo-European languages such as Present-day Finnish or Zulu, older Indo-European languages such as classical Latin – or even earlier manifestations of Germanic such as 4th-century Gothic, which, unlike OE, regularly distinguished nominative and accusative plural forms of the noun; cf. OE *hlāfas* 'loaves' (both NOM and ACC), Go. *hláibōs* (NOM), *hláibans* (ACC). Present-day English is comparatively analytic, but not as analytic as (say) Present-day Mandarin Chinese; a 21st-century English-speaker still marks person, number and case, and sustains grammatical cohesion, with concord between verbal and pronominal inflexions, for instance, e.g. *I love bananas* beside *she hates bananas*.

As might be expected, Middle English grammars occupy a half-way position between Old and Present-day English, although there is both diachronic and diatopic variation. Here in (1), for instance, is a short passage from one of the writings ascribed to the Yorkshire writer Richard Rolle, as it survives in the Thornton Manuscript held in the Cathedral Chapter Library at Lincoln, and localized to Lincolnshire:

(1) *Arestotill sais þat þe bees are feghtande agaynes hym þat will drawe þaire hony fra thayme. Swa sulde we do agaynes deuelis, þat afforces thame to reue fra vs þe hony of poure lyfe and of grace. For many are, þat neuer kane halde þe ordyre of lufe ynence þaire frendys, sybbe or fremmede. Bot outhire þay lufe þaym ouer mekill, settand thaire thoghte vnryghtwysely on thaym, or þay luf thayme ouer lyttill, yf þay doo noghte all as þey wolde till þame* (Sisam 1921: 41)
'Aristotle says that the bees are fighting against him who wishes to take their honey from them. So ought we to do against devils, who endeavor [literally, endeavor them, cf. the French reflexive verb *s'afforcer*] to take from us the honey of humble life and of grace. For there are many, who never know how to observe moderation in [literally, never know how to hold the order of] towards their friends, akin or not akin. But either they love them too much, focusing their mind unrighteously on them, or they love them too little' (my translation)

Aspects of the spelling of this passage defamiliarize the text for a modern reader, e.g. *swa* 'so' and *sulde* 'should', both of which are distinctively northern in dialectal distribution (the former with northern <a> as the reflex of Old English *ā*, the latter with <s> in 'shall', 'should' – demonstrating, incidentally, the similarity between northern Middle English and usages in West Germanic languages beyond the British Isles, cf. Present-day German and Dutch cognates). But in many grammatical features there are features which correlate, broadly, with Present-day English; thus verbs such as *sais*, *are* appear much as modern English, cf. PDE *says*, *are*, and the pronominal system is also similar to modern usage, e.g. *þaire* 'their', *tha(y)me* 'them', cf. OE *hīe*, *him*.

There are some differences in the passage in inflexional morphology in comparison with Present-day Standard English. The form *afforces*, for instance, has an inflected form in *–es* despite being governed by a relative pronoun *þat* 'who' postmodifying a plural noun *deuells* 'devils', and the present participle ending *–ande* in *feghtande* might be compared with the Present-day Standard English *-ing*. However, such forms are only seen as deviant from the perspective of standard usage; *-s*-type endings in plural verbs, and a present participle inflexion in *–an* (derived from *–ande*) are both features of Present-day Scots, for instance. It is noticeable that, in the Rolle passage, the *-s* is dropped when the verb is immediately preceded by a third-person plural pronoun, e.g. *þay luf(e)*; this structure, the so-called Northern Personal Pronoun Rule, is still a characteristic feature of Scots. (The origins of the Northern Personal Pronoun Rule have been much debated. Several scholars have suggested that the construction is derived through contact with a similar pattern in Celtic languages, and this view has recently been developed by Klemola 2000; Benskin 2011.)

The Rolle passage might be compared with another 14th-century text from a quite distinct dialect area: *The Ayenbite of Inwyt* by Dan Michel of Northgate, which survives in a holograph manuscript (London, British Library Arundel 57), localized to Canterbury in Kent, in the extreme south of England, and dated to 1340. The following passage gives some flavor of the language of the text (2):

(2) *Efterward þer wes a poure man, ase me zayþ, þet hedde ane cou; and yhyerde zigge of his preste ine his prechinge þet God zede in his spelle þet God wolde yelde an*

hondreduald al þet me yeaue uor him. Þe guode man, mid þe rede of his wyue, yeaf his cou to his preste, þet wes riche. Þe prest his nom bleþeliche, and hise zente to þe oþren þet he hedde. Þo hit com to euen, þe guode mannes cou com hom to his house ase hi wes ywoned, and ledde mid hare alle þe prestes kun, al to an hondred. Þo þe guode man ysez þet, he þozte þet þet wes þet word of þe Godspelle þet he hedde yyolde; and him hi weren yloked beuore his bissope aye þane prest. (Sisam 1921: 34–35)

'Afterwards there was a poor man, as it is said to me, who had a cow; and [he] heard say from his priest in his preaching that God said in his gospel that God would repay a hundredfold all that one gave for him. The good man, according to the advice of his wife, gave his cow to his priest, who was rich. The priest took his [cow] happily, and sent her to the others that he had. When it came to evening, the good man's cow came home to his house as she was accustomed, and led with her all the priest's cattle, up to a hundred. When the good man saw that, he thought that that was the word of the Gospel that he had restored; and they were adjudged [literally, looked] to him before the bishop against the priest' [i.e. the bishop ruled that a poor man should have the property in question, rather than the priest; see further Sisam 1921: 213]' (my translation)

Again, there are distinctive features of spelling in this passage, such as *z*, *u*/*v* where <s, f> would appear in Present-day English, e.g. *zayþ* 'says', *zente* 'sent', *uor* 'for', *wyue* 'wife'; this usage seems to reflect "Southern voicing", still a feature of South-Western accents but recessive in Kent by Joseph Wright's day (see Wright 1905: 226, 241). But in grammatical terms, the passage demonstrates southern retention of the older pronouns in *h*-, e.g. *hi* 'they/she', and even a relic of the inflected determiner, viz. *þane* 'the/that' (DAT). In phrases such as *þe guode man* 'the good man', adjectival inflexion is retained. In verbs, the Old English *ge*-prefix, which was apparently in origin an aspectual marker, is retained in reduced form as *y*-, in *ywoned* 'accustomed', *yloked* 'adjudged' etc., while the third person singular inflexion appears as *–þ* in the impersonal construction *me zayþ* 'it is said to me'. In sum, the inflexional morphology of this passage is conservative in comparison with the northern usage represented by the Rolle text (see 1).

Syntactically, Middle English retains some features characteristic of Old English which are no longer current in present-day usage. The following passage (3) is from a Western text, John of Trevisa's translation of Higden's *Polychronicon*, as it survives in London, British Library Cotton Tiberius D.vii, a manuscript dated to around 1400 and localized to Berkeley in Gloucestershire, on the English side of the Severn Estuary.

(3) *Yn Britayn buþ meny wondres. Noþeles foure buþ most wonderfol. Þe furste ys at Pectoun. Þar bloweþ so strong a wynd out of þe chenes of þe eorþe þat hyt casteþ vp aze cloþes þat me casteþ yn. Þe secunde ys at Stonhenge bysydes Salesbury. Þar gret stones and wondur huge buþ arered an hyz, as hyt were zates, so þat þar semeþ zates yset apon oþer zates. Noþeles hyt ys nozt clerlych yknowe noþer parceyuet houz and wharfore a buþ so arered and so wonderlych yhonged.* (Sisam 1921: 146)

'There are many wonders in Britain. Nonetheless four are most wonderful. The first is at "Pectoun" [a mistake for the Peak of Derbyshire; see Sisam 1921: 252]. There such a strong wind blows out of the fissures of the earth that it throws back up clothes that are thrown in [literally, that one throws in]. The

> second is at Stonehenge besides Salisbury. There great and wonderfully huge stones are raised up high, in the manner of gates [literally, as it were gates], so that there seem to be gates set upon other gates. Nevertheless it is not clearly known or perceived how and wherefore they are raised up in this way and so wonderfully hung' (my translation)

The passage contains several features characteristic of a south-west Midland dialect, e.g. forms such as *buþ* 'are', with vowel in <u> and plural inflexion in *-þ*, past participles with *y-*, e.g. *yhonged*, *yknowe*, or the form *a* 'they'. But there are also syntactic archaisms; thus, the main verb is in "second position" after an initial adverbial, as in Old English and Present-day German, in constructions such as *Þar bloweþ so strong a wynd out of þe chenes of þe eorþe*, while *gret stones and wondur huge* 'great and wonderfully huge stones' is an example of the characteristically Old English construction known as the "splitting of heavy groups" (see Mitchell 1985: 612–616, Sections 1464–1471).

The grammatical differences between the three passages analysed so far seem to derive from the different interaction each dialect has had with the language with which late Old English had had most intimate contact, viz. Old Norse. The impact of Norse on English was not really reflected in the written language in Anglo-Saxon times, since "classical" Late West Saxon *Schriftsprache* – based on the usage of the parts of England furthest from the Viking invasions – is by far the best recorded variety of English during the period, and was a language of official record (and thus liable to standardization) (see Kornexl, Chapter 24). Only during the Middle English period, with the loss of the national currency of the *Schriftsprache*, is the full impact of Norse to be discerned.

It might be expected that the influence of Norse would be strongest in those areas where Viking settlement was most dense, viz. Northern England; and the fact that grammatical innovation is earliest and most thorough in northern varieties indicates that the impact of Norse encouraged the continuing shift, in English, from synthesis to analysis that characterizes – albeit with varying speeds and to varying extents – all the Germanic languages. Barbara Strang famously argued that the process "came first in the [North] because of its long exposure to bilingualism":

> Those of us who have tried, as adults, to fit into a new language-community know that in such circumstances one does not retain any more of the morphology of the new language than is strictly necessary to make oneself understood. Where a community is unilingual, old patterns remain from inertia, regardless of their functional obsolescence. In this indirect way, far more than through direct syntactic borrowing, the presence of a Scandinavian community affected the syntax of English (Strang 1970: 281).

5 Lexicon

Norse left its mark on the English lexicon as well as (it seems) its grammar. Most scholars hold that the third-person plural pronouns already cited as characteristic of Northern Middle English and now standard in Present-day English, viz. *they, them, their* have a Norse etymology, although their adoption may have been encouraged by congruence of the initial sound in Norse *þeir*, *þeim*, *þeira* with that of the so-called "simple" demonstrative of Old English, viz. *þā, þǣm, þāra*, all of which could be used with pronominal function. A more complex example is the form *she*, which seems to demonstrate the impact of Norse in a more roundabout way. Most scholars hold that this form arose from a blend of the Old English *hēo* with a Norse pronunciation, yielding **hjō*; such forms seem to be represented in spelling by (e.g.) *ȝho*. The /hj/-cluster, being of low yield in the English lexicon, has a tendency to shift to [ʃ], cf. the form *Shug*, a modern nickname for the common Scottish personal name *Hugh*, or the commonly-cited example of *Shetland* from older *Hjaltland* (see further Britton 1991; see also Samuels 1972: 114–116).

Adoption of the Norse forms of the pronouns seems to have been encouraged by general inflexional loss; more distinctive pronouns were required as syntactic tracking devices, and it is noticeable that the Present-day English third-person pronouns *he*, *she*, *it* and *they* are much more phonetically distinctive than the Old English equivalents *hē*, *hēo*, *hit* and *hīe*. It is probably not a coincidence, therefore, that it was in Kent, where inflexional distinctions were best preserved, that the new distinctive pronouns were slowest to develop – although of course this slowness would have been reinforced by the fact that the new forms, because derived from Norse, were not available in that part of the country for early selection.

Norse also left its mark on the set of open-class words commonly occurring in English; common words such as *ill*, *wing*, *egg*, *take*, *skill* are all from Norse. Some words derived from Norse but with Old English cognates have, interestingly, developed distinct meanings, e.g. Norse-derived *skirt* beside Old English-derived *shirt*. Because of the closeness of the relationship between the two languages – particularly between Norse and the most northerly dialect of Old English, Old Anglian – it is occasionally hard to work out whether the Present-day English word is derived from Norse or from a dialect of English; a good example of such an uncertain form is *call*, which is probably derived from Norse *kalla* but is also recorded once in Old English as *ceallian* (see the etymology in OED for *call* v.). Norse-derived place-names often indicate Norse settlement, even if the forms involved are no longer part of the local dialect; thus *Ormskirk* in Lancashire contains the Norse generic *kirk* 'church', flagging a time when the local word for 'church' was *kirk*. However, the form is recessive, and is now largely restricted to Scottish use, referring to the established Church of Scotland (see Volume 2, Dance, Chapter 110).

Whereas Norse-derived words seem to fall for the most part into everyday domains of language during the Middle English period, other words taken from other languages are of more restricted currency. Into this group fall what are by far the largest body of new items entering the English lexicon, viz. words derived from varieties of French. The earliest French-derived forms which seem to have become part of the English lexicon were taken, as might be expected, from Norman French, e.g. *prison*, *grace*, *mercy*, *baron* etc.; later on during the Middle English period many words are taken from Central French. Sometimes an early loan from Norman French can be distinguished in English by its pronunciation; thus Present-day English *war* comes from Norman French *werre* rather than from Central French *guerre*. Sometimes Norman and Central French cognates have both entered the language, cf. *warden* alongside *guardian*. Many French stems have been combined with English affixes to produce new words, e.g. *gentleness* (see Volume 2, Skaffari, Chapter 106).

The influx of French words also had a structural effect on the semantics of the English lexicon: new words took over slots hitherto occupied by native forms, and a reorganisation followed. For instance, the French-derived word *memory*, first recorded in

English in the 13th century, took over from Old English *(ge)mynd*, which in turn replaced the obsolete and largely poetical form *hyge* with the meaning 'mind' (see Smith 1996: 138). The study of the shifting semantic structure of English is currently in its infancy. The recent completion of the *Historical Thesaurus of the Oxford English Dictionary* (Kay et al. 2009) will allow for a major leap forward in our understanding of semantic change with reference to the lexicon; the possibilities for such work have already been demonstrated by the online *Thesaurus of Old English* (Edmonds et al. 2005; also Roberts et al. 2000).

The primary resources for the study of the Middle English lexicon remain, however, not only the *Oxford English Dictionary* (Simpson [ed.] 2000–), on which the *Historical Thesaurus* draws and with which it is now linked online, but also the *Middle English Dictionary* (Kurath et al. 1952–2001). The *Middle English Dictionary*, whose first fascicule appeared in 1952 but which derived originally from William Craigie's call, back in 1919, for a series of "period" dictionaries to complement the *Oxford English Dictionary*, was completed in print form in 2001. It was transferred online shortly afterwards as part of the larger *Middle English Compendium* (McSparran [ed.] 2006; http://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/mec/digitMSS.html) which also includes a corpus of machine-readable texts and a hyper-bibliography, greatly increasing its functionality. The online version of the *Middle English Dictionary* makes it possible for complex searches to be performed; it also enhances massively our understanding of the range of variation that existed in Middle English.

6 Summary

It will be clear from the above that the study of Middle English is at an exciting stage. Middle English is, for the reasons given above, the period in the history of English when variation in the spoken mode is reflected (however partially) most thoroughly in writing, and the variationist paradigms now dominant in theoretical studies offer scholars many exciting avenues for future research. The combination of the new resources now available alongside major developments in linguistic theory means that a reconciliation of "old" philology and "new" linguistics is now possible (see the very apposite comments in Rissanen 1990, which prefigured many current developments in the field).

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4 Periods: Early Modern English

Abstract

The two most notable changes in the Early Modern English period (1500–1700) were standardization and the growth of the lexicon. Changes in the cultural and political climate, such as the spread of printing and increasing availability of education and subsequent growing literacy among the population, were linked to these changes. The process of vernacularization in many areas (science, religion, law, government) produced new uses for English, and the Renaissance ideals of writing produced new styles and registers. Increased mobility, particularly towards London, contributed to the spread of linguistic innovations. The progressively more global trade brought contacts with new languages, and the spread of English world wide took its first steps in the colonialization of North America.

1 Introduction

Early Modern English is perhaps most commonly said to range from 1500 to 1700, but since language change is gradual rather than abrupt, such demarcation lines are

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naturally abstractions. Late Middle English during the 15th century increasingly shows features typical of Modern English, becoming more easily understandable even to the untrained present-day reader. The spread of the printing presses, one of the shaping forces on the development of Early Modern English, started towards the end of that century. Similarly, the cut-off date at 1700 marks the approximate time when most great changes during the Early Modern English period had run their course, and leaves the heyday of the prescriptive and normative tradition of the 18th century outside this stage in the development of the language.

