A COMPANION TO

THE HISTORY OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

EDITED BY
HARUKO MOMMA AND MICHAEL MATTO

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The history of the English language (HEL) is arguably the most complex subject being taught in English programs today. HEL was among the first courses to be offered at the college level when English became a discipline in the mid- to late nineteenth century. In its 150-year history, HEL has developed its methodology by adapting new material from the rapidly growing fields of linguistics and English studies, while simultaneously drawing inspiration from such allied disciplines as sociology, psychology, anthropology, and history. The history of HEL studies also coincides with the time during which English increased its influence and became one of the most widely used languages in the world. Because of the complexity of the subject and the vastness of its material, the editing of this volume took us to many shores, both known and unknown, where we were so fortunate as to meet many people who gave us support and inspiration. At Blackwell we owe our thanks to Emma Bennett, Hannah Morrell, Rosemary Bird, Karen Wilson, Jenny Phillips, and Astrid Wind for their warm support, patience, and professionalism. We would also like to thank Andrew McNeillie for suggesting the project at its beginning stage and Dan Donoghue for making our involvement possible. We would like to express our sense of gratitude to Carlos J. Manuel, who gave us linguistic advice on the Glossary and the Notes on Phonetic Symbols and Orthography, and to our copy-editor Benedick Turner, whose steadiness and quiet encouragement helped us remain anchored in the last stretch of editing. We are also indebted to friends and colleagues who gave us suggestions and encouragement at various stages: Mark Atherton, Catherine A. M. Clarke, Heide Estes, Kathleen Fitzpatrick, Jennifer Fleischner, Elaine Freedgood, Ernest Gilman, John Guillory, Gayle Insler, John Maynard, Chris Mayo, and Martha Rust. Our special thanks go to Fred C. Robinson for his generosity, and to Adam McKeown for his remarkable selflessness as a friend and colleague. To Lahney Preston-Matto, who was there from the very beginning and helped make this collaboration possible, we can only continue to say thank you.

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Finally, we would like to dedicate this volume to Seizo Kasai and the late Julian Boyd, our undergraduate teachers through whose guidance we were introduced to the world of HEL and developed our love of language, history, and English.

Note on Phonetic Symbols and Orthography

Though the study of the history of the English language does not require an extensive linguistic background, it is helpful to know some typographic conventions of linguistic analysis and some letters and abbreviations no longer found in current orthography.

Phonetic Transcription

Brackets

Readers will note three kind of brackets placed around letters and other symbols in these essays: angle brackets <t>, slashes /t/, and square brackets [t].

<t>	angle brackets indicate *graphemes*: how a sound is represented in written form.
/t/	slashes indicate *phonemes*: the smallest meaningfully distinct sound within a language.
[t], [t^h]	square brackets indicate *phonetic transcription*: the exact description of a spoken sound.

While phonemics and phonetics are often virtually identical in practice, very precise phonetic transcription offers more phonological detail. For example, the phoneme /t/ in *top* and *stop* is spelled with the grapheme <t> and for most speakers represents essentially the same sound, but the <t> in *top* is aspirated (i.e., accompanied by a puff of breath) and so signified by the superscript ^{h} in phonetic transcription [t^h], while the <t> in *stop* is not aspirated [t].

Phonetic alphabet

The desire among linguists for a systematic method for transcribing the spoken sounds of languages was realized with the creation of the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) in 1888 by the International Phonetic Association. Designed to represent the

discrete sounds of all the world's languages within one set of symbols, the IPA allows linguists to transcribe spoken sounds consistently.

The IPA provides symbols for far more sounds than any individual language uses, so the symbols are not always intuitive for speakers of a given language. Variations on the IPA have therefore been developed, often for use in dictionaries, but also for scholarly use. One set of such variants, though not codified by any official organization, is known informally as the Americanist Phonetic Alphabet (APA), with symbols based primarily on English spelling. Also, differences in transcription systems sometimes reflect differing underlying phonetic theories. For instance, the English sounds represented by the letters <y> and <w> in the words *yet* and *wet* might be categorized as kinds of consonants (as IPA does) or as glides or semi-vowels (as APA generally does).