The social, political, and cultural changes associated with the Renaissance all influenced the development of the English language in the early modern period. These changes were in many ways interrelated, and reinforced each other. The preference for studying classical sources instead of the medieval authorities' commentaries on them (*Ad fontes*) led to an educational reform, benefiting from the new appreciation of learning. The new schools provided literacy for an increasingly large part of the population. The changes in the intellectual climate and educational opportunities were both tied to the advancement of science and the concomitant vernacularization process of scientific writing. The Reformation, with a gradual break from the Latin traditions of the Catholic Church and the vernacularization of religious life, showed a parallel trend in stressing the authority of the original source, the Bible, and the need for people to have the ability to study it firsthand. Similar trends of vernacularization can be found in other areas of life, such as politics and law. Finally, the Age of Discovery provided contacts with new cultures as well as the beginnings of colonialization and, on the linguistic front, the first stages of American English. Many changes had a direct impact on the daily lives of the population, and the printing press was instrumental in disseminating these trends to the reading public.

On the level of linguistic change, the two most notable processes are the standardization of written language and the vast increase in the lexicon. Much attention has been paid to the standardization process, which tends to provide an overly narrow view of the language as a whole, since dialects continued to be spoken (and in some cases written) by a vast majority of the population, even if this is disguised in the evidence remaining to us. While standardization of particularly printed sources tends to mask existing linguistic variation, there are also sources which give us a new perspective on the language. From the point of view of the linguist studying the period, the most important difference with earlier centuries is the wealth of new evidence on the linguistic practices of the population, providing us with English that was never written down before, or not in such quantity. Not only are there more types of texts (such as scientific and religious writing) being written in English, there are also more people than ever leaving written evidence concerning their lives. "Ego documents", such as letters, autobiographies, wills, and travelogues, all have first person singular in common, but they also all give first-hand evidence of the linguistic practices of people in often quite private and personal, informal circumstances. We are still at the mercy of what has been preserved, but because more texts of all kinds were produced, there are also more kinds of writing remaining.

There are few general descriptions of Early Modern English. The most extensive of these is the third volume of the *Cambridge History of English* (Lass 1999). There are also three book-length introductions aimed primarily at an undergraduate readership: Barber (1997), Görlach (1991), and Nevalainen (2006). Each represents a particular stage in the scholarship on Early Modern English, as can be most clearly seen in the evidence they use to support their description of the language. Barber illustrates his volume mostly through literary texts, following the tradition of stressing the importance of Shakespeare, and the value of drama as evidence of spoken language. Görlach includes an ample selection of texts from a number of genres, bringing a wider perspective by the inclusion of more formal, non-literary types of writing. Nevalainen is a representative of the present-day paradigm of corpus-based research and draws her examples from electronic corpora and databases (see Section 4 below). All approaches have their merits, and together they provide a fuller picture of what the English language was like. Together they also illustrate the varied approaches it is possible to take when studying the language of the early modern period.

This chapter has its main focus on the social, cultural, and political contexts in which Early Modern English was produced (Section 2) and on the production of English language texts (Section 3). A brief introduction to resources for the study of Early Modern English is provided in Section 4. The last section gives a brief overview of some of the changes in the language of the period, but leaves the more detailed discussion of all the linguistic aspects of Early Modern English to be found in the relevant chapters elsewhere in these volumes.

2 Historical and social background

Language variation and change never take place in isolation. The connections between language and society mean that historical events need to be taken into account also when discussing the overall developments of Early Modern English. While Lass (1999: 5) is certainly correct in asserting that "[t]he story of a language 'itself' must be carefully distinguished from the story of its changing uses, users and social context – just as the changes themselves (as results) must be distinguished from the mechanisms by which they came about (e.g. lexical and social diffusion)", it would still be remiss of us to overlook the influence of political and social changes taking place in the society where Early Modern English was being spoken and written. These changes required language users to adapt to new situations by creating new words and new styles of writing, they facilitated or hindered the dissemination of changes, and they influenced the variety of texts produced and preserved to us for study.

Arguably, the most significant political events in the history of the period (at least when looked at from a linguistic point of view) were probably the Reformation and the consequent dissolution of the monasteries in the 16th century and the Civil War in the 17th century. Both episodes led to increasingly loose network ties because of the increased mobility of the population, and these in turn sped up linguistic change for some variables (Milroy 1992; Raumolin-Brunberg 1998). Both also produced, directly or indirectly, new types of texts, which allowed English to be written down in ways unlike those of previous centuries.

The main development in social history relevant for language change was the advancement of educational opportunities for a wider range of social strata and the subsequent increased literacy rate of the population. This, in turn, gives us more linguistic first-hand evidence from a larger proportion of the population. The more widespread literacy also tied in with the advancement of printing, since there was a more extensive reading public than before. The availability of new genres for a lay audience and the growing vernacularization of genres such as science and religion, which had previously been mainly the province of Latin, were all part of the larger picture.

The population of England increased rapidly during the 16th century, followed by a time of stagnation before a further increase began in the 18th century (Coleman and Salt 1992: 2). Since there were no reliable statistics or census data created at the time, estimates of population size have been made based on such divergent data as muster rolls, lay subsidy rolls, ecclesiastical censuses, and parish registers. The reliability of population information increases when "a modernizing mercantilist state" required accurate information of resources and security, but also increasing literacy and numeracy and a more settled social and political order contributed to the development (Coleman and Salt 1992: 7). A summary of different population estimates suggests that the mid-16th-century population of England was somewhere around 2.8 million, rising to 4.1 million in the early 17th century, and showing a reasonably steady 5.0–5.2 million in the latter half of the 17th century (Coleman and Salt 1992: 5). The population of Scotland around 1600 has been estimated at one million, stagnating after that, while Ireland went from the same one-million population in 1600 to twice that in 1700; the North American English-speaking population started from a few thousand and reached quarter of a million by 1700 (Kishlansky 1996: 8). The population of London increased at a much more rapid pace than that of the country in general, from 50,000 in 1500 to 200,000 in 1600 and 575,000 in 1700 (Coleman and Salt 1992: 28). This shows the growing importance of the metropolis as a hub of government, commerce, and culture, and points to a special position also from the point of view of linguistic development (see Nevalainen, Volume 2, Historical Sociolinguistics).

Already in medieval Britain there was a fair amount of geographical mobility and a later age of marriage than seems to have been common elsewhere in Europe. This was due to a free market in land, labor, and food. During the early modern period the average household consisted of 4.7 people, who were members of the nuclear family, and only rarely were there three generations under one roof. Up to 30% of households included servants, i.e. resident household or farm workers, who were typically single, aged between 15 and 30, and both men and women. As many as three quarters of boys and half of girls were in service at some point of their life. The common practice of service increased the geographical mobility of the population even further. The average age of first marriage in the 17th century for men was around 28 and for women 26 (Coleman and Salt 1992: 7, 14–15). This pattern of population movement had an impact on linguistic change in promoting dialect contact.

As the population increased, there was even greater pressure for migration. While there was a great deal of subsistence migration by the unskilled and poor, particularly after 1650 there was also a large number of skilled people migrating to better themselves. Especially Scotland and Ireland produced a constant stream of migrants both to England and later to the New World (Kishlansky 1996: 13). We can only speculate how different the linguistic patterns of the mostly unlettered subsistence migrants and the at least minimally educated skilled migrants were, and how much influence either group would have had in the new location they settled at. The effect of social ambition on linguistic patterns has been established, so it is plausible that skilled workers would have more resources for linguistic adaptation.

The major population crises during the early modern period were epidemics of the sweating sickness in the mid-16th century and recurring plague. In London, over 15%

of all deaths between 1580 and 1650 were caused by the plague. There were significant epidemics in 1563, 1593, and 1603, with minor outbreaks in 1578 and 1582 (Rappaport 1989: 72). The epidemics increased mobility among the population in two ways. On the one hand, the number of deaths meant there was more room for newcomers from all over the country. On the other hand, people fleeing London because of the danger probably took their new city ways, including any linguistic innovations, with them. In the 17th century, the Civil War had its own cost in loss of life: the estimated number of deaths was 80,000 in combat and 100,000 from disease (Coleman and Salt 1992: 24). Overall, the death rate in towns was higher than the birth rate, which made constant migration necessary for their growth. The continuous stream of migrants to London meant that English from all over the country could be heard in the streets, even if some areas (particularly North England) were over-represented (Coleman and Salt 1992: 27).

During the early modern period, unlike the medieval times, there was no major, linguistically significant, influx of immigrants from abroad, but there were foreign craftsmen who moved to England to stay. Many of these were Protestants escaping religious persecution on the continent, but also skilled craftsmen from various countries seeking a livelihood. Around 1500 one in ten craftsmen in London were immigrants, and by 1540 they numbered one in six. In the rest of the country they were found in smaller numbers (Youings 1984: 128). Again, we can only speculate on the influence of these people, but arguably they would have had some influence on the professional language of their particular trade if nothing else.

In contrast to earlier periods, there was more emigration from England, Ireland, and Scotland. The colonization of North America began, and after the first wave of migrants the surplus population of Ireland and Scotland was over-represented among those seeking opportunities in the New World. This obviously had an impact on how the new variety began to be shaped.

As a result of new trade routes being discovered, English merchants, such as the East India Company, could be found trading at far distant places from the late 16th century onwards. While the original intent was to trade mostly with the East Indies, the company founded trading posts all over the Asian coastline, including India and China, but also e.g. Japan. There were also other trading companies in the West Indies and West Africa, but none was quite as long-lived or influential. The trading contacts led not only to new vocabulary for previously unknown peoples, cultures, and merchandise, but also to yet another new genre of popular writing, the travelogue. Contact was maintained not only with the indigenous peoples but also with other European traders working in the same areas, which led to the creation of trading jargons, and numerous letters were sent home, describing conditions of trade.

2.1 Education

The humanist ideas of the Renaissance led to an increased appreciation of education. The aristocracy began to maintain the ideal of the well-rounded gentleman, which included learning. At the same time, education was increasingly seen as the means of providing the country with competent public servants. This was a trend that had already started in the 15th century, but it became increasingly important in the early modern period. Since the reorganization of the Tudor state and the expansion of government activities, as well as the increase in diplomacy and foreign trade, came with a concomitant need for voluminous correspondence and detailed record keeping, there was a constant demand for literate and learned civil servants (Briggs 1994: 97; Cressy 1975: 5).

Education was increasingly a secular business (Youings 1984: 17). While the dissolution of the monasteries had led to the end of schools in connection with monasteries, it provided the country with unemployed monks, who were often able to work as freelance school teachers in informal schools over the country. At the same time, new secular schools were being founded. Henry VIII alone is linked to at least eighteen schools founded or re-established during his reign, and many of the nobility followed suit. Schoolmasters needed a license to teach, and before the Civil War these licenses were under ecclesiastical control, with the purpose of preventing Catholic and Puritan teaching. During the Commonwealth control was shifted to the Parliament, but the success of any authority on imposing their demands on individual teachers is likely to have been limited at best.

Education, like everything else in the society, depended on social status. The number of schools increased by at least 300 in 1500–1620, but the type of schools was extremely varied. At the one end, there were small private schools kept by a single master, at the other, grammar schools with wealthy patrons (Briggs 1994: 123). In 1647, educational reformer Samuel Hartlib envisioned four different types of education for the different social strata: one for the "vulgar, whose life is mechanical", another for the gentry, "who are to bear charges in the commonwealth". The third kind of school should be for scholars, who would go on to be teachers, and the fourth for the ministry (cited from Cressy 1975: 23). For the highest ranks of society, education was a value in itself, often initially received at home from tutors, while the lower ranks saw education as a means of social advancement, and were more typically educated at the various types of schools (Youings 1984: 119–120).

Apart from social rank, gender was another major influence on the type and breadth of education available for individual people. While there were exceptional women at any given time, highly educated and well-read, they were definitely in the minority. Women like Margaret Roper, Katherine Astley, Queen Elizabeth, Ann Conway, or Dorothy Osborne were the exception, not the rule. Formal education was mostly unavailable, although some girls attended petty schools, small elementary schools often run by a single teacher. With higher social status came the possibility of private tutoring, at times including even classical learning. Since women did not work outside the home in professions where literacy and learning were needed, teaching them anything beyond basic skills was not considered a priority. In 1581 Richard Mulcaster, when discussing the education of women, suggested that "[r]eading if for nothing else (…) is very needful for religion, to read that which they must know and ought to perform" (cited from Cressy 1975: 110). A century later, in 1673, Bathusa Makin started a private academy for young ladies at Tottenham, but was very conscious of the resistance she was likely to meet: "I expect to meet with many scoffs and taunts from inconsiderate and illiterate men, that prize their own lusts and pleasure more than your [= that of 'all ingenious and virtuous ladies'] profit and content" (cited from Cressy 1975: 113).

Increased educational opportunities appeared at all levels of schooling: the number of students attending universities rose, and new groups of people, such as parish priests, had a university degree. For lay people, universities were a means of social advancement in the administration, but many depended on a wealthy patron or a scholarship to pay for their expensive education. Legal training at the Inns of Court was almost entirely beyond people below the rank of gentry because of the prohibitive cost (Briggs 1994: 124).

In the end, sources describing the realities of education leave much for conjecture, and a great deal of what we know is based on estimations, but there is a body of writing on the theory. A great many handbooks describing the kind of education that was desirable were published, ranging from Elyot's *Book Named the Governor* (1531) to Ascham's *Schoolmaster* (1570) and Mulcaster's *Positions* (1581). What the existence of these books shows us is that the content of a suitable education was in general agreed upon. The handbooks range from the philosophical to the practical, discussing the education of all strata of society (Brink 2010: 31).

2.2 Literacy

In the beginning of the early modern period literacy in England was restricted to the elites of society, but the transition to mass literacy began during this time (Cressy 1980: 175). Around 1500, the estimated rate of illiteracy for men was approximately 90%, while for women it was still very close to 100%. The literate people belonged to the highest strata of the population, and literacy was, for talented young men lucky enough to find a patron to support their education, a way of social advancement. Around 1600, illiteracy had clearly decreased, close to 30% of men being literate, but still only 10% of women. By 1700, the change is remarkable, since nearly half of all men could read and write and a quarter of women as well (Cressy 1980: 177). It should be remembered that these statistics are based on estimates, and that some of the assumptions at the basis of them are not completely reliable. It may well be, for example, that a person may sign a document with a mark and yet be able to write. Particularly the literacy of gentlewomen may be underestimated. There were many occasions when it was vitally important for a woman de facto looking after the estates in the absence of her husband to be able to keep account of household matters, to oversee the work of scribes employed by the family and the like, and this could be achieved more reliably if the mistress of the house was herself literate. At the same time, when scribes were available, women may simply have preferred to make use of their services rather than writing themselves (Brink 2010: 28–29).

Literacy in early modern England was taught as two separate skills, reading and writing. This means that those who could read were not necessarily able to write. Reading was advocated by religious and secular writers alike. The ability to read the Bible was considered to be a spiritual benefit of great value to the general public. At the same time, education was seen as having both a moral and a civic value (Cressy 1980: 186).

As mentioned above, different strata of the population did not have equal access to education, which also leads to literacy being unequally represented among them. It should be remembered, however, that literacy was not necessarily learned at school, but could also be taught by a family member or employer. Boys apprenticed to craftsmen and merchants were usually expected to have an elementary command of literacy and numeracy (Youings 1984). They would then be further instructed by their masters in the skills specific to their trade. Letter writing, for example, was often learned by copying old letters. This transferred not only the spelling conventions of the writing community, but also the textual practices involved in that particular genre. In addition to factual literacy, being able to transfer one's thoughts to paper, it was often necessary to be familiar with genre conventions and the requirements of a particular author-audience relationship. While some social conventions of spoken language (such as forms of address) could be more or less directly transferred to written form, there were other practices in the areas of, for example, style shifting and deferential discourse which were probably more tied to the written expression of social relations. In addition, much depended on a writer's command of the "rules" of written language (see e.g. Palander-Collin 2009).

3 Printing and vernacularization

One of the greatest changes in the early modern period when compared to the Middle Ages was the proliferation of all kinds of writing in English. As mentioned above, this was linked to the cultural developments related to the Renaissance and to the greater number of literate readers as a lay audience for new genres. Both entertainment and information of all kinds were reaching its readership. This new proliferation of different types of texts was possible because there was a reading public willing to pay.