The editors of this volume have decided to allow each contributor his or her choice of transcription system, thus symbols from both the IPA and the APA appear in this book. This results in some small inconsistencies across essays using different systems. To clarify for readers, we offer the following charts to outline the correspondences.

Consonants

The chart below contains all the consonant sounds discussed in the book, most of which are standard in English pronunciations throughout the world. Some (/φ, ß, x, ɤ, χ/) were important in the earlier history of the language, but are no longer in wide use. Two symbols in one cell represent variants from APA (left) and IPA (right) as used in this book.

		LABIAL		DENTAL			PALATO-VELAR			GLOTTAL
		Labial	Labio-dental	Dental	Alveolar	Alveo-palatal	Palatal	Velar	Uvular	
Stops (Plosives)	voiceless	p			t			k		
	voiced	b			d			g		
Fricatives	voiceless	φ	f	θ	s	š/ʃ	ç	x	χ	h
	voiced	ß	v	ð	z	ž/ʒ		ɤ		
Affricates	voiceless					č/ʧ				
	voiced					ǰ/ʤ				
Nasals		m			n			ŋ		
Approximants (Liquids)	rhotic				r					
	lateral				l					
Approximants (Glides, Semi-Vowels)	voiced						y/j			
	voiceless labialized							hw/ʍ		
	voiced labialized							w		

Superscript symbols

- ^{h} aspiration: indicates that the sound is accompanied by a puff of breath.
- ^{w} labialized: indicates that the sound is accompanied by a rounding of the lips.

Compare the /k/ aspirated in *kit* [k^{h}ɪt], unaspirated in *skit* [skɪt], and labialized in *quit* [k^{w}ɪt].

Consonant sounds of modern English illustrated

/p/	pit	/f/	fan	/š/, /ʃ/	sure	/m/	mine	/y/, /j/	yet
/b/	bit	/v/	van	/ž/, /ʒ/	azure	/n/	nine	/hw/, /ʍ/	whet
/t/	tip	/θ/	thigh	/č/, /ʧ/	char	/ŋ/	sing	/w/	wet
/d/	dip	/ð/	thy	/ǰ/, /ʤ/	jar	/r/	rat		
/k/	cot	/s/	sue	/ç/	huge	/l/	let		
/g/	got	/z/	zoo	/h/	hot				

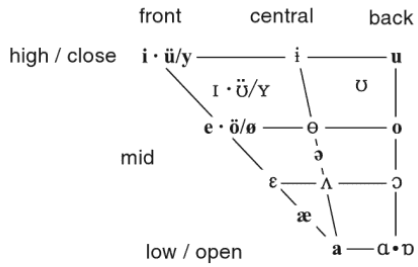
The following fricative consonant sounds are not generally found in modern American or British RP pronunciation, but are important to the history of English.

- /ɸ/ voiceless like /f/, but with lips together as if pronouncing /p/
- /ß/ voiced like /v/, but with lips together as if pronouncing /b/
- /x/ unvoiced like /ç/ but slightly further back, as if pronouncing /g/
- /χ/ slightly further back than /x/, but not so far as /h/
- /ʁ/ like /x/, but voiced

Vowels

The various schemas and symbols for representing vowel systems are difficult to reconcile with one another. While most vowel schemas attempt to reproduce the biological manner of articulation, they employ different terminologies. For instance, IPA describes the openness of the mouth (with "close – mid – open,") while APA instead indicates the level of the tongue (with "high – mid – low").

Like the consonant chart, the schematic below represents only the sounds discussed in this book. One should imagine the graph represents a mouth facing left, and the symbols mark places of articulation. Three of the sounds are given two symbols, which represent transcription variants from APA (left) and IPA (right): ü/y, ö/ʏ, and ö/ø. Note that the vowel phoneme /y/ (from IPA) is different from the consonant or glide phoneme /y/ (from APA), though they use the same symbol. Symbols to the left and right of bullet points represent unrounded and rounded variants, respectively (rounded sounds are pronounced with the lips pulled into a circle and slightly protruding).



Long and short vowels

: indicates a long vowel, which is held longer than its short counterpart, but is otherwise articulated in the same place. Compare the long vowel of *sea* [si:] with the short vowel of *seat* [sit]. Length can also be indicated by a doubling of the phonetic symbol: /sii/ versus /sit/.