The mass-production of books, the increased literacy, and the relative affluence of middle ranks gave rise to a new audience for the more popular sorts of writing. Fiction of all kinds – prose, verse, and drama – was published in increasing amounts, ranging from broadside ballads to multivolume collections of plays. Pamphlets were produced to enlighten the public, to present political views, and to introduce new ideas and inventions. For example, sermons, the pros and cons of tobacco smoking, and new scientific discoveries were all topics suited for this form of publication. Handbooks providing instruction on many fields from medicine and culinary recipes to letter writing and proper conduct in polite society were increasingly made available to the lay readership.

For the linguist, there is also much more surviving data than from earlier centuries, probably because so much more was written, both for publication and for private audiences. Many examples of private writing, particularly ego documents such as private letters and journals, remain unedited in archives, but the wealth of edited data is significantly more varied than in previous centuries. On the one hand, English was being used in new kinds of written language, presenting us with registers which either did not exist in earlier centuries or were curtailed to spoken language. On the other hand, because of the increased proportion of literate people, we are gaining direct access to the language of an ever widening part of the population. We are no longer solely reliant on fiction for the language of the middle and even lower ranks, since they – or at least some of them – are able to put pen to paper themselves. Similarly, women's voices are more clearly heard during the early modern period than ever before. As the legal system increasingly functioned in English, court proceedings were also beginning to be recorded (and published) in that language, giving further voice to the previously silent. This means that our understanding of the full range of English in use is more complete than during earlier centuries. We are still far from actual spoken language, but we are getting a better idea of private and informal language from the actual speakers themselves.

Personal correspondence is one obvious genre, made necessary, for example, by the mobility of people, as they entered service, moved to London to find their fortunes, or married outside their own immediate locality. There are also more personal journals, commonplace books, and household accounts, which all reveal the more private and often informal side of people. On the more official side, the number of documents prepared by the growing number of civil servants increases notably during the period, and these documents are more typically written in English than during the Middle Ages, when they were more often written in Latin and Norman French. Because we have very little corresponding material from earlier periods, it is often difficult to estimate whether some words or forms of expression are new to the age or have simply never been written down before – or at least not in a form that has survived to us.

3.1 Printing

Printing was a way of disseminating ideas, but also a way of disseminating the emerging written standard language. Printed books had a wider circulation than manuscripts (and many genres still circulated largely in that form), but it is notoriously difficult to estimate how great a difference this made to the actual size of the reading public. Ownership of books was certainly fashionable, and a way of displaying wealth (Youings 1984: 194). The number of books printed each year increased steadily, and in addition to books, there were pamphlets and broadsheets (Briggs 1994: 123).

The book trade had its centre in London, but was by no means confined to it. Major towns had their established book sellers, and books were available at markets and fairs, by traveling peddlers along with other merchandise. During the third quarter of the 16th century nearly 4000 books were published, and during the last quarter this nearly doubled. In the 17th century, nearly ten thousand books were published in each quarter century (O'Callaghan 2010: 165).

One of the consequences of the educational system becoming more regulated was a greater degree of shared background amongst the educated, and a widening of areas of interest. The ideal of the "Renaissance Man" included both literary culture and the visual arts, but also physical skills such as fencing, shooting, riding, and dancing (Briggs 1994: 124). This led to an interest in guides and handbooks in the various areas of expertise deemed necessary for the perfect courtier. Also other books, ostensibly aimed at a more common readership, were in actual fact aimed at the highest ranks. For example, Fitzherbert's *Book of Husbandry*, published in 1523, was quite expensive and had a small print run of a few hundred copies (Youings 1984).

There was also an increasing interest in news, which led to the publication of newsbooks from the early 1620s onwards. There were newsletters that readers could subscribe to, and these were often distributed in manuscript form, but printing was eventually the way for news as well. By the end of the 17th century, there were numerous news sheets being published, as well as twice- or thrice-weekly newspapers such as the *London Gazette* or the *British Mercury* (Briggs 1994: 165–166).

Cheap, popular writing of the era included ballads, chapbooks, almanacs, and jestbooks, as well as other types of fairly ephemeral writing, which has often been regarded as representing the literary tastes of the lower ranks of society (Barry 1995: 73). On the other hand, escapist literature in the form of chivalric romances continued to be quite popular, and it is more than likely that the readership of these books went far beyond the highest strata of literate society (Barry 1995: 74). Texts were translated, abridged, rewritten, and sampled for the benefit and pleasure of those not able to read them in the original (Barry 1995: 80). Snippets were published as unbound books and in newspapers and magazines, which made them available at a lower price. Texts would be shared by several people by reading aloud in places where people gathered, which further lowered the cost for each reader (Barry 1995: 81).

3.2 Vernacularization

Early modern England was no longer a multilingual country in the way medieval England was. While Celtic languages continued to be spoken in the west, the Norman French aristocracy had seemingly lost their language by the 16th century. Despite the loss of societal multilingualism, functional multilingualism continued in many ways. Latin was still the language of higher and upper-class education, and people would learn other languages according to the necessities of their trade. So, for example, merchants involved in foreign trade would know a variety of languages depending on the direction of trade. For trade with continental Europe, French, Dutch, and Italian could be useful, while the more far-reaching trade of the East India Company, for example, made it useful for traders to learn at least a smattering of the languages of people traded with, as well as trading languages and jargons.

The knowledge and use of languages other than English was reflected in the code-switching patterns of different genres. There was a greater variety of languages switched into than in medieval times (see Raumolin-Brunberg, Chapter 45), reflecting the changes in society and types of texts, but Latin was still the most frequently occurring language. Particularly, scientific and religious texts show a high incidence of passages in languages other than English, especially when the intended audience was professional (Pahta and Nurmi 2006). This seems to indicate that there was still an expectation of Latin being known by the readers, even if the main body of the text was in English.

Code-switching in these two domains can be seen as a bridge phenomenon in one of the processes that had a great influence on the development of Early Modern English, vernacularization (see Wright, Chapter 43). This was a progression that could be seen in many types of texts. While scientific and religious writing are often cited as examples, the same development could also be seen in e.g. administrative documents. English was now being used in registers and domains which had previously been performed in another language, most typically Latin and French. Görlach (1999: 462) estimates that around 1500 legal texts were already mostly produced in English, although there were still remnants of Latin and French. In the realm of literature the rise of standard English is most evident, while some Latin and also dialects of English are still used. Scholarly texts are the area where Latin is still most frequently used. In Görlach's estimate, approximately half of scientific writing was in English at the beginning of the early modern period, the other half being mostly in Latin. The vernacularization process continued through the 16th and 17th centuries, and by the mid-17th century English was the primary language for scholarly texts in England.

The language of religion also went through a gradual change. With the Reformation, Bible translations were ever more widely spread, and the language of liturgy changed from Latin to English. Because of the constant tension between Anglicans and Catholics and later also the Puritans and other groups, not to mention the rising Quakerism and other minor groups, there was also a constant need of discussion and writing on religion, and this was carried out in English, outlining the particularly English context in which these debates were carried out.

The expansion of English into new registers placed requirements on the language, and the influences can be seen on many levels of language. Not only does the lexicon constantly expand to accommodate the expression of new ideas, but new rhetorical styles had their influence on ideals of writing. The fact that education was still very much on the pattern of classical Latin meant that "the English style used in many formal text types was apparently praised according to how close it came to Latin models" (Görlach 1999: 464). Even on the level of individual linguistic items the influence of education can be suspected. So, for example, epistemic uses of *may* and *must* spread first in the language of university-educated high-ranking men, which would suggest that the thought styles taught at Oxford and Cambridge included the use of epistemic modality (Nurmi 2003, 2009).

4 Resources for the study of Early Modern English

Because of the proliferation of different types of text, we are also able to benefit from a larger variety of electronic corpora as sources for studying Early Modern English. On the one hand, we have multi-genre general-purpose corpora, and on the other, there are also more specialized corpora of a single genre or domain of writing. Of the first type, the *Helsinki Corpus* (Rissanen et al. 1991) covers the years 1500–1710 and consists of 500,000 words in 18 genres. The ARCHER corpus (Biber and Finegan 1990–93/2002/2007/2010) focuses more on the late modern period, but it starts from 1650, and has 11 genres. Also, other varieties are covered: ARCHER includes a corresponding selection of both British and American English, and the *Helsinki Corpus of Older Scots* (Meurman-Solin 1995) brings a possibility of contrastive studies. With the digitization of more and more materials, large commercial databases offer an ever increasing selection of the early printed sources in massive archives, such as *Early English Books Online* (Chadwyck-Healey 2003–2011) and the *Literature Online* (Chadwyck-Healey 1996–2011) database.

The more specialized corpora focus on a single genre, topic domain, or publication type. A good example of the last is the *Lampeter Corpus* (Claridge et al. 1999). It contains tracts published between 1640 and 1740, and has six topic domains, which are represented for each decade of the timeperiod, numbering over a million words. The *Zurich English Newspaper Corpus* (ZEN) (Fries, Lehmann et al. 2004) covers early English newspapers between 1661–1791, giving access to 1.6 million words of whole newspaper issues with their varied content types. *Newdigate Newsletters* (Hines 1995) presents the precursor and competitor of the newspaper, written between 1674–1715 (750,000 words). The single-genre *Parsed Corpus of Early English Correspondence* (PCEEC) (Nevalainen et al. 2006) consists of personal letters written between 1410 and 1681, altogether 2.2 million words. There is also a short version containing a selection of the texts, the *Corpus of Early English Correspondence Sampler* (CEECS) (Keränen et al. 1998), with 450,000 words. A *Corpus of English Dialogues 1560–1760* (Kytö and Culpeper 2006) focuses on speech-based texts, containing both authentic dialogue in trial proceedings and witness depositions, and constructed dialogue in drama and prose fiction, again reaching over a million words.

There are also corpora focusing on a special domain of writing. The *Corpus of Early English Medical Writing* (Taavitsainen et al. 1995–) presents various text categories aimed at both expert and lay readership and covering multiple types of writing from the purely academic to health guides for the general public. The *Corpus of English Religious Prose* (Kohnen et al. forthc.), which is being prepared, tackles the domain of religion and the various genres of writing that are connected with it. New corpus projects arise all the time, and the variety of these projects and the types of corpora they aim to build are a testimony to the multiplicity of material available for scholars of Early Modern English.

5 Changes in Early Modern English

The two most striking changes taking place in the early modern period were the standardization, particularly of orthography, in published writing (with a gradual spread of similar spelling conventions to private texts as well) and the explosive growth of the lexicon. The early stages of descriptive and prescriptive writing on language were also seen during this period, even if the main developments only arrived in the 18th century. Many of the other linguistic developments of the age were continuations of long-term trends which had their origins in Middle and – in some cases – Old English.

Standardization is most often viewed on the level of orthography, and certainly the changes there were remarkable during the two centuries in question, but also other levels of language can be argued to have developed some form of standard. Printing and the growing and developing civil service spread the particular type of writing of literate people in London and at the universities to a more varied readership than before, and provided a model to aim towards. Many linguistic features which become an established part of the new general dialect did not necessarily spread to the spoken regional forms of language, but, since our remaining sources are written, they tend to obscure the richness of local variation which must have existed all through the centuries in order to have survived to the present day (see Moessner, Chapter 44).

The vocabulary of English was increasing as more types of texts were produced, and this led to hard word dictionaries being published. These often took the form of wordlists, which might contain words invented by the compiler of the lexicon, never seen outside these compilations, but they also presented many words which have since established their place in the English lexicon. Some dictionaries were aimed at translators, others specialized in a given field, such as legal or medical terminology or the language of thieves (see Considine, Chapter 66). The orthoepists discussed ways of improving the English spelling system and as an unintended side product gave us a clearer idea of how the language was pronounced. Early grammars were heavily based on the Latin model, and were often not very succesful in describing English in those terms. Because of the newly literate middle ranks of society, there was a welcoming readership for these works, although the age of the autodidact did not properly begin before the 18th century. How much influence any of these volumes had on the English actually used is an open question, but they give us an indication of the increasing interest in codifying, analyzing and teaching English.

The English lexicon increased in size in several ways and for several reasons. New words were borrowed for new concepts, both scientific and cultural, from any number of languages. While Latin was the most influential source, the influx of new words from both European and world languages is notable. As the English became more familiar with the world, they introduced new words to describe the flora and fauna, the artifacts and merchandise, the peoples and cultures they encountered. At the same time, the

Renaissance ideal of expressing an idea in as many ways as possible contributed to the borrowing of Latin words in order to introduce variety. New words did not come solely from borrowing: also word formation through prefixes and suffixes, as well as compounding, was frequent. Many of the elements included in these processes were borrowed themselves, but there was eventually also mixing of native and borrowed elements. Many near synonyms were introduced, but only a selection of those has survived (see Lancashire, Chapter 40).

On the level of morphology, the loss of nominal case endings that had been going on for a long time reached its culmination, with only the genitive *-s* remaining in the nominal system. The use of apostrophes to signify the genitive as distinguished from plural (or to distinguish genitive singular and plural) arose only gradually, and did not reach present usage before the 18th century.

In the case of personal pronouns the most notable changes appeared with regard to second person. The singular pronoun *thou* became increasingly marked, and was used less and less except for highly specific contexts (intimacy, status difference, religious language). As *thou* disappeared, the corresponding verbal inflection disappeared as well. In the plural, the object form *you* replaced the old subject form *ye*. In the case of relative pronouns, subject pronoun *who* became established in human reference (see Busse, Chapter 46).

Adjectives and adverbs showed more variation in the formation of comparative and superlative forms than Present-Day English, and the rules governing the use of inflections or the periphrastic forms were still in flux, leaving room for double forms (*most happiest*). Adverbs had variant forms without the suffix *-ly*, so that *smooth*/*smoothly* could be used interchangeably.

The verbal system saw a rise of auxiliaries. Periphrastic *do* established itself in questions and negative statements. For a while, it seemed that *do* was also making inroads in affirmative statements, but this development was cut short (see Warner, Chapter 47). Verbal inflections followed a similar trend as nominal case endings, and the early modern period saw the loss of all but the third-person singular suffix, which changed from the earlier *-th* to *-s*. Since the loss of inflections made the subjunctive scarcer, modal auxiliaries took some of its functions. The meanings of modal auxiliaries shifted more towards the present model with the increasing frequency of epistemic meanings. The progressive *be* + *-ing* form started increasing, although the real development of this construction took place in the 18th and 19th centuries.

As for word order, the long-term change towards a fixed pattern of subject-verb-object in declarative statements saw the last stages of formalization. Sentence-initial adverbs could still cause subject-verb inversion in the early modern period, but, apart from the greater liberties taken by verse, this pattern was notably less frequent by 1700. Many syntactic patterns typical of Latin could be seen in high styles of writing, whether legalese or ornate literature (see Seoane, Chapter 39).

On the level of pronunciation, the Great Vowel Shift was perhaps the most notable development. The raising of long vowels took place over three centuries, and was a series of local developments (see Krug, Chapter 48). All parts of the shift did not run their course in all dialects, and there was variation in how individual words were affected. Local dialects continued as the main spoken form, but the beginnings of Received Pronunciation appeared in the cultural hub that was London (see Mugglestone, Volume 2, Chapter 121).

All in all, developments in Early Modern English levelled much of the earlier variation as the new standard language was formed. The place for standard was in official, published and formal kinds of writing, but private, unpublished, and informal language continued to show much more regional and stylistic variation. Being able to command the standard register was one of the requirements of inclusion in the elites of the country, but large parts of the population could lead successful lives without the requirements of shaping their language to this new pattern.

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5 Periods: Late Modern English

Abstract

This chapter provides an overview of research into the history of English in the Late Modern period. It begins with an account of how this period came to be defined as a distinct period lasting roughly from 1700–1900 and goes on to discuss the reasons why this period has, until relatively recently, received less scholarly attention than earlier ones. An overview of the external history of the period follows, concentrating on factors such as urbanization, industrialization, and the growth of transport and communications technology, all of which contributed to the social and geographical mobility which characterize this period. The remainder of the chapter provides brief accounts of research into the syntax and morphology, phonology, and lexis of this period. The chapter concludes with a short account of recent research which re-evaluates the normative grammarians of this period and some suggestions for future directions for the study of Late Modern English.

1 Introduction: definitions of Late Modern English

The phrase "Late Modern English" seems to have been first used by Poutsma in the title of his *Grammar of Late Modern English* (first published in 1914), but he was referring here not to a historical period so much as to what was, to him, contemporary English, "the English Language as it presents itself in the printed documents of the last few generations" (Poutsma 1928: viii). As such, his study was synchronic rather than diachronic, dealing with the language as it was in his time and in the very recent past.

The tripartite division of the history of English into Old, Middle and Modern English can probably be attributed to Sweet, who proposed this division in a lecture to the Philological Society (1873–1874). Sweet saw "Modern English" as a unity stretching from the 16th century to his own time and characterized it as the period of lost inflections.

The recognition of Late (or Later) Modern English as a specific period in the history of English appears to have followed much later. Charles Barber uses the term "Later Modern English" to distinguish this period from Early Modern English:

> I am taking eModE to be the English language between 1500 and 1700. All such divisions are arbitrary, for linguistic change is continuous; but there are a number of features in the language of that period which mark it off fairly clearly from Middle English (ME) and Later Modern English (LModE) (Barber, 1976: 1).

Barber provides no end-point for the Later Modern period, but a consensus has since emerged that the Late Modern period lasts roughly from 1700 to 1900, though Beal (2004) extends the end-point to 1945. (See Curzan, Volume 2, Periodization.)

2 The growth of Late Modern English studies

Charles Jones refers to the 18th and 19th centuries as the "Cinderellas of English historical linguistic study" (Jones 1989: 279). This situation lasted until the final decade of the 20th century, when Bailey (1996) and Görlach (1999) both published monographs on 19th-century English. Until this point, studies of 18th- and/or 19th-century English tended to concentrate on specific areas. The agenda for research on this period had been set by Leonard's (1929) volume on "correctness" in 18th-century English, so that general histories of English tended to describe this period as characterized by the appearance of prescriptive grammars and authoritative dictionaries. These earlier works express the view that there were no linguistic changes worthy of investigation after 1700. A typical statement is that made by Bloomfield and Newmark, who assert that "after the period of the Great Vowel Shift was over, the changes that were to take place in English phonology were few indeed" (Bloomfield and Newmark 1963: 293), and, even as late as 1992, Freeborn stated that "the linguistic changes that have taken place from the eighteenth century to the present day have been relatively few" (Freeborn 1992: 180). That any language could be spoken for 200 years without any change taking place is highly unlikely, but scholars were referring here to the kind of major, structural changes, such as the Great Vowel Shift or the introduction of *do*-support, which dominate much discussion of earlier periods. Some scholars, such as Strang, suggest that the nature of change in the Late Modern period was different from that in Middle and Early Modern English.

> Some short histories of English give the impression that changes in pronunciation stopped dead in the 18c, a development which would be inexplicable for a language in everyday use. It is true that the sweeping systematic changes we can detect in earlier periods are missing, but the amount of change is no less. Rather, its location has changed: in the past two hundred years changes in pronunciation are predominantly due, not, as in the past, to evolution of the system, but to what, in a very broad sense, we may call the interplay of different varieties, and to the complex analogical relationship between different parts of the language (Strang 1970: 78–79).

Although Strang acknowledges that changes have taken place since 1700, her suggestion that "sweeping systematic changes" were completed by then and that the later changes were caused by "the interplay of different varieties" would appear to flout the "uniformitarian principle" that the mechanisms governing linguistic variation and change operated in past times and societies as they do today. Research in the fields of socio-historical linguistics and historical sociolinguistics, such as Romaine (1982) and Nevalainen and Raumolin-Brunberg (2003), has demonstrated that "the interplay of different varieties" was as much a factor in linguistic change in the Early Modern period as Strang claims it to be for "the past two hundred years". The perceived difference between linguistic changes of earlier and later periods is more likely to be a result of the scholar's perspective: changes appear simpler and more abstract as chronological distance increases, and as the amount of detailed evidence for variation decreases. Jones suggests as much when he writes:

> There has always been a suggestion … especially among those scholars writing in the first half of the twentieth century, that phonological and syntactic change is only properly observable at a great distance and that somehow the eighteenth, and especially the nineteenth centuries, are "too close" chronologically for any meaningful observations concerning language change to be made (Jones, 1989: 279).

Perhaps one reason for the upsurge of interest in Late Modern English in the 1990s is that, as the new millennium hove into sight, scholars felt sufficiently distanced from the 18th and 19th centuries to be able to observe the linguistic changes that occurred in this period.

However, chronological distance is not the only reason for the growth of studies in Late Modern English in the late 20th and early 21st centuries. The development of corpus studies and the availability of a wide range of texts and text types in electronic form have enabled scholars both to identify overall patterns of change and to interrogate individual texts in ways which were simply not possible prior to the digital revolution. Historical linguists can now search for syntactic patterns or lexical collocations in corpora consisting of millions of words, or they can access individual texts for close study. David Denison's comment on the nature of syntactic change in Late Modern English comes from this perspective:

> Since relatively few categorical losses or innovations have occurred in the last two centuries, syntactic change has more often been statistical in nature, with a given construction occurring throughout the period and either becoming more or less common generally or in particular registers. The overall, rather elusive effect can seem more a matter of stylistic than syntactic change (Denison 1998: 93).

The area of linguistics in which constructions becoming "more or less common" is of primary interest is, of course, sociolinguistics, where quantitative methods have been used to investigate variation and change in language since the 1960s. The application of models taken from sociolinguistics has allowed scholars to make sense of the variability of data from the Late Modern period. The notion of "stylistic change" has also been given more prominence in sociolinguistics than in formal linguistics, and the application of sociolinguistic models, together with the availability of texts, has led to the investigation of the "styles" of social networks and of individuals in the Late Modern period.

So, we could say that a confluence of circumstances has led to the increasing prominence of Late Modern English studies in the late 20th and early 21st centuries. There are now two monographs entirely devoted to this period, Beal (2004) and Tieken-Boon van Ostade (2009); a conference on Late Modern English initiated by Charles Jones in 2001 has now had four meetings; and the proceedings of the first three of these conferences have been published as Dossena and Jones (eds.) (2003), Bueno Alonso et al. (eds.) (2007), and Tieken-Boon van Ostade and van der Wurff (eds.) (2009). The contents of these volumes provide a good indication of the agenda that is developing for those working in the field of Late Modern English. Dossena and Jones divide their volume into three sections entitled "The Late Modern English Grammatical Tradition", "The Syntax of Late Modern English", and "Language and Context in the Late Modern Period". The third section is fairly eclectic, dealing with the language of individuals, and with pragmatics and sociolinguistics. Bueno Alonso et al. present individual contributions rather than grouping them into sections, but of the fifteen papers, seven are devoted to syntax or morphology, three to pragmatics, and five to areas such as variation and change and the development of genres. Tieken and van der Wurff divide their volume into four sections entitled "Prescriptive and Normative Concerns", "Late Modern Work on the English Language", "Studies in Grammar and Lexis", and "Studies on Letters". This indicates that the main areas of research in Late Modern English are: morpho-syntactic change; the normative tradition; historical pragmatics; and what we might broadly refer to as historical sociolinguistics. This is not to say that other areas have been totally neglected: for instance, two monographs have been published (Beal 1999 and Jones 2006) which are entirely devoted to the phonology and phonetics of English in this period. As the quotes from Strang (1970) and Denison (1998) above might have predicted, the study of Late Modern English has more recently been informed by the methods and frameworks of sociolinguistics and corpus linguistics (see, for instance, Mair 2002; Rohdenburg 2007; and De Smet 2007), so that research is often difficult to categorize in conventional linguistic terms. In the sections that follow, I shall provide a brief account of the external history of English-speaking communities in the Late Modern Period, then go on to summarize the main developments in morpho-syntax, phonology, and lexis, before discussing the ways in which scholars of Late Modern English have interrogated the normative texts of this period to arrive at a more nuanced view of the "Age of Authority" than had hitherto been put forward.

3 External history

We saw in Section 1 that the Late Modern period is usually described as beginning around 1700. In his introduction to Volume III of the *Cambridge History of the English Language* covering the period 1476–1776, Lass gives a dramatic summary of the events leading up to this point in history: "By the eighteenth century, the nation had been through a religious reformation, a regicide, a commonwealth, the flight of the hereditary monarch, and the accession of a foreign king who signed away much of his power" (Lass 1999: 3). Lass also agrees with the historian Roy Porter (2000) in viewing the publication of Newton's *Principia* (1687) as marking the beginning of the English Enlightenment, an age of "reason" and science. The most obvious linguistic consequence of scientific progress in the Late Modern period was to stimulate lexical innovation as new inventions, processes, and whole disciplines required names. Newton wrote his *Principia* in Latin, but the Royal Society was to foster a style of scientific writing in English as writing in Latin declined.

The scientific discoveries of the late 17th and early 18th centuries led to the technological innovations which drove the Industrial Revolution of the late 18th and 19th centuries. Britain became an industrial and urban nation as workers moved from the countryside to the newly-expanding towns and cities. The historian Michael Rose writes:

> At the beginning of the [nineteenth] century there were only fifteen towns in England and Wales with more than 20,000 inhabitants; by 1851, there were sixty-three, and one half of the population could be described as town dwellers compared to about one third in the late eighteenth century. By 1900, almost 80 per cent of the population lived in urban districts with populations of 10,000 or more. In the space of a hundred years, Britain had transformed into an urban society (Rose 1985: 277).

The main linguistic consequence of this urbanization and movement of populations was dialect contact, leading to levelling and the formation of new, urban dialects. Dialect contact was also facilitated by advances in transport and communications in this period. In the course of the 18th century, the Turnpike Trusts funded a substantial number of new roads, cutting the length of a journey by carriage from York to London from three days to one, and opening up the possibility of travel for leisure as well as business, at least for the reasonably well-to-do. The development of the railway network in the 19th century made affordable leisure travel possible for the lower and middle classes. The introduction of the Penny Post in 1840 and the electric telegraph in 1837 increased the possibilities for written communication, and bequeathed a rich legacy of data to scholars of Late Modern English, who have been able to create corpora of letters from this period, such as the *Corpus of late 18c Prose* (Denison et al. 2002) and the 18th century extension to the *Corpus of Early English Correspondence* (CEECE) (Nevalainen et al. 1998–2006). The invention of the phonograph in 1877 made it possible for speakers of English to hear the disembodied voices of speakers from distant places. All these developments had the effect of increasing dialect contact between speakers (and writers) from different parts of Britain (and beyond).

Dialect contact of a different kind was occasioned by the introduction of compulsory, free elementary schooling in 1870. One consequence of this was that every child would come into contact with Standard English because every village would have at least one schoolteacher who, along with the clergyman, would act as models of "correct" usage. Scholarly interest in philology led to the formation of the English Dialect Society in 1873, the objective of which was to collect material for a comprehensive dictionary of English dialects. This objective was achieved with the publication of Wright's *English Dialect Dictionary* (1898–1905), but in the interim many glossaries of individual dialects were published under the auspices of the English Dialect Society. The authors of these glossaries all express a sense of urgency: they have collected their material "just in time", and all blame universal education and the railways for the imminent demise of dialects. An example of such a statement is the following, from Morris's *Yorkshire Folk-Talk*:

> Railways and certificated schoolmasters, despite their advantages, are making sad havoc of much that is interesting and worth preserving in the mother tongue of the people. This is to be regretted. It is with the object of collecting any such relics of the past, which would otherwise be doomed to oblivion, that I make the following appeal to my brother Yorkshiremen (Morris 1892: v).

What few of these 19th-century antiquarians and philologists recognized was that dialect contact can create new varieties as well as destroying old ones. In the towns and cities of the Industrial Revolution, new, urban dialects were being forged in the crucible of contact between speakers of different regional and national varieties of English. In some places the impact of Irish immigration during and immediately after the Great Famine was considerable: in Liverpool and in the 19th-century "new town" of Middlesbrough, approximately one-fifth of the population recorded in censuses of this period was Irish-born. Elsewhere, the influx of population was mainly from the rural hinterland, but in places such as Newcastle and the West Riding of Yorkshire, dialect writing and performance testifies to a growing consciousness of, and pride in, new urban identities and varieties of speech (Beal 2000, 2011). These urban varieties have since become the main object of dialect study in the late 20th and early 21st centuries, and are now in their turn seen as potentially threatened by levelling and supralocalization.

The Late Modern period also saw the beginning of the "great divide" between British and American English. Although the first English-speaking colonies in what is now the USA were founded in the early 17th century, the development of American English as a national variety with its own prescribed norms was precipitated by the American Revolution (1775–1783). In 1789, Webster asserted that "customs, habit and *language*, as well as government, should be national. America should have her *own*, distinct from all the world" (Webster 1789: 179). His *American Dictionary of the English Language* (Webster 1828) provided norms for spelling which were deliberately differentiated from those of British English, and legitimized "Americanisms" by including them in the dictionary. Once America became independent, Americans loyal to the crown moved to Canada and British colonial expansion diverted to Australia in 1788 and, in the 19th century, to South Africa and New Zealand. The development of distinct national norms of English in these countries was perhaps more a phenomenon of the 20th century, but the history of these Englishes belongs entirely in the Late Modern period (see Volume 2, Section XV). Thus, the Late Modern period is one in which English ceases to be predominantly the "property" of speakers in Britain, and any history of English in this period needs to take account of this. Another linguistic consequence of the British Empire was the introduction into English of loan words from a wide variety of languages, as flora, fauna, topographic features, and customs hitherto unknown to speakers of English required names. This, along with the scientific discoveries and inventions referred to above, accounts for the dramatic increase in lexical innovation during the 19th century.

Within Britain, the commercial opportunities of the Industrial Revolution and the expansion of educational provision led in the course of the Late Modern period to the emergence of an ambitious and influential middle class, who were now able to gain the wealth, power, and influence which had formerly been the preserve of the landed gentry. Indeed, the most prominent industrialists and entrepreneurs could be ennobled to the peerage, build their own "great houses" in the country, socialize with the gentry, and send their sons to the public schools which became the cradle of Received Pronunciation. Social mobility led to linguistic insecurity amongst the upwardly-mobile and so created a market for the normative texts for which this era is famous.

As has already been noted, Leonard's (1929) work on the grammarians of the 18th century was so influential that, for much of the 20th century, the received view of these grammars was that they imposed arbitrary rules to suppress variation in English. In recent years, the wider availability of these texts facilitated by *Eighteenth-Century*

Collections Online (Gage Cengage Learning 2009) and other digitization projects, has allowed scholars to develop a more nuanced account of these grammars, and to compare precept with practice. Nevertheless, it cannot be denied that the Late Modern period marks the final stages of the standardization process for British English and that the prescriptive attitudes of this era are still with us today (Beal 2008, 2009).

4 Syntax and morphology

As Denison noted (see Section 2), the Late Modern English period saw very little in the way of categorical change in syntax or morphology. Some constructions and patterns which had been used variably in Early Modern English became regulated in this period, so that variants formerly found in Standard English texts would be restricted to non-standard usage and/or "marked" in some way. Many scholars have blamed the prescriptive grammarians of the 18th century for this regulation, but recent research involving the comparison of precept and practice in this period suggests that they were simply codifying what was already best practice. I shall therefore discuss these changes in Section 7, and concentrate here on the more categorical changes.

As far as morphology is concerned, there was very little change within Standard English in the Late Modern period. We saw in Section 1 that Sweet defined the Modern English period as a whole as the period of lost inflections. However, the only inflection to be lost after 1700 is the second person singular *-st* ending. This in turn depends on the loss, from Standard English, of the distinction between second person singular *thou, thee, thy, thine* and the formerly plural *ye, you, your, yours*. The singular forms had become marked in the Early Modern period, and by 1700 "survived only in dialects, among Quakers, in literary styles, as a device of heightening […] and in its present religious function" (Strang 1970: 140). Some 18th-century authors, notably Sheridan and Richardson, put *thou* forms into the mouths of upper-class males, but this usage was not universally accepted. Although 18th-century grammarians often include *thee, thou, thy* in their paradigms of pronouns in order to demonstrate the singular-plural distinction, Greenwood tells his readers that "it is ungentile [sic.] and rude to say, *Thou dost so and so*" (Greenwood 1711: 110). Later in the century, Lowth states that "*Thou* in the Polite, and even in the Familiar style, is disused, and the plural *You* is employed instead of it" (Lowth 1762: 48). In this case, the statements of the grammarians accord with the evidence from 18th-century texts: by the middle of the century, use of *thou* had declined from "ungentile" to "disused", at least in Standard English. (See further Busse, Chapter 46.)