Vowel sounds of modern English

Examples are from standard American pronunciation.

/i/	bee	/ə/	bud	/u/	boo
/ɪ/	bid	/ʌ/	bug	/ʊ/	book
/e/	bade			/o/	boat
/ɛ/	bed			/ɔ/	bought
/æ/	bad			/ɑ/	body

The following vowel sounds are not generally distinguished in modern American or British Received Pronunciation, but are important to the history of vowels in English.

/ü/, /y/	like /i/, but rounded (like the French *du*)
/ö/, /ʏ/	like /ɪ/, but rounded
/ö/, /ø/	like /e/, but rounded
/ɵ/	like /ə/, but slightly higher
/ɨ/	like /ɵ/, but slightly higher (e.g., the unstressed first syllable of *begin*)
/a/	like /æ/, but slightly lower
/ɒ/	like /ɑ/, but rounded

Diphthongs

Many of the vowels of English are pronounced as a movement from one vowel to another; these are called diphthongs. The three most commonly pronounced diphthongs in English can be heard in the standard American pronunciations of *boy* /bɔɪ/,

buy /baɪ/ and *bough* /baʊ/; each unambiguously contains a movement between two vowel sounds. However, compared with many other European languages, modern English has few pure vowel sounds at all. For instance, even the /e/ of *bade* has a slight glide from /e/ to /ɪ/ for many English speakers, a movement perhaps more noticeable in the word *bane* or *bay*.

Orthography

Handwriting and typographic conventions change over time and vary among languages. Some of the essays in this collection make use of unfamiliar orthography when quoting from period sources or languages other than English. The following notes may be of use:

<ȝ> is called *yogh*, and is related orthographically to <g>. Yogh was used in the Middle English period to represent a variety of related velar sounds, including /y/ and /x/.

<ȝ> is the so-called "Tironian *et*" used in medieval manuscripts as an abbreviation for *and*, much as modern printers use <&>.

<þ> is called *thorn* and was used to represent either /θ/ or /ð/ in Old and Middle English. It was virtually interchangeable with <ð>.

<ð> is called *eth* and was used to represent either /θ/ or /ð/ in Old and Middle English. The grapheme <ð> thus does not always carry the same sound as the voiced fricative /ð/. It was virtually interchangeable with <þ>.

<v> and <u> were used either interchangeably or in the reverse of modern convention in medieval and early modern English. Often, <v> is used at the beginning of a word, <u> in the middle. In other texts, <v> might regularly represent the vowel, and <u> the consonant.

A Timeline for HEL

The following timeline will help readers contextualize the historical events discussed in this volume. While this list emphasizes topics covered by the contributors (as noted), it also includes other important events.

>1000 BCE	Indo-European languages spread throughout Europe and southern Asia, some already attested in writing for hundreds of years. (Baldi)
ca. 1000–1 BCE	Gradual sound shifts (Grimm's Law) take place in Germanic languages. (Fulk)
55–54 BCE	Julius Caesar invades Britain.
43 CE	Romans under Claudius conquer Britain; the "Roman Britain" period begins.
ca. 50–100	Scandinavian Runic inscriptions are produced, which remain the oldest attestations of a Germanic language. (Baldi)
ca. 98	Roman historian Cornelius Tacitus writes *Germania*. (Fulk)
ca. 350	Bishop Wulfila translates the Bible into Gothic, an East Germanic language. (Baldi)
410	Roman troops withdraw from Britain as Visigoths sack Rome; the "Roman Britain" period ends.
449	According to tradition, Anglo-Saxons (Angles, Saxons, Jutes) begin invasion and settlement of Britain, bringing their West Germanic dialects to the island.
597	Pope Gregory sends Augustine to Kent where he converts King Æthelberht and 10,000 other Anglo-Saxons to Christianity. (Donoghue)
793–ca. 900	Vikings (Danes, Norwegians, Swedes) raid England periodically and establish settlements.
878	King Alfred's victory over Guthrum's Danish army at Edington paves the way for the creation of the Kingdom of the Anglo-Saxons. (Gretsch; Donoghue)
886	King Alfred and Guthrum sign a treaty establishing the "Danelaw" north and east of London, heavily settled by the Norse-speaking vikings. (Donoghue)
890s	King Alfred translates Pope Gregory's *Regula pastoralis* into English. (Gretsch)