The only categorical innovation in Late Modern English syntax concerns what has variously been called the "*be* + *-ing*" construction, the "progressive" and the "expanded form", as in *She is reading a book*. Although this construction had been used before 1700, its use in Early Modern English was optional in contexts where today it would be required. In *Hamlet* (II.ii.190), Polonius asks Hamlet "What do you read my Lord?" Today this would be interpreted as an inquiry into the prince's reading habits, but Polonius was referring to the book that Hamlet had in his hands at the time. Today, the required construction in this pragmatic context would be "what are you reading, my Lord?" There was a remarkable increase in usage of this construction throughout the Late Modern period, both in terms of the sheer numbers of such constructions, and the types of clause in which it can occur, such that it becomes fully grammaticalized in the course of this period. From the second half of the 18th century, there is a rise in its use with stative verbs such as *love, wish*, etc., with verbs denoting "instant" actions such as *explode, fall* etc., and with nominal and adjectival complements (e.g. *You're being a fool/foolish*). The extension to the passive is likewise an innovation of the Late Modern period. Until the late 18th century, passive voice and progressive aspect could not both be marked in a clause, so that, if somebody wished to say that a house was under construction but not yet finished, the most acceptable way of expressing this would be "the house is building". The passive was understood and the sentence unambiguous because houses can't build themselves. The first examples of the passive with *be + -ing* are found in late 18th-century letters (1):

(1) *I have received the speech and address of the House of Lords; probably, that of the House of Commons* ***was being debated*** *when the post went out.* (Letters "to" *Ser. Lett. 1st Earl Malmesbury*; Denison 1998: 152).

Letters are, of course, the most informal genre of writing, and innovations are likely to be recorded earlier here than in more formal styles. It took some time for this construction to become accepted in all styles: even in the early 20th century Curme and Kurath seem to begrudge it:

> From 1825 on […] the form with *being* + perfect participle began to lead all others in this competition, so that in spite of considerable opposition the clumsy *is being built* became more common than *is building* in the usual passive meaning, i.e. where it was desired to represent a person or thing as affected by an agent working under resistance vigorously and consciously to a definite end: "The house *is being built*", "My auto *is being repaired*" (Curme and Kurath 1931: 444).

The extension of the construction to longer verb phrases involving perfective and modal verbs came later. They appear in the late 19th century, but are roundly condemned by grammarians. By the early 20th century, such constructions are found in literary texts: they were rare then as now, simply because the pragmatic circumstances in which they might be used are rare. An early example is from Galsworthy (2):

(2) *She doesn't trust us: I* ***shall*** *always* ***be being pushed*** *away from him by her.* (1915 *Freelands*; Denison 1998: 158).

A much fuller account of this and other syntactic changes of the Late Modern period can be found in Aarts, López-Cuoso, and Méndez-Naya, Chapter 54. I have singled out the "*be + -ing*" construction here because it is one of very few areas in which the grammar of English has changed between 1700 and the present day to the extent that an earlier usage would seem ungrammatical to today's speakers and, conversely, it is difficult for us to comprehend what 18th- and 19th-century grammarians found so "unnatural" in a sentence such as *the house is being built*.

5 Phonology

The phonology of Late Modern English has, until very recently, had much less scholarly attention paid to it than that of earlier periods. This is probably because, as MacMahon suggests, "superficially, the period under consideration might appear to contain little of phonetic and phonological interest, compared with, for example, earlier changes such as the transition from Old to Middle English, and the Great Vowel Shift" (MacMahon 1998: 373). However, from the sociohistorical point of view, it is a very rich period. The 18th century saw the beginning of the elocution movement and the publication of pronouncing dictionaries intended as guides to the "correct" pronunciation of English, i.e. that of educated, well-bred Londoners, whilst the 19th century witnessed the rise of Received Pronunciation (RP) (see Mugglestone, Volume 2, Chapter 121). Although the pronouncing dictionaries written by elocutionists such as Walker (1791) and Sheridan (1780) were undoubtedly normative, their detailed descriptions of sounds and transcriptions of every word in their dictionaries provide a wealth of evidence for the prestigious pronunciation of the period. A more detailed account can be found in Beal (1999) and Beal (2004: 125–167); see, also, Jones, Chapter 52: here, I shall briefly describe the main changes in the pronunciation of "received" English between 1700 and 1900.

As far as consonants are concerned, the most striking development, at least as far as the pronunciation of English in England is concerned, is the loss of rhoticity. This is one of the most salient perceived differences between British and American English today (even though many varieties of British English are rhotic and several varieties of US English are non-rhotic). The detailed evidence from 18th- and 19th-century sources reveals that this change came "from below" and that it took a century for it to become accepted in the usage of RP speakers. Walker is often cited as the earliest source of evidence for the loss of rhoticity: "In England, and particularly in London, the r in *lard, bard, card, regard*, is pronounced so much in the throat, as to be little more than the middle or Italian *a* lengthened into *baa, baad, caad, regaad*" (Walker 1791: 50). But a careful reading reveals that he considered this to be a marker of lower-class London usage. Moreover, Walker describes the Irish pronunciation of /r/ as too harsh, but says that the pronunciation at the beginning of a word should be more "forcible" than at the end, so that "*Rome, river, rage*, may have the r as forcible as in Ireland, but *bar, bard, card, hard* &c. must have it nearly as soft as in London" (Walker 1791: 50). This suggests Walker was recommending a weakened /r/ in final and preconsonantal positions rather than total loss of rhoticity. As Mugglestone (1995: 98–103) demonstrates, "dropping" of /r/ continued to be overtly stimatized until the late 19th century. Today, of course, it is the rhotic accents of England that are stigmatized as "rustic".

The other main consonantal changes in Late Modern English are not so much changes in the system, or even the distribution of phonemes, as the regulation of variants. Two of the greatest shibboleths of non-standard pronunciation in the 20th and 21st centuries are popularly known as "dropping" of <h> and <g>. In the latter case, the term "dropping" is not at all accurate, since the stigmatized variant is /n/ as opposed to /ŋ/ in, e.g. *hunting, shooting* and *fishing*. In both cases, the stigmatized variants had been attested at least from the Early Modern period, but are not labelled as "vulgar" or "incorrect" before the 18th century. Whilst "h-dropping" became the greatest social shibboleth of the 19th century, the alveolar pronunciation of <ing> has a more complex history. This pronunciation was a marker both of lower-class and upper-class usage throughout the Late Modern period and it can still be heard in the speech of very elderly, very conservative RP speakers. The stigmatization of alveolar <ing> thus provides an intriguing example of a linguistic change of the Late Modern period in which middle-class speakers were in the vanguard, as has so often been seen to be the case in sociolinguistic studies of the 20th century.

Such vowel changes as occurred in the Late Modern period largely involve the continuation of processes begun in the 16th and 17th centuries. In all cases, the earlier variants are still found in English regional accents, with many of the innovations still confined to RP and southern English varieties. The innovation known as the STRUT–FOOT split, whereby some reflexes of ME ō and ŭ were unrounded to /ʌ/ in southern accents of (English) English, can be traced back to the 17th century. However, the lack of this split became stigmatized as "provincial" in the 18th century (and remains so to this day). Walker writes:

> If the short sound of the letter **u** in *trunk, sunk* etc., differ from the sound of this letter in the northern parts of England, where they sound it like the **u** in *bull* […] it necessarily follows that every word where this letter occurs must by these provincials be mispronounced (Walker 1791: xiii).

The other highly salient marker of the "north-south divide" in present-day accents of England, the pronunciation of the vowel in *bath, laugh, grass*, etc., has a more complex history. The lengthening and backing of this vowel seems, like the loss of rhoticity, to have been a change "from below". Evidence of lengthening of /a/ in certain environments can be found in late 17th-century sources, but, throughout the 18th and 19th centuries, the pronunciation with /ɑː/ was not universally accepted. Walker tells us that, although "Italian *a*" had previously been heard in words such as *glass, fast*: "this pronunciation seems to have been for some years advancing to the short sound of this letter, as heard in *hand, land, grand* etc. and pronouncing the *a* in *after, answer, basket, plant, mast*, etc. as long as in *half, calf* etc. borders very closely on vulgarity" (Walker 1791: 10). This change seems to have begun as a lengthened /æː/ in the 17th century, and not to have become stigmatized until the lengthened vowel was retracted to [ɑː] The latter pronunciation is described as "drawling" throughout the 19th century, and there is evidence of a pronunciation with [æ] or even [ɛ] by young ladies wanting to avoid the "vulgar" [ɑː]. Those who wished their pronunciation to be beyond reproach had to avoid both the "drawling" [ɑː] and the "mincing" [æ] at least until the beginning of the 20th century, when Daniel Jones's use of cardinal [ɑ] seems to have established this as the RP pronunciation.

The other vowel changes to be considered here could be regarded as the tail-end of the Great Vowel Shift. In words such as *face* and *goat*, the ME vowels had been raised to /eː/ and /oː/ respectively, and these are the pronunciations recommended by Walker, who describes them as the "long, slender" sound of <a> and the "long, open" sound of <o> respectively, both of which are unequivocally monophthongal. However, the first evidence for diphthongal pronunciations of both these vowels comes very soon after Walker's first edition: MacMahon (1998: 459) points out that the first evidence for diphthongization of /oː/ comes from the Scottish orthoepist William Smith in 1795 and it is generally accepted that the first attestation of a diphthongal pronunciation of /eː/ comes from Batchelor (1809). (In both cases, the diphthongal pronunciations are widely accepted in the 19th century, and are still found in RP and many other accents of present-day English.)

6 Lexis

The picture that we have of lexical innovation in the Late Modern period has largely been determined by the policies and practices of the *Oxford English Dictionary* (OED) (Simpson [ed.] 2000–). Until very recently, any research of a statistical nature into lexical innovation in this period (and earlier ones) was based on the *Chronological English Dictionary* (CED) (Finkenstaedt et al. 1970), which in turn took its data from the *Shorter Oxford English Dictionary* [SOED] [Onions 1964]). The CED has proved immensely useful to historians of English, as it reorganizes entries in the SOED by year of first citation and provides a numerical code to indicate the etymology of each word. For each year, the total number of first citations is given at the end of the table. Figure 5.1 is based on the total number of first citations for each decade of the Late Modern Period.

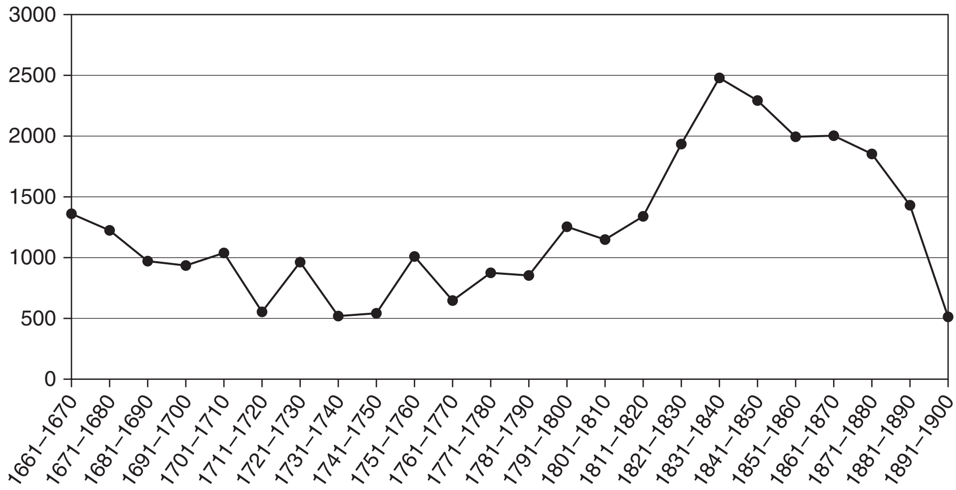

Figure 5.1: Numbers of first citations in SOED by decade 1661–1900

What is immediately apparent from Figure 5.1 is that lexical innovation is at a low rate through the late 17th and 18th centuries, and then rises to a peak in the mid-19th century before a further sharp decline towards the end of the century. However, the authors of the CED acknowledge that "the vocabulary of the twentieth century is less systematically represented than that of the preceding periods" (Finkenstaedt et al. 1970: xi). This almost certainly accounts for the steep drop shown in Figure 5.1 from the end of the 19th century onwards: since the SOED is based on the first edition of the OED, it reflects the coverage of the latter, work on which began in earnest in 1879, but which was not published in its entirety until 1928. It is hardly surprising that innovations of the late 19th and early 20th centuries were not recorded, as the earlier fascicles, covering earlier letters of the alphabet, would have been completed by then. The apparent "trough" in the 18th century can also, to some extent, be accounted for by the practices of the OED, as the compilers of the first edition excerpted texts from the 18th century much less exhaustively than those from earlier periods or from the 19th century. This is now being remedied by the compilers of the third edition of the OED, so that research based on the OED online will give a more accurate picture of lexical innovation in this period. Nevertheless, it still seems to be the case that there was less innovation in the 18th century than in the early 17th or mid-19th centuries.

It is tempting to attribute this decline in innovation to the conservatism of the age. Celebrated authors such as Swift and Addison ridiculed the pretentious innovations of the age in the periodicals of the time such as the *Tatler* and the *Spectator,* but the same kind of discourse can be found in today's newspapers whenever a dictionary releases a list of new words. If there was no innovation, they would have nothing to satirize. It is more likely that the rate of lexical innovation in the 18th century seems low by comparison with the earlier period, when the move towards printing in English created a gap in learned vocabulary that needed to be filled, and the 19th century, when the sheer pace of scientific progress demanded new words for new discoveries. Even in the "conservative" 18th century, it was acknowledged that everything in nature must have a name, so innovations which filled gaps in the vocabulary and which added to the clarity of nomenclature were accepted. Many of these were introduced via works such as Chambers' *Cyclopedia* (Chambers et al. 1753): a search of OED online for all words with first citations from 1753 yields a total of 538, 273 or just over 50% of which were first cited in that year's supplement to the *Cyclopedia.* Not surprisingly, these were mainly learned, scientific words with Latin and/or Greek etymologies. Examples are: *archivist, cotoneaster, eczema, hydrangea, linguiform, phosphorical* and *trifoliate.* Along with these classical forms, Chambers introduced words from "exotic" languages to describe the findings of explorers and plant hunters, and eponyms which name the object after its discoverer or inventor. Examples of the former are *jacaranda* and *jacare* (an alligator), both from Tupi, whilst the eponyms include *camellia* (named after the Moravian Jesuit botanist Kamell) and *fuchsia* (from the German botanist Fuchs). There are also examples of compounds, such as *boat-fly, bull-fight*, and *butter-nut* and of introductions from French, such as *ballon.*

These trends continued in the 19th century, but on a much larger and wider scale. The vast majority of lexical innovations in this century were scientific terms formed from Latin and Greek elements, such as the medical terms *conjunctivitis, myelitis*, and *synovitis*, the botanical terms *bicrenate, bifoliate, brachiate*, and *campylotropous*, and the less technical *abnormal* (replacing French *anormal*), *intensifier, paraffin*, and *revolver*, all of which are first cited in 1835. The influx of classical formations became a cause for complaint, just as it had during the "inkhorn wars" of the 16th century. R. Chenevix Trench, one of the founders of the OED, wrote of such scientific terms:

> These, so long as they do not pass beyond the threshold of the science for whose use they were invented, have no proper right to be called words at all. They are a kind of shorthand, or algebraic notion of the science to which they belong, and will find no place in a dictionary constructed upon true principles (Trench 1870: 120–121).

New fields of science opened up in the course of the 19th century, requiring their own technical vocabularies. In the field of geology, newly-discovered minerals were often formed by adding the suffix *-ite* to the name of the discoverer or the place where they were first found. Examples are *bromlite, lanarkite, leadhillite, proustite, smithsonite, stromeyerite, troostite, uralite*, and *voltzite*, all first cited in 1835. Likewise the *-itis* suffix found in *conjunctivitis, myelitis,* and *synovitis* was to become very productive as a means of naming inflammations of various body parts. Thus the scientific vocabulary snowballed in this century as the proliferation of terms provided new building-blocks for future innovation.

The 19th century was also, of course, the era of British colonial expansion and imperialism. This is reflected in the wide range of sources from which words were taken in this century: just as British plant-hunters, archaeologists, and explorers plundered the world's resources and brought them home, so the names of these trophies brought elements from "exotic" languages into the vocabulary. Examples, again all first cited in 1835, from every continent outside Europe are *kiwi, rata*, and *tui* from Maori; *chacma* from the African language Nama; *fulwa*, the Bengali word for the butter tree; *nandu* from Tupi/Guarani; and *tepee* from Lakhota.

I have only been able to give a flavor of lexical innovation in the Late Modern period here: much more detail can be found in Dossena, Chapter 55. The most important point to be borne in mind is that our knowledge of lexical innovation in this, and indeed any, period, can only be as extensive and accurate as the sources available for our research. As the third edition of the OED reaches completion, we can look forward to new research findings in this area.