ca. 900	Bede's *Ecclesiastical History* is translated from Latin into Old English. (Donoghue)
ca. 975–1025	The four great manuscripts containing Old English poetry (Exeter Book, Junius Manuscript, Vercelli Book, and *Beowulf* Manuscript) are compiled, though many of the texts they contain were likely composed over the previous 300 years.
993–5	Aelfric composes his Latin–Old English *Glossary*. (Hüllen)
1066	William the Conqueror leads the Norman conquest of England, solidifying French as the language of the nobility. (Turville-Petre)
1171	Henry II leads the Cambro-Norman invasion of Ireland, bringing French and English speakers to the island. (Dolan)
1204	King John of England loses Normandy to France. (Turville-Petre)
ca. 1245	Walter of Bibbesworth compiles his *Tretiz de Langage* to improve the French of English-speaking landowners. (Hüllen; Turville-Petre)
1282	Wales is conquered by King Edward I of England. (Löffler)
1348–50	The Black Plague kills about one-third of the English population.
1362	Statute of Pleading requires English be spoken in law courts. (Plummer)
1366	Statutes of Kilkenny outlaw (among other Irish customs) speaking Irish by Englishmen in Ireland. (Dolan)
1370–1400	Chaucer writes his major works. (Plummer)
1380s	John Wycliffe and his followers illegally translate the Latin Vulgate Bible into English. (Nevalainen)
1380–1450	Chancery standard written English is developed. (Lerer)
ca. 1450	Johannes Guttenburg establishes the printing press in Germany.
1476	William Caxton sets up the first printing press in England. (Nevalainen; King)
1492	Christopher Columbus explores the Caribbean and Central America.
1497	Italian navigator John Cabot explores Newfoundland.
1500–1650	Great Vowel Shift takes place. (Lerer; Stockwell & Minkova)
1525	William Tyndale prints an English translation of the New Testament. (King; Nevalainen)
1534	The first complete English translation of the Bible from the original Greek and Hebrew is produced. (Nevalainen)
1536 and 1543	Acts of Union (Laws in Wales Acts) annex Wales to England. (Löffler)

1542	Crown of Ireland Act makes the English king also the Irish king.
1558–1603	Queen Elizabeth I reigns.
ca. 1575–1600	English becomes an important trade language in West Africa. (Mazrui)
1580s–1612	Shakespeare composes his plays. (McKeown)
1583–1607	British attempt unsuccessfully to establish colonies in America.
1588	The Bible is translated into Welsh. (Löffler)
1589	George Puttenham publishes his *Art of English Poesy* (King; Matto)
1600	British East India Company receives its charter, facilitating economic expansion into India. (Sridhar)
1600s	Atlantic slave trade begins, bringing Africans to America. (Zeigler)
1603	Union of the Crowns: James VI of Scotland becomes James I of England and Scotland, accelerating the Anglicization of Scots-English. (Nevalainen)
1604	Robert Cawdrey compiles *A Table Alphabeticall*, the first monolingual English dictionary (Brewer; Nevalainen; Crowley)
1607	The Virginia Company of London successfully establishes a colony in America at Jamestown, Virginia.
1610	British establish fishing outposts in Newfoundland.
1611	The King James Bible is published. (Nevalainen)
1620	Pilgrims establish a colony at Plymouth Rock.
1623–ca. 1660	British establish colonies throughout Caribbean.
1642–51	English Civil Wars are ongoing. (McIntosh)
1660	The Restoration: Charles II returns to the throne. (Nevalainen)
1663	The Royal Society is founded. (McIntosh; Matto)
1689	British establish the three administrative districts of Bengal, Bombay (now Mumbai), and Madras (now Chennai) on the Indian subcontinent. (Sridhar)
1694	French publish a national dictionary. (Brewer)
1695	The Licensing Act expires, giving anyone the freedom to publish without government permission. (McIntosh)
1707	Acts of Union unite governments of England and Scotland, creating the Kingdom of Great Britain.
1712	Jonathan Swift writes his "Proposal for Correcting, Improving and Ascertaining the English Tongue." (Matto & Momma; McIntosh; Bailey)
1755	Samuel Johnson's *Dictionary of the English Language* is published. (Brewer)
	French-speaking Acadians are expelled from Canada by British, settle in Louisiana and are called Cajuns.

1773	British establish a Governor Generalship in India. (Sridhar)
1776	Thomas Jefferson drafts American Declaration of Independence. (Simpson)
1780s	British begin to settle in Australia. (Peters)
1783	Treaty of Paris recognizes an independent United States of America; Noah Webster's "blue-back" spelling book is published. (Brewer)
1786	William Jones suggests a common root for Sanskrit, Greek, and Latin, promoting comparative linguistics and Indo-European studies. (McIntosh)
1787	English speakers of African origin are repatriated to Africa in Freetown, Sierra Leone. (Mazrui)
1789–99	The French Revolution takes place. (Poovey)
1795	Lindley Murray's *English Grammar* is published. (Curzan)
1800	Act of Union unites governments of Ireland and Great Britain, creating the Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland and requiring that Irish politicians speak English in British government. (Dolan)
1803	The Louisiana Purchase allows US to expand westward.
1811–18	Jane Austen's novels are published. (Poovey)
1819	The British government passes the Six Acts, aimed to suppress the publication of radical newspapers. (Poovey)
1820	Freed English-speaking slaves repatriated from America to the newly created West African nation of Liberia. (Mazrui)
1828	Noah Webster's *Dictionary of American English* is published. (Brewer; Simpson)
1831	A system of Primary School Education is introduced in Ireland, with English as the medium of instruction. (Dolan)
1835	Lord Macaulay's Minute initiates the introduction of English language education into South Asia. (Sridhar)
1836	The phrase "standard English" first appears in a philological sketch on the history of the language in the *Quarterly Review*. (Crowley)
1837–1901	Queen Victoria reigns.
1840s	British begin to settle in New Zealand. (Peters)
1845–9	Many monoglot Irish speakers die as a result of the Great Famine in Ireland. (Dolan)
1852	*Roget's Thesaurus* is first published. (Hüllen)
1858	Act for the Better Government of India results in the British governing India directly. (Sridhar)
1859	*Proposal for the Publication of a New English Dictionary* initiates work on what will be the *Oxford English Dictionary*. (Crowley)

1873	Harvard University introduces the first American college program in English composition for native speakers. (Soliday, Matto)
1898	Americans take over control of the Philippines from Spain, beginning America's colonial period. (Gonzalez)
1914–39	James Joyce's major works are published. (Milesi)
1922	Ratification of the Anglo-Irish Treaty recognizes an independent Irish Free State, which will become the Republic of Ireland.
1925	The Phelps-Stokes Commission recommends teaching both English and native languages in Africa. (Mazrui)
1926–62	William Faulkner's major works are published. (Polk)
1928	*Oxford English Dictionary* is completed. (Brewer)
1946	The Philippines achieve independence from the United States.
1947	India achieves independence from Britain; Pakistan splits from India. (Sridhar)
1953	English made a compulsory subject in national examinations in elementary schools throughout Anglophone Africa. (Mazrui)
1957–68	Most of Britain's African colonies achieve independence.
1967	The Official Languages Act makes English and Hindi India's two official languages (Sridhar) Tanzania launches a "Swahilization" program. (Mazrui)
1970–	Toni Morrison's major works are published. (Tally)
1975–	Salman Rushdie's major works are published. (Khair)
1979	Lawsuit (*Martin Luther King Jr Elementary School Children vs. Ann Arbor School District Board*) sets precedent for requiring teachers to study AAVE. (Ziegler) Urdu replaces English as the language of instruction in schools in Pakistan. (Sridhar)
1991	Helsinki corpus of English words from the Old English period through 1720 is completed. (Curzan)
1993	Welsh Language Act makes Welsh an official language in Wales alongside English. (Löffler)
1996–7	The "Ebonics" debates begin in Oakland, California. (Zeigler; Jones)
1998	The Good Friday Agreement grants "parity of esteem" to the Irish language and to Ulster Scots (Ullans) in Northern Ireland. (Dolan)