7 Normative grammarians

In this section, I shall give a brief overview of research on what, to earlier scholars, was the main area of interest in Late Modern English: the rise of prescriptivism in the 18th century and the effect of normative texts on standardizing and regulating the language. As I have indicated above (Section 2), the seminal text in this field was S. A. Leonard's *The Doctrine of Correctness in English Usage 1700–1800* (1929). This was so influential that it led a whole generation of scholars to describe the 18th century as the age of correctness and to present 18th-century grammarians as unenlightened prescriptivists who imposed arbitrary rules on the language on the basis of logic, analogy, or conformity to the rules of Latin. In the past decade, a more nuanced view of these grammarians has come to the fore, facilitated by the wider availability of texts from this period provided by databases such as *Eighteenth-century Collections Online* (Gage Cengage Learning 2009) and corpora of Late Modern texts. This has enabled scholars to scrutinize more carefully what the grammarians actually wrote and to compare their precepts with actual usage of the period. For instance, the myth that Robert Lowth "invented" the rule that a preposition should not appear at the end of a sentence still endures in cyberspace, but Yáñez-Bouza has demonstrated that he did no such thing. After examining a wide range of statements from grammarians on this topic she concludes that "Lowth was neither the first one, nor (ipso facto) was he the only one, nor was his stricture proscriptive" (Yáñez-Bouza 2008: 277).

The role of prescriptive grammarians in relegating constructions such as the "double negative" to non-standard usage in this period has also received attention. Greenwood's statement that "two *Negatives* or two *Adverbs of Denying,* do in *English* affirm" (Greenwood 1711: 160) is often cited as an example of mathematical logic inappropriately applied to language. Yet Nevalainen and Raumolin-Brunberg (2003) demonstrate that multiple negation was already subject to social stratification in the Early Modern period, its use largely confined to the lower classes. Thus, Greenwood may well have been rationalizing a stigma that already existed, rather than imposing an arbitrary rule on the language. Research in this area is ongoing, but the collection of papers in

Tieken-Boon van Ostade (ed.) (2008) provides a good introduction, and a salutary riposte to Leonard (1929). (See further Percy, Chapter 63.)

8 Summary

This brief overview of scholarship in the field of Late Modern English has demonstrated that this is a young and growing area of research. The ever-increasing availability of corpora and electronic editions of texts from this period has led to an upsurge of interest from scholars in a number of fields. Their work challenges the previously received view that the Late Modern period was a time of relative linguistic stasis and normative attitudes to language and reveals the "complex analogical relationships" predicted by Strang (1970: 79).

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6 Periods: Contemporary English

1 Introduction
2 Phonology
3 Morphology
4 Vocabulary
5 Syntax
6 Summary
7 References

Abstract

This chapter sketches current changes in phonetics-phonology, morphology, vocabulary, and syntax, focusing on data from British, New Zealand, and Australian English. Central themes are the interplay of spoken and written, standard and non-standard English, changes in linguistic practices as opposed to changes in phonology, grammar, and vocabulary, the many changes affecting all geographical varieties of English versus changes confined to particular varieties. The changes in vocabulary illustrate the usual close connection between language and cultural change. Many of the apparent changes in grammar consist of old constructions hitherto used only in speech but now spreading into written texts. They raise questions of analysis bearing on classification (middles or passivals?), constituent structure, and particular areas of grammar, such as the tense-aspect system and modality. As usual, lying behind the changes in language and practices are issues of social and cultural capital.

Alex Bergs and Laurel Brinton 2012, Historical Linguistics of English (HSK 34.1), de Gruyter, 78–96

1 Introduction

1.1 Content

This chapter presents an overview of changes in progress in English. Section 1 discusses general issues, Sections 2, 3, 4, and 5 deal with, respectively, changes in phonology, morphology, vocabulary, and syntax. Section 5 on syntax, morpho-syntax and lexico-syntax is much longer than the others. One reason is that anyone looking for further information about the phonology or morphology of any variety of English will find it in Kortmann and Schneider et al. (2004–08). Another reason is that the author of this chapter has for many years worked on the syntax of English, spoken and written, standard and non-standard and can comment on constructions not usually mentioned in corpus-based work. He also believes that syntax raises most questions about changing norms and language practices, the relationship between spoken and written language, what counts as standard and non-standard, and whether perceived changes involve new structures or a wider domain for already existing ones.

1.2 Changes in grammar and changes in language practices

The question of ongoing change in contemporary English is complex, encompassing changes in the grammatical code and in language practices. One example of change in language practices is what Mair and Leech (2006: 336) call "colloquialization", the use in written language of features associated with spoken language: semi-modals (e.g. *you want to do it this way*), the *get* passive, *that* or zero relative clauses, and singular *they.* None of these is new; in fact the last three are attested in the early 17th century. Some of them have their own functions and meanings: singular *they* enables writers to avoid the clumsy *he or she*, the *get* passive is dynamic and is frequently, but by no means exclusively, used for adverse events, and *that* is the norm in restrictive relative clauses in American English.

Some of the changes presented in Section 5 relate to the use in writing of structures common in spoken English and might be counted by Mair and Leech as colloquialization (N.B. "written English" and "spoken English" are convenient simplifications; there are many genres of both). However, these structures are found in both formal and informal spoken English, and raise various questions: How old are they? What is their constituent structure? In what types of written and spoken text are they found? Which categories of users use them? These are important questions but answers to them require intensive research and detailed discussion and cannot be accommodated here.

These spoken English structures are central to Section 5 because they are used by speakers of both standard and non-standard English and in combination with both standard and non-standard syntax. A major question is the extent to which regional, non-standard norms will be followed by speakers and writers producing more formal, public texts other than dialogue in novels and plays. Much informal Internet writing already follows the norms of informal speech, norms that may be standard or non-standard but which all relate to spoken, especially spontaneous spoken, English and represent colloquialization.

1.3 Recognizing recent or on-going changes

Linguistic practices and usages are changing but typically involve the extension of existing constructions and words. Mair and Leech (2006) warn that long-term variability can be mistaken for change, that apparent changes may simply be the abandoning of "marginal shibboleths" (*less books* vs. *fewer books*), and that long-term changes may be missed. Denison (1998: 95) points out that an aberrant usage might become a successful change, might be adopted but not generally, or might remain an error not established in anybody's usage.

Denison also warns us that apparently new usages might be old ones previously confined to informal spoken English, standard or non-standard, but now appearing in formal speech and in writing. Denison's point is supported by the examples from Mair and Leech (2006) listed in the opening paragraph, which have long been typical of spontaneous speech.

A further point, emphasized in Miller (2006), is that it is difficult to classify constructions as general spoken or regional non-standard. Some apparent changes might simply be once-general usages that were restricted for a time and are now being reintroduced. (See the discussion in Section 5.1.1.) The use in British English (BrE) *sat/stood* instead of *sitting/standing* illustrates the difficulty. Carter and McCarthy (1997: 34) attribute the utterance *the pilot was sat in one of the seats* to "Yorkshire dialect". In contrast, Cheshire et al. (1993: 70–71) show that BrE *sat/stood* is widespread and characteristic of "a general non-standard or semi-standard variety of English". Trask (2001) reflects the uncertainty, describing *was sat* as "colloquial British English" and *was stood* as "regional British English". Burchfield (1981), writing for the BBC, declared *was sat/stood there* unacceptable in any circumstances, but almost thirty years on, the structure is used by, e.g., reporters on the BBC *News at Ten* (though not by the presenters). Not only is it possible that many structures considered "non-standard" are actually spoken standard, but changes in formal spoken norms and practices may be evolving much more quickly than previously thought.

1.4 The data

The syntactic and morpho-syntactic data in this chapter come mainly from the author's own database, collected over the past thirty years. Some examples were collected on the hoof from informal conversation, university meetings, and radio and television programs (some of which were recorded); some are from transcriptions of conversation and business meetings; and there are written examples from newspapers, e-mails, minutes of meetings, students' dissertations and examination answers, and books. The discussion focuses on British and New Zealand English (NZE), which the author has experienced directly, but with supplementary data from the Australian component of *International Corpus of English* (ICE; for information, see http://ice-corpora.net/ice/) in the Macquarie Archive and the 4-volume *Varieties of English* (Kortmann and Schneider et al. 2004–8). With respect to syntax, the BrE and NZE data are typical of many other varieties of English.

Many recent discussions are based on exhaustive computer searches of corpus data, which are invaluable for information about lexical collocations and morpho-syntax but not necessarily about syntax, especially the syntax of spoken language (see the discussion in Miller and Weinert 1998: Chapter 1). The trained specialist with native or near-native knowledge of English and handling attentively all sorts of spoken and written texts on a daily basis can pick up many clues as to variant usages and possible on-going changes. Hypotheses about changes can then be checked against corpus data (which may be behind the times) or via elicitation tests. The data presented here can confidently be taken as representing on-going changes in linguistic code or linguistic practice because of the time span, the range of speakers and writers and text types, and comparisons with other databases.

2 Phonology

All geographical varieties of English evince rich phonological variation and change. Some changes are confined to particular varieties while others affect many. One example of the former is the Northern Cities Shift, six changes affecting the vowel system in the variety spoken in Chicago, Buffalo, Cleveland, and Detroit (Gordon 2008; Labov 1994, 2001). A second example is the NZE vowel in *dress*, which has become as close as the vowel in *fleece*, whereas in Australian English (AustrE) the *dress* vowel has become more open. The NZE vowel in *trap* has raised and fronted and the *kit* vowel has become backed and lowered (*kit* is allegedly perceived by Australians as *cut*).

In modern Received Pronunciation (RP) the *dress* vowel has become more open, the *trap* vowel less forward and more open, the *price* diphthong more central and the *square* vowel a long Cardinal 3 and not a diphthong, according to Upton (2008: 241), who also mentions the falling together of *paw* and *poor*. For NZE, Bauer and Warren (2008) mention the on-going merger of the *near* and *square* diphthongs. For AustrE Horvath (2008: 105) lists ten changes in the vowel system between the 1960s and the 1990s.

Most vowel changes are variety-specific, but one change affecting most if not all varieties of English is the fronting of the *foot* vowel.

A widespread change affecting consonants is *l*-vocalization, observed in London and South East England, and potentially causing pairs such as *meal* and *mill* and *pool* and *pull* to fall together (Altendorf and Watt: 2008). The same *l*-vocalization after front vowels and in syllabic /l/ has been studied in Glasgow by Stuart-Smith et al. (2006), who note that the new vocalization exists alongside the enduring results of the old Scots *l*-vocalization after back vowels which gave *ba'* for *ball*. *L*-vocalization is widespread in AustrE (Horvath: 2008) and is present in NZE, where it is associated with the neutralization of the vowels in pairs such as *fill* and *full* and *full* and *fool*.

Another widespread change is *t*-glottalisation, occurring throughout the UK, as attested by the articles in Foulkes and Docherty (1999), even among speakers of modern RP (see Fabricius 2002).

For varieties in London and the South East, Altendorf and Watt (2008: 212) refer to a “dramatic rise” in the frequency of /r/ realized as a labio-dental approximant in the speech of young, working-class speakers.

A prosodic change affecting all varieties of English is the appearance of the High Rising Terminal (HRT). Horvath (2008) and Bauer and Warren (2008) comment on AustrE and NZE, where it is a feature of many speakers under forty. By 1990 the HRT was spreading among speakers of British English under thirty, and it is thoroughly established in the USA and Canada.

The vowel mergers mentioned above are phonological in nature, but changes such as the fronting of the *foot* vowel, *t*-glottalization, and the realization of /r/ as a labio-dental approximant are phonetic. Also phonetic, but altering the phonotactics of the affected varieties, are changes in NZE (and observed elsewhere, Laurie Bauer, p.c.) such as combinations of palato-alveolar affricate plus /r/ in *try* and *dry*, and the use of an initial palato-alveolar fricative in words such as *strong* and *stripe*. It is tempting to see some of the NZE and AustrE changes as part of a general differentiation from BrE, as is happening with vocabulary (see Section 4).

3 Morphology

Observers can find many changes in linguistic practices and new uses for old forms, but recently created forms are rare apart from new plurals and singulars. Collins and Peters (2008: 342) report that standard AustrE has the past tense forms *shrunk* and *sunk*, which they consider unacceptable. However, *sunk* is an old form that still occurs in speech and writing in BrE and both forms are widely used in North America (Laurel Brinton, p.c.). Users of AustrE are not inventing new past tense forms but favoring one existing form over another.

Changes in practice are affecting noun plurals, witness the fashion for plural forms such as *fora*, *referenda*, *stadia*, and *corpora*; Trask (2001: 130) says "*fora* is now increasingly used, especially by academics". Another change affects adjectives used as nouns: plural forms such as *renewables* and *sharps* (in medical usage, sharp instruments, including needles) are common (but note examples of long standing like *shallows* and *deeps* and the names of mountains ranges such as *The Remarkables* and *The Rockies*; instructions on the use of washing machines refer to *delicates* and *woolens*, and *cottons* and *linens*). Some plural nouns are beginning to be used as singulars. Examples are *bacteria*, now regularly so used, and *premises* – notices in several shop windows in Edinburgh declare *This premises is under CCTV surveillance*. There are plausible reasons for the new uses. The singular *bacterium* is rarely seen outside technical literature, and a collection of internal spaces is most frequently referred to by singular nouns such as *shop*, *office*, *house*. A number of originally mass nouns are now also used as count nouns. Rugby players are said *(not) to get a lot of ball*, university administrators are interested in *how much grant* they receive, and a notice in the Western General Hospital in Edinburgh advises medical staff to *avoid taking unnecessary bloods* (equivalent to *samples of blood* not *types of blood*, unlike *wines*, *butters,* and so on). (Laurie Bauer, p.c., observes that the increase in the expressions such as *amount of people* vs. *number of people* indicates a more general change involving the concepts of count and mass.)

Changes in derivational morphology typically consist of increased usage of a particular affix and its attachment to a larger set of words. Bauer (1994: 40–47) discusses the increasing use of *-ee* with non-passive meaning – *escapee*, *absentee* vs. *payee*, *nominee*, and its new use with nouns denoting non-human entities – *advancee*, *controllee*.

Denison (2008) refers to a fashion among students at Manchester University for using the suffix *-age*, often humorously. He cites *There was some general sleepage/chattage/faffage*. Jespersen (1961: 436) cites *chattage* from a novel by Marjory Allingham (but since her novels are out of fashion and print, we can assume that the students' use is an independent invention). In Britain *outage* began to replace *power cut* in the 1980s in connection with power cuts in North America but the *Oxford English Dictionary* (OED) supplies an example from 1900, also in relation to power cuts in the United States.

Jespersen (1961: 173–183) exemplifies different types of what he calls “reduplicative compounds”, such as *those many many bodies* (Shakespeare) or *an old, old man* (Dickens and Shelley). The construction is apparently becoming more frequent, sometimes with an intensifying meaning, as in *It’s a big big fish* (television presenter) or *That’s a long long street*. Note too *Do you really really like me*? (from the film *Restless Natives*). An interviewee on Channel 4 News in the UK, discussing poverty, said *they’re not poor poor*; that is, the persons referred to were not poor in an absolute sense but relatively poor, receiving less than 60% of the median wage.

Nouns too combine, signalling ‘this X is (not) really something that is properly classed as an X’. Examples heard recently by the writer are *It’s not a problem problem* (i.e. no need to worry, it’s easily solved) and *In spite of his age he’s a student student* (i.e. he has signed up for courses and is genuinely doing the work).

4 Vocabulary

The preface to the 2nd edition of the OED (Simpson and Weiner 1989: xxiv) distinguishes words of unquestioned “Anglicity” and words of doubtful “Anglicity”, including “local dialect and slang”, the technical terms of trades, processes, and science. As will be seen below, technical terms and local dialect are tenacious.

Copious borrowing from other languages is usually considered a hallmark of English, but Minkova and Stockwell (2006: 483) suggest that “English has turned inwards to its own resources for new words and new readings”, and appeal to the fact that of the new words in English between 1963 and 1981 only 7.5% were borrowed.

This general picture is supported by the *Cambridge Advanced Learner’s Dictionary* (Good [ed.] 2008), which analyzes newly included words. Out of 120 items, 20 are borrowings, much more than 7.5%, but, significantly, all under the rubric “food and drink”: e.g. *basmati rice*, *blini*, *chorizo*, *nigiri*. The other new words are either compounds from existing words or roots (*grey water*, *energy efficient*, *biofuels*, *biomass*) or old words with a new meaning (*troll*, *hybrid*). Many additions come from technology, especially computing and the Internet. Technical terms in business and commerce also find their way into general use. The dictionary lists *brand aware*, *cool hunter*, *flick factor*, and *flexible working* (but just missed *credit crunch*, *toxic debts*, and *subprime*). Many new items are compounds (see Mair and Leech’s comment [2006: 333] about a possible resurgence of the Germanic noun + noun sequences).