Part I
Introduction

1
History, English, Language: Studying HEL Today

Michael Matto and Haruko Momma

This *Companion to the History of the English Language* represents a somewhat unusual entry in the Blackwell Companions to Literature and Culture series, for this is not fundamentally a book about literature. We nevertheless expect our edition will complement the study of English-based literature and culture in a productive way, especially given the tendency since the middle of the last century for students of English studies to focus on criticism of modern literature, contemporary theory, and cultural phenomena. Our aim is to offer those working with literary and cultural material a fuller perspective on language, one that enhances their interests in the light of the history of the English language (HEL) as it has been researched and studied for more than a century. To this end, the current volume reflects contemporary concerns with colonialism and post-colonialism, race and gender, imperialism and globalization, and Anglophone cultures and literatures, but approaches these contemporary issues from a historical perspective with special attention paid to the role played by language. In this introduction we will contextualize HEL studies in today's world so that we may create a framework within which to read the 58 essays that follow.

In 1712, Jonathan Swift, the satirist and author of *Gulliver's Travels*, wrote his "Proposal for Correcting, Improving, and Ascertaining the English Tongue," in which he entreated the Earl of Oxford to establish a national "Society" to arbitrate and limit changes in the English language. In his proposal, Swift condemned change as the bane of any language, insisting that linguistic change is "infallibly for the worse" and arguing that "it is better a Language should not be wholly perfect, than it should be perpetually changing" (Swift 1907: 15). Swift's anxiety over linguistic instability and his longing to rescue his language from decline and corruption ironically came after a thousand years of radical change to the language of the Anglo-Saxons had produced the English he recognized as his own. We, like Swift, commonly perceive our own language to have reached the pinnacle of its development, and we often resist change even if we are aware of the evolutionary history that led to its current state. But as evolutionary biologist Stephen Jay Gould reminded us, we often imagine the

evolutionary process to be a teleological development towards some perfected end when in fact evolution is by definition an ongoing process whose perpetual state is change. HEL as a subject is the study of an evolutionary process in Gould's strict sense: it is not the story of the "perfection" of the language, but rather of its ongoing metamorphosis within changing environments. At any moment the language represents at once the culmination of past changes and the starting place for future evolution.

The environmental factors that cause change in language are also themselves affected by language in a kind of feedback loop; HEL as it is currently studied therefore concerns itself with politics, economics, culture, technology, religion – any area of human experience in which language plays a role. In next chapter, Thomas Cable traces the "history of the history of the English language," so we will not attempt here what he has already so expertly accomplished. But to underscore one point, we would emphasize that the subject of HEL now engages the environmental situatedness of language more deeply than ever before. As Cable makes clear, this was not always so: the history of HEL moves gradually from the study of language alone to the study of language in culture in general. The present collection reflects HEL's new, broader scope without abandoning its focus on language. It may therefore be useful to reconsider the three fundamental concepts that define HEL: English, Language and History.

English: Nation and Tongue

Swift was not alone in calling for an English "Society" or "Academy" of language; many late seventeenth-century and eighteenth-century British political writers recognized that the language of the expanding Empire was becoming important enough to warrant an attempt to control its future. Swift saw a cautionary tale in the history of Latin: after spreading throughout the Roman Empire, Latin declined in elegance, admitted foreign words and syntactic constructions, and splintered into a number of regional dialects that would become the Romance languages. Thus the source of his claim that change is "infallibly for the worse": for Swift, this process represented the death spiral of a perfect language.

Swift seems to have thought of all languages in terms of states and their subjects. He used the phrase "the Roman Language" as often as the proper noun "Latin," and regularly wrote "our language" and "our words" when referring to English. Such usage suggests that when he wrote "the French tongue" or "the English language," Swift was defining these languages through the identities of their speakers rather than through the languages' inherent characteristics. Nevertheless, Swift recognized, through his analogy with the Roman Empire, that political expansion would lead to an increase in the number of English speakers around the world, thus complicating his notion of "our" English language. Today, in our post-colonial world, an easy equation of nationality and language is impossible. Obviously many more native English speakers live outside England and Great Britain than within, and beyond Anglophone

nations, best estimates suggest there are currently some three times as many ESL speakers and learners in the world as native speakers. The Englishes used throughout the world today – whether called dialects, creoles, or varieties of "broken" English – belie the notion that *English* can any longer imply primarily "the language of England," other than in a purely historical sense.