Borrowing has not been abandoned by all users of all varieties of English. Consider NZE and the practices of certain users in Scotland. New Zealand society is establishing its own norms (see Schneider 2003). Cultural independence is signalled very clearly by vocabulary. New Zealanders use Antipodean vocabulary of English origin but, strikingly, Maori vocabulary too. Macalister (2006) demonstrates an early wave of borrowing into NZE from Maori (1841–1880) and, from 1970, a second period of borrowing. The latter coincides with a reviving Maori society and a growing interest in Maori culture among white New Zealanders, who had to break free of cultural (and economic) dependence on Britain when the latter joined the Common Market in 1973.

Non-standard varieties too undergo lexical change, and Scots shows how complex the process can be. Macafee (1994) charts the serious loss of traditional Scots vocabulary among working-class Scots, whereas Hardie (1996) refers to the knowledge among professionals of Scots vocabulary in literature, the law, and local authority documents.

Against this background the Scottish Parliament, reconstituted in 1999 after a break of 292 years, has on its website documents in classic Scots, the former language of government. An excerpt from a document on language awareness in schools is given in (1).

(1) *Amang the ettles o the study is: Tae speir oot the kind o wittins anent the languages o Scotland wantit … by education* (www.scottish.parliament.uk/msp/crossParty Groups/groups/scots/SoP%20version%202.PDF; accessed 4 May 2008)

Whit 'what', *maist* 'most', *mak* 'make' are still in current, regular use among many speakers in Scotland. Not in regular use is *speir* 'ask'; fairly esoteric are *wittins* 'knowledge', *ettles* 'aims, intentions', and *anent* 'concerning', though the last occurs regularly in legal documents. The authors of this and other documents on the same web site have gone back to written texts and revived vocabulary that otherwise was in disuse.

To sum up, in the English-speaking world current developments in vocabulary are more complex and varied than might be thought, with lapses into disuse, revivals, borrowings and extensions of meaning. And in various locations all these developments accompany attempts by groups of speakers to use "non-standard" vocabulary in text types and contexts in which it is not accepted by the owners of social capital and cultural power.

5 Syntax

5.1 Middles

The middle construction, as in *Nothing drives like a Ford Falcon* (New Zealand advertising slogan), is reviving and spreading. The middle is generally thought to exclude the progressive, to have a generic or habitual interpretation, and to require adverbs of manner. However, (2a, b) refer to single events and are identical in form and meaning with an example such as *The story told well* (1815 Jane Austen, *Emma* Chapter 23, paragraph 4).

(2) a. *[…] a 1912 Silver Ghost* ***sold for £1.5m*** *in California* (2007 *The Herald Scotland*, Dec. 4)
b. *skylarks […] soon* ***established*** *throughout the country* (Gill et al. 1994: Bird B)

There is controversy over what counts as an instance of the middle construction. In her exhaustive investigation Hundt (2007: 141–147) distinguishes mediopassives – non-progressive, generic, focusing on inherent properties – from passivals, possibly progressive, definitely non-generic, and not focusing on inherent properties. The distinction is difficult to apply. She proposes that generic mediopassives focus on inherent properties by means of manner adverbs, modal verbs and negatives. She treats (3) as a middle/mediopassive, but a temporary transmission failure is not an inherent property; (4) she treats as a marginal middle because it describes an inherent property but is in the progressive.

(3) *The fax* ***may send*** *if you tried again.* (Hundt 2007: 142)

(4) *The 1971s, at only £1000 a bottle,* ***are drinking*** *so much better at the moment.* (1998 *Private Eye*, Feb. 20, p. 7; Hundt 2007: 143)

The proposed distinction, more semantic than syntactic, is here disregarded. We propose a single middle construction with clear semantic and discourse properties which is reclaiming grammatical properties it possessed earlier and extending its range of lexical items. Note that the middle and the passive differ distinctly in syntax and meaning. The passive has its own passive morphosyntax, while the middle requires active verb forms. The passive allows optional agent phrases, the middle does not. The passive presupposes an agent, the middle does not. The middle presents an entity as controlling (Kemmer 1993) a given situation, but the passive does not.

Bolinger (1968: 130) talks of "self-propelled" activities, as in *The coffee is making*, which applies neatly to a British Army news briefing in 2003: *there were three bombs that* ***didn't guide*** *for one reason or another some of them went short.* The blame fell on the bombs (just as the child saying *The vase just broke* is blaming the vase, and might add *all by itself*). Since the properties described above apply both to "mediopassives" and "passivals", the distinction is not worth drawing.

Hundt's impressive range of middles is supported by the author's modest data, 60 examples with 54 different lexical verbs from BrE and NZE showing that the middle is regularly used in speech and writing wherever a non-agent participant is perceived as the controller, as in (5).

(5) a. *if the features are privative and require no value, then they simply* ***check*** *in the way that we have already seen [...]* (Adger 2003: 169)
b. *The lawsuit [...] claims that the nano* ***scratches*** *"excessively during normal usage".* (2006 *New Zealand Herald*)
c. *that'****s processing*** *for us now* (Scottish Gas employee referring to an invoice being prepared by the computer)

5.2 Indirect questions

In *Fiona asked if we were going to France* the clause *if we were going to France* is an indirect question. It has the word order of a declarative clause, is introduced by *if*, and conveys the content of a question. The speaker's direct question, *Are you going to France?*, is not reproduced. This is the construction typical of formal written English.

An alternative construction is *Fiona asked were we going to France*, in which the complement clause has the subject-auxiliary inversion of direct questions. Quirk et al. (1985: 1052) say the construction is "common in Irish English and dialectally". Denison (1998: 246), following Henry (1995), asserts that the construction is normal in Ulster English, Welsh English, recent American English, and the New Englishes.

In fact, the "alternative" construction is typical of spontaneous spoken English in all varieties, but now regularly occurs in newspapers and in written texts not subject to copy-editing. It is not new; witness this example from *Bleak House*: *I had thought beforehand that I knew its purport, and I did. It asked me* ***would I be the mistress of Bleak House.*** (1852–53 Dickens, *Bleak House*, Part 14, chapter 44).

The author's private database contains written and spoken examples from final examination scripts, dissertations, newspapers (British and New Zealand), web sites, university meetings, and business meetings. The construction functions as the complement of verbs such as *ask*, *find out* (6a, b), nouns such as *issue* (7), adjectives such as *sure* (8), and prepositions (9). Miller and Weinert (1998: 83) report that a sample of 14 Scottish English conversations contained 3 instances of the "classic" construction as in *asked if they were going to France* and 22 instances of the alternative construction.

(6) a. *You have to ask* ***why is it necessary to raise this very delicate and difficult subject*** *[..]* (2005 *The Herald*, Scotland, Feb. 17 [written]).
b. *Log on at the BBC World Service Aids site to find out* ***how much do you know about condoms***. (BBC webpage)

(7) *this issue about* ***how are we preparing students to flow on*** *seems to me quite important* (Associate Deans Meeting, University of Auckland, [unplanned]).

(8) *No one is sure* ***how long are the passages leading off from this centre***. (1988 Taylor [travel article], *Scotland on Sunday*, Nov. 13)

(9) *The question centres on* ***where did this come from****?* (Final Honours examination script, University of Edinburgh, June 2002)

5.3 NP-clause (left dislocation)

Quirk et al. (1985: 1416–1417) assign the example in (10) to loose, informal speech.

(10) *This man I was telling you about – well, he used to live next door to me.*

They analyze *This man I was telling you about* as setting the "point of departure" for the utterance as a whole and as enabling speakers to avoid the tricky processing of clauses containing complex phrases.

Speakers do avoid complex subject NPs in spontaneous speech, but many left-dislocated NPs are simple. Consider (11a–c):

(11) a. ***this film*** *it does give a real close-up of what goes on behind the scenes*. (2007 Brook, "Talking movies", *BBC World*, Apr. 19).
b. *"I like* ***his*** *[Keith Floyd's] style of cookery," adds Fenton's wife Patricia. "He just throws everything in.* ***Rick Stein*** *– he's only copying Floyd, isn't he?"* (2007 *The Independent*, Extra, Oct. 11, 2–3)
c. *"****My youngest daughter*** *gets embarrassed when she sees me on television," says Stewart. "****My eldest****, she doesn't mind so much […]"* (2007 "Preparing to rock your world", *The Herald*, Scotland, Nov. 13, p. 17 [Dr Iain Stewart being interviewed by Susan Swarbrick])

The construction can simply signal a contrast, as in (11b, c), or simultaneously ease the production of complex utterances and signal a contrast, as in (12)–(13).

(12) *"What struck me was that* ***people who behaved the way my ex and I did****, their children were fine, but* ***those who made more mistakes****, their children suffered more."* (2007 "Divorce doesn't have to be a disaster", *The Herald*, Scotland, Dec. 3, p. 15)

(13) *"You know, it's* ***an amazing building. The one that was never built****, that would have been even more amazing. It was going to be over 550 feet in height, an unbelievable sight".* (2007 *The Tablet*, Dec. 22–29, pp. 12–13 [Sir Terry Leahy, interview by Chris Blackhurst])

Three important points arise. The construction is not new; (14) is from *Bleak House*. *Mr Jarndyce* is not a vocative but is in apposition to *Your cousin*.

(14) *"****Your cousin, Mr Jarndyce.*** *I owe so much to him. Would you mind describing him to me?"* (1852–1853 Dickens, *Bleak House* Chapter 4)

The construction has a contrastive discourse function: Rick Stein, in contrast with Keith Floyd, the one that was never built in contrast with the one that was, the eldest daughter in contrast with the youngest. Finally, it raises interesting questions about the typological difference between subject-prominent and topic-prominent languages and the typology of spontaneous spoken English in contrast with the typology of formal written English (see Miller and Weinert 1998: 363–366).

5.4 Direct object NP + complement clause

The King James Bible translates Matthew VI.28 as "Consider the lilies of the field how they grow". Imitating the Greek (Miller and Weinert 1998: 362), the construction has the merit of making central the lilies of the field, as the referent of the direct object in a simple clause, and stating their relevant property in a separate complement clause. The constituent structure is not clear, though *the lilies of the field* and *How they grow* both modify *consider*. Other translators have been unhappy with the construction: the Revised English Bible has "Consider how the lilies of the field grow", with *the lilies of the field* as subject of the complement clause and removed from the center of attention.

The construction has been noticeable in spontaneous spoken English for some time; (15) was uttered in 1978 by a seventeen-year old Scottish male in Edinburgh, with no pause between *religion* and *the damage …*

(15) *i was brought up a catholic and i* ***hate religion the damage it does to human people*** *[…]* (Miller-Brown corpus of Scottish conversations, mbc2–m87, University of Edinburgh)

Here the direct object of *hate* is *religion* and the complement clause conveying the relevant property of *religion* is *the damage it does to human people*. Example (16) is from the New Zealand component of ICE, again with no pause.

(16) *i can never* ***remember any of my family how old they are***

The direct object of *remember* is *any of my family* and the relevant property is conveyed by *how old they are*.

Example (17) was uttered in November 2008 by the prosecuting counsel in a court case in Britain (The transcription of the words appeared on the TV screen and were spoken by actors).

(17) *Did you threaten Michael X at any time that you would have him killed?*

The direct object of *threaten* is *Michael X* and the clause *that you would have him killed* conveys, not a property of Michael X, but the content of the putative threat. A written version might be *Did you threaten to have Michael X killed…?* (The OED lists a superficially similar construction from the Wycliffe Bible of 1380: *And he threatenyde hem, that thei schulden not seie to any man of him*. However the clause *that thei…* is a clause of purpose. The people were threatened so that they would not say anything.)

This sub-section closes with an example of the construction from writing (18).

(18) *everyone turned to [Stoichev] with a smile […] I* ***remembered Rossi, how he'd listened so modestly*** *to the cheers and speeches* (2005 Kostova, *The Historian*)

5.5 Tense and aspect

Two oppositions constitute the core of the English tense-aspect system, past vs. present and simple vs. progressive. These oppositions yield, e.g. *writes* vs. *wrote*, *is writing* vs. *was writing, writes* vs. *is writing*, and *wrote* vs. *was writing*. Early English originally had a simple present and a simple past (Elsness 1997). Appearing in the 14th century, the progressive came into regular use in subordinate clauses by the 18th century and by the late 20th century, in British English, had become very frequent in main clauses, especially in speech. Smitterberg (2000) demonstrates that the progressive became more frequent in the genres of Letters, Drama, Fiction, and History but less frequent in the genre of Science. The databases of Mair and Leech (2006: 323) show the progressive becoming generally more frequent but also spreading into new parts of the verb system such as the passive. Collins and Peters (2008: 346) observe the same phenomenon in AustrE and NZE. Here we focus on main clauses and the spread of the progressive to all lexical or situation aspects.

Imperfectives express single actions, states, and habitual events. Examples of the progressive collected by the author from written texts in Britain and New Zealand suggest that the English progressive is acquiring imperfective traits. It occurs with stative verbs, as in (19), and is used for habitual events, as in (20). The stative progressives are familiar to the author, an older speaker, but the habitual progressives are either peculiar or unacceptable.

Examples (19a–b) offer two stative verbs, *understand* and *see*, in the progressive, (19c) is both stative and generic, and (19d) is generic.

(19) a. *I am sorry to have to worry you again with […] X's resubmission. However Department Y* ***is still not really understanding*** *what it is that X needs to do.* (University of Auckland, e-mail from a committee chair)

b. *"And there is an older generation who* ***are seeing NCEA as lowering the standards*** *[…]"* (2007 *New Zealand Listener*, June 9–15, p. 23)

c. *She lives in a house which* ***is dating back 200 years***. (2007 [photography program] BBC, June 17).

d. *[…] it may be that internal linguistic factors […]* ***are governing the choice*** *between have to and have got to […]* (Tagliamonte 2004: 43)

These examples are significant; (19a, b, d) were written by contributors who care about their grammar; the e-mail was formal; the *New Zealand Listener* is a heavyweight periodical; academic texts are scrutinized by referees. Performance errors are unlikely.

Examples (20a–d) occurred in final degree examination scripts. In examinations students have little time for planning and editing and produce constructions typical of speech or informal writing but unusual in formal writing. Examples (20a, b) are generic but have stative verbs in the progressive – *precede*, *understand*, and *depend*. Example (20c) has a progressive in a clause denoting a repeated event: the students repeatedly forget the new numbers.

(20) a. *The first vowel in [complaints] is short as it* ***is preceeding*** [sic] *the nasal bilabial /m/.* (Final degree examination script, University of Lancaster, June 2002)

b. *Naturally a child* ***is depending*** *on his parents, or other adults to provide an environment were he can learn new words.* (Final Honours examination script, University of Edinburgh, June 1983)

c. *The code is often changed and students* ***are forgetting*** *the new number* (Minutes of Staff-Honours Students Liaison Committee Meeting, University of Edinburgh, Feb. 1998 [written by a 4th year student])

Examples (20a, b) may reflect a choice of perspective. In examinations students discuss examples given in the question paper and write down their analysis as it proceeds. They may use the progressive to metaphorically put their readers in the middle of on-going events. If correct, this explanation does not contradict the comments on the increasing frequency of the progressive but provides one of its causes.

The simple present in main clauses is already isolated as a marker of certain text-types such as sports commentaries and stage directions and of temporal and conditional subordinate clauses: *When we go to London, we avoid the Underground*; *As soon as she arrives, we will have lunch*; *If you see them, please pass on my best wishes*. The simple past, however, is in regular and frequent use, since speakers can use it or the present perfect to refer to past events. The simple past focuses on past situations while the perfect focuses on their results (Michaelis 1994). Miller (2000, 2004a, 2004b) argues that there are different sets of speakers with different usages of the perfect and simple past. Elsness (1997) demonstrates that the simple past with *just* for recent events and *ever* for experiential meaning (*Were you ever in Paris?*) is the majority use in American English, but this is also the regular pattern in the spontaneous speech of many, perhaps most, speakers in Britain. To complicate matters, there is evidence that speakers who use the perfect are beginning to combine it with specific past-time adverbs, a usage not recognized by reference grammars of standard English but mentioned in Comrie (1985: 33). (Bauer [1989] notes the same development in NZE.

He observes [p.c.] that police in New Zealand and Australia regularly use perfects in their reports to the media, even with definite time adverbs, as in *an accident has occurred last night*.) Elsness (1997: 250) supplies examples from Shakespeare, Pepys, and Galsworthy. As so often, an apparently new usage is an old usage spreading.

5.6 (Apparently) recent constructions

5.6.1 Latinate prefixes and Germanic particles

The past thirty years have seen a growing tendency in speech and writing for Germanic particles to be combined with both prefixed and prefix-less Latin verbs, such as *extend out*, *project out*, *restore back*, *reintroduce back*, *reduce down*, *circulate round*, *amplify up*. In (21) *reduce* combines with *down*. *Re-* is a prefix, in Latin, but for most speakers of English *reduce* has no prefix; the particle *down* signals the essential "down" component of the meaning. (A noticeboard in the Botanic Gardens in Edinburgh, an eminently academic context, talks of plants being *restored back* into their original habitat.)

(21) *Deglaze the pan with the wine and* ***reduce down*** *to approximately 2 tablespoons.* (2002 Christensen-Yule and McRae, *The New Zealand Chef*, p. 29)

5.6.2 Modal verbs

Brown and Miller (1982) report that in their Scottish English conversations *must* was very infrequent and had only epistemic meaning. Deontic obligation was expressed by *have to* and *have got to*, the latter used when the obligation was imposed by someone in authority or by circumstances. *Have to* was neutral in that respect. *May* was missing altogether, whether for permission or epistemic possibility. *Shall* and *ought* were missing.

Tagliamonte (2004), analyzing data collected in York (Britain) in the late 90s, reports that only 15% of the deontic forms are of *must*, and that *must* is hardly used by speakers under 30 and mostly by speakers over 70. This supports Brown and Miller's finding, but with respect to *have (got) to*. Tagliamonte says that grammaticality judgments confirm that there is little to choose between *I have to go shopping* and *I've got to go shopping*. Grammaticality judgments are not the strongest of tests; Brown and Miller used other elicitation techniques and it would be interesting to see the results of any similar investigation in York.

One major change affecting all varieties of English in the past thirty years is the use of *may* instead of *might* for the expression of remote possibility. (As a result, *may* has reappeared in Scottish English – see the first paragraph of Section 5.6.2.) Example (22) is spoken NZE, cited in the *New Zealand Herald*, and (23) is from a book by one of the UK's leading historians, Norman Davies.

(22) *A St John medical adviser acknowledged that Mr Boonen* ***may*** *have lived had he not waited for the ambulance.* (2007 *New Zealand Herald*, Feb. 28)

(23) a. *The witness said that days later he heard media reports that someone had gone missing. He believed what he had seen that night* ***may*** *be connected and he and his wife met with police.*

The trial, before Judge Lord Matthews, continues. (2009 *The Herald,* Scotland June 23, p. 3)

b. *If the style had matched the content, it* ***may*** *have had more success in crossing the sectarian divide.* (1999 Davies, *The Isles: A History*, pp. 512–513)

Trask (2001:183) declares that Standard English absolutely requires *might* but the change is well-established in speech and writing.

5.6.3 Argument structure

The argument structure of transfer verbs is susceptible to change, that is, verbs denoting the movement of something to someone and involving a person transferring, the entity transferred (typically inanimate), and the recipient. The recipient is typically human and speakers tend to place other humans at the center of events. The changes in argument structure all involve a change whereby recipient NPs are not (possibly optional) oblique objects but obligatory direct objects central to the clause syntax. The syntactic centrality parallels the semantic centrality of recipients.

Verbs such as *donate*, *attribute*, and *forward* take the construction V NP_1 *to* NP_2, as in *donated the treasure to the museum*, *attributed the painting to Raphael* and *forwarded the letter to Susan*. Current dictionaries show these verbs excluding the construction V NP_2 NP_1, as in *donated the museum the treasure.* Over the past twenty years, however, each set of students taking the author's courses has contained two or three individuals for whom *donated the museum the treasure*, *attributed Raphael the painting* and *forwarded Susan the letter* are perfectly acceptable.

Verbs such as *issue*, *confer*, *bequeath*, *parachute*, *circulate*, *confer*, *grant*, and *inflict* typically take the construction V NP_1 P NP_2, where P is *to* or *on*, as in *issue/bequeath something to someone* and *inflict something on someone.* Data from written English, such as *they issued him with a deadline to resign*, indicate that these verbs are being used in the construction V NP_2 *with* NP_1, as in (24)–(26).

(24) *PM Thaksin Shinawatra is facing a showdown with critics after* ***they issued him with a deadline to resign*** […] (2006 *New Zealand Herald*, Mar. 24)

(25) *It is odd that the whiskered traffic managers [of the railway companies] have* ***bequeathed Scotland with her most pronounced token of nationhood*** *[…]* (1993 Clarke, "A sporting chance for Scottish Tories" *The Scotsman*, Aug. 13)

(26) *– if it's a severe winter we'll have to parachute the island with food supplies like Bosnia* (1994 *Scotland on Sunday*, Apr. 24)

A passive example such as *they will be conferred with honorary degrees* (*The Herald*, Scotland) suggests the active construction *confer someone with a degree.* It is possible that the passive construction appeared first and gave rise to the active. Denison (1998: 215) cites a passive example from 1917 *I'm issued with her* [a horse].

For many speakers the pair *rob* and *steal* are clearly distinguished; you steal valuables by taking them away illegally, but you rob the owner of the valuables (Trask 2001: 250). *Rob* is now being used by many speakers for the action applied to the valuables, as in the sentence *They'll probably end up going to jail or something or probably* ***robbing stuff*** (BA dissertation, University of Lancaster, 2002)**.** And of course Trask's entry on *rob* and *steal* indicates that the usage is frequent enough to catch the attention of conservative speakers. In fact, this use of *rob* is an old usage that has survived in speech and in non-standard English. In Johnson's *Dictionary* the third definition for *rob* is "to take away unlawfully". Examples are *fashion a carriage to rob love from any* (Shakespeare) and *Double sacrilege […] to rob the relick and deface the shrine* (Dryden).

Prevent occurs in three constructions: *We prevented Susan from marrying a monster*; *We prevented Susan marrying a monster*; *We prevented Susan's marrying a monster*. The last construction is now archaic. *Stop*, which is similar in meaning to *prevent*, also takes the first two constructions, as in *We stopped Susan from marrying a monster* and *We stopped Susan marrying a monster*. Both verbs have to do with situations in which somebody is (metaphorically) kept away from or moved away from an action.

Burchfield (1996: 622) notes the three *prevent* constructions, as does Trask (2001: 228) but neither mentions that the construction is attracting other verbs, such as *thwart* in(27) and *intimidate* in (28).

(27) *Her parents,* ***financially thwarted from education themselves****, were "adamant that we would succeed […]"* (2007 *New Zealand Listener*, June 9–15, p. 27)

(28) *Witnesses are being* ***intimidated from coming forward****.* (2007 *New Zealand Herald*, Feb.)

The usual constructions are, e.g. *She was thwarted* ***in*** *her attempt to defraud the bank* and *The hooligans intimidated them* ***into*** *handing over their cash*. However, *from* is semantically motivated; someone thwarted or intimidated into not doing something is metaphorically removed from that activity.

5.7 Syntax and the organization of text

We conclude with changes affecting conjunctions and the arrangement of clauses into sentences. Quirk et al. (1985: 667–668) classify *plus* as a marginal preposition, but add that it "can even be used as a conjunction", as in *You can get what you want, plus you can save money.* A New Zealand example is *For centuries people used liquorice […] It has anti-inflammatory, anti-bacterial, expectorant and laxative properties* ***plus*** *it tastes good* (2007 *Weekend Herald*, *Canvas*, Sept. 9).

In the above examples *plus* is clause-initial. Example (29) contains a sentence-initial example, with *plus* separated from the rest of the sentence by a comma and being treated as a sentence adverb.

(29) *[…] it avoids the 'duplication problem' […]* ***Plus,*** *the lack of ordered rules means that OT analyses are not burdened with various intermediate levels […]* (Ph.D. thesis, University of Edinburgh, 2002)

Although is a subordinating conjunction introducing adverbial clauses of concession. *Also* is an adverb which typically occurs to the left of the main verb as in *She also writes* *poetry, I am also writing a book*. Both have begun to function as sentence adverbs, as in (30).

(30) ***Also**, since I did not have access to the original photocopies […], I was unable to establish whether certain transformations were simply caused by transcription mistakes.* (BA dissertation, University of Lancaster, June 2003)

The Australian English component of ICE yielded eight examples in unscripted speech, as in (31) and (32).

(31) *Mmm That's so true That's so true **Also** you spent enough money on drinks on Friday night I think* (S1A-094(B):333)

(32) ***Although**, English has been the most successful language in an attempt of* [sic JM] *becoming a lingua franca.* (Final Honours examination script, University of Edinburgh, June 2001)

We conclude this section with a change and a non-change. Quotative *like* is relatively new, at least in British English. It is absent from the corpus of Scottish English collected by the author and Keith Brown in 1977–1978 (Brown and Miller 1982) but abundant in the corpus of Scottish English collected by Jane Stuart-Smith et al. (1996) and in the corpus of English English that appears in Carter and McCarthy (1997). An excellent account of previous work and analysis of original data is offered by Buchstaller (2004).

The non-change is the use of the discourse marker *like*. Contrary to Anderwald (2008: 459–460), it was not imported to Britain from the United States and is not recent. Utterance-final *like* occurs in dialogue in works by James Hogg and Sir Walter Scott from the early 19th century and utterance-medial *like* occurs in a mid-19th century example in Grant and Main-Dixon's *Grammar of Scots*. D'Arcy (2007: 401) reports the occurrence of utterance-initial and -medial *like* in recordings of New Zealand speakers made in 1946–1948. Their parents were from various parts of the UK, not from the USA. Although not a new usage, the discourse-marker *like* deserves to be taken seriously in view of its longevity, its widespread use and the lack of detailed knowledge about its origin (see Miller 2009).

6 Summary

The phonological changes described in Section 2 pertain to issues in theories of linguistic change such as the interplay between social networks, social and national identities, and properties of language systems. Space does not permit a discussion of these issues (but see Labov 1994, 2001). The lexical changes mentioned in Section 4 exemplify well-known phenomena: creation of new vocabulary for new phenomena, (metaphorical) extension of meaning as in *troll* and *grey water*, and so on. Just as importantly and interestingly, in some varieties of English, changes in vocabulary signal the assertion or re-assertion of cultural independence. In contrast, the syntactic changes covered in Section 5 raise familiar and unfamiliar issues. Grammaticalization is exemplified by *plus*, which has acquired the more grammatical function of conjunction, and by both the quotative and the discourse marker *like*. The relation between *rob* and *steal* exemplifes the phenomenon of persistence, whereby old structures persist in use alongside new structures to which they have given rise. The revival of the middle raises questions about transitivity in English and about basic and non-basic constructions. Context is important, of course. Mair and Leech (2006) comment that *whom* is far from dead; it thrives in formal texts, especially written. *Shall*, which few speakers of Scottish English use in speech or writing, thrives in formal notices such as *This shop shall be open on Thursday evening till 9 pm* (the notice was not a legal document issued, say, by the City Council but a notice produced by the shop in question).

Constructions that raise a number of questions are the indirect question (Section 5.2), the NP-clause (Section 5.3), and the direct object + complement clause (Section 5.4). The constituent structure of the last construction is not clear. Dealing with the NP-clause construction, one analysis puts the NP outside the clause (and has no sentences), while another one has the NP and clause as constituents of a single sentence. The constructions are unusual, too, in not fitting the theory that changes happen from below, or filter into standard English from non-standard varieties. Speakers (and writers) of standard and non-standard English alike use the constructions. The constructions raise questions about the typology of (spontaneous) spoken English, as discussed in Miller and Weinert (1998: 363–366), and about social capital and norms – who decides them and attitudes to them in informal everyday practice, in schools, and in employment.

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II Linguistic Levels

7 Linguistic Levels: Phonology

Abstract

Changes in the sound system of a language may involve many different aspects. First, phonemes may be added to an inventory, they may become obsolete, or they may change their shape. Second, allophonic rules may emerge (e.g. "voice intersonorant fricatives"), disappear, or change. Third, phonotactic restrictions may be added (e.g. no syllable-initial /kn/ sequences, so that such clusters are reduced to one sound), or change their effect (e.g. the ban on /kn/ sequences may be resolved by epenthesis). Fourth, prosodic structure may change (resulting in, for instance, stress shift) and, fifth, morphophonological alternations (e.g. ablaut and umlaut) may start to play a different role or they may vanish (e.g. when morphology is regularized). This chapter will first briefly introduce the field of phonology as envisaged by structuralists and generative linguists. Section 2 discusses some changes in the consonant inventory, the allophonic variations, and the phonotactic restrictions in the history of the English language and shows that many of these changes are interrelated in the sense that a change in one component triggers an effect in another component. Section 3 expresses some ideas on the future of looking back on changes in the sound system, and Section 4 summarizes the chapter.

1 Introduction to some basic terms and developments in phonological theory

The ability of speakers to distinguish separate segments in a string of speech sounds is an important part of the knowledge that language users have about their native language. Speakers of English realize that the words *pin*, *thin, bin*, and *fin* differ only in the first sound and they may use this knowledge in rhyme, alliteration and in games with nonsense words (e.g. "Annie the pannie the thanny", "Simon the bimon the fimon"). The sounds represented by *p*, *th, b*, and *f* have a function in English, i.e. these speech sounds – together with approximately 35 others – are the minimal units that can distinguish meaning in English. The smallest elements that can cause a change in meaning are called "distinctive sounds" or "phonemes". Jones (1967: vi) mentions that the French word "phonème" appears to have been invented by the Frenchman L. Havet, who used it in 1876 to mean "speech sound". At the beginning of the 20th century the term "phoneme" acquired a more abstract meaning and referred to the minimal unit in speech that can function to distinguish meaning.

A theory of the phoneme began to be developed at the turn of the 20th century – especially in the works of Baudouin de Courtenay (1895) and de Saussure (1916) – and became one of the important research interests of structural linguistics in the first half of the 20th century. In a statement submitted to the First International Congress of Linguistics meeting in The Hague in 1928, Roman Jakobson, Sergej Karcevskij, Nikolaj Sergeevič Trubetzkoy, and other members of the Prague School emphasized that a scientific description of a language must include a characterization of its phonological system, i.e. the repertory, pertinent to that language, of the distinctive contrasts among its speech sounds (see Jakobson 1971 [1962]). Thus, an important goal of structural phonology in Europe – as well as in North America – was to establish the phoneme inventories of languages. The method used to establish the phoneme inventory of a language is to systematically compare words with different meanings that differ in one sound only. Such word pairs are called "minimal pairs".

Furthermore, the international congress held that the field of language change should not be confined to studying isolated changes; rather, changes should be considered in terms of the linguistic system which undergoes them. As Waugh (1976: 21) puts it, according to the Prague School, "we must understand the structure before the change begins, the structure after it takes place, the sense of the change undergone in respect to the undergoing system, the level at which the change takes place (e.g. distinctive feature or phoneme) and the effects of the change on the system".

One of the main concerns of Roman Jakobson became to develop a theory of phonology that would predict exactly those distinctive sounds that can be found in the world's languages, and he hypothesized that there is a limited number of phonological (or "distinctive") features – approximately 15 – that characterize the sounds of human languages (see, e.g., Jakobson 1939; Jakobson et al. 1951; Jakobson and Halle 1956). In the system that Jakobson and his colleagues developed, each phoneme is represented by a set of features such as [grave]/[acute] and [flat]/[nonflat] which are unrelated (i.e. not grouped into smaller sets) and binary. For Jakobson, speech sounds are characterized by features and for him it followed that sound changes should involve features or phonemes too: a sound change is a change in the distribution of a phonological feature or phoneme within a system. With Sapir (1921) before him, Jakobson posited that if in a system /p, t, k/, one segment has changed (e.g. /p/ to /b/), the outcome is asymmetric (/b, t, k/). The simplest way to restore the symmetry is an analogous change of the other members in the system (e.g. /t, k/ → /d, g/). Should the resulting pattern already exist, then the system of oppositions can only survive if the older series (in our example /b, d, g/) itself undergoes a change (e.g. spirantization). In this hypothetical example, the stops specified as being voiceless gradually changed into voiced stops – i.e. the feature that expresses voicing in stops changed – and the older voiced stops became fricatives – i.e. for voiced stops the feature that specified complete obstruction in the vocal tract changed into a feature that specifies incomplete obstruction ([+continuant]). In this case, the phonological sound change alters the relationship between two elements from /p/ versus /b/ to /b/ versus /v/. Jakobson also allowed for sound changes that lead to the elimination of a phonological contrast or to the formation of a contrast and we will encounter English examples of modification, elimination, and creation of phonological contrasts in the remainder of this chapter.

Speech sounds may be articulated differently depending on the position in the word. For example, the initial sound in the word *pin* (and the non-word *pannie*) is pronounced