While a study of HEL must, of course, trace English's beginnings to that small island off the northwest corner of the European mainland, the term *English* has ranged far away from its ancestral home. To continue Swift's analogy with Latin, since at some point Gallic Latin became Old French, we might ask when the English of, say, Jamaica will have earned its own moniker, and should no longer be called "English" at all. But such a question reinscribes Swift's equation of language and sovereign state – Jamaican English is not English only to the extent that it is not the English of England. We may soon find we need a terminology similar to "Romance Languages" to accommodate the Englishes born in the wake of British expansion: the "English language *family*" perhaps, as David Crystal among others has suggested. With such a formulation, Swift's fear of language decay and death becomes a celebration of generation and proliferation; as one language spreads and evolves to become many, it lives on more abundantly than it could have otherwise. In such a case, change might be seen as "infallibly for the better."

Language: Monolingualism, Register, and Genre

As Cable's chapter demonstrates, the history of the English language is an academic subject that has regularly been taught at the university level for more than one hundred years. HEL has customarily been offered in English programs. This seems like a logical choice at first, because most English departments confer degrees in English "language" and "literature." For students who engage in English studies at English-speaking institutions, however, the "language" part of the degree they work towards may seem somewhat redundant. After all, don't they know English already? Indeed, English programs today probably attract students who hope to apply their competence in their native language to the study of literature. This invisibility of language in literary studies is a relatively recent phenomenon, however. Historically speaking, the practice of coupling "language" and "literature" for an academic study of English goes back to the nineteenth century when the discipline of modern-language studies was developed within the paradigm of the new philology, which placed emphasis on the historicity of the vernaculars. Prior to modern philology, the literary education of the West had long concerned the study of Latin (and Greek), for which the mastering of grammar was a prerequisite for the study of rhetoric. In the long history of liberal arts education, therefore, monolingualism is more an exception than the norm.

Today HEL provides students of English with an opportunity to develop a new perspective on the language. When given a text written in pre-Chaucerian Middle

English or Gullah, for instance, we must approach the language not as an instrument for study but as an object of study itself. Texts written in either of these varieties of English require careful analysis, because the language, though called English, is distant and unfamiliar. Moreover, the scale of linguistic unfamiliarity is not necessarily in proportion to the historical or geographical distance of the texts. In reading Shakespeare, for instance, we often find poetic passages more accessible than some of the prose passages, even though the average English speaker in Shakespeare's time would have found it the other way around. This discrepancy derives in part from our privileging of the elevated style of Shakespearean sonnets or soliloquies over the plainer style of his prose which often represented the informal or colloquial speech of lower classes. But the discrepancy also derives from the conservative nature of literary language itself. In comparison, spoken language is so mutable that the colloquialism of one generation is often incomprehensible to the next.

Just as playwrights and novelists would choose different registers for different characters, ordinary people are likely to speak more than one "language" in their daily life even if they belong to a small or secluded community. This important point is made by M. M. Bakhtin with an example of a rural laborer in Russia:

> Thus an illiterate peasant, miles away from any urban center, naively immersed in an unmoving and for him unshakable everyday world, nevertheless lived in several language systems: he prayed to God in one language (Church Slavonic), sang songs in another, spoke to his family in a third and, when he began to dictate petitions to the local authorities through a scribe, he tried speaking yet a fourth language (the official-literate language, "paper" language). All these are *different languages*, even from the point of view of abstract socio-dialectological markers. (Bakhtin 1981: 295–6)

The key to understanding Bakhtin's claim that one's existence in society is fundamentally multilingual lies in the multivalence of language itself. When used as an uncountable noun, the word *language* refers to verbal communication in general. As a countable noun, a language comprises a specific variety of speech used in one or more countries, regions, or communities of people with a distinct group identity. Strictly speaking, *language* in the second sense is not a linguistic entity, because a language as such is formally indistinguishable from a dialect, and one can be separated from the other only through socio-political factors. The word *language* has yet another meaning in a phrase like "paper language," or "literary language." The word *language* used in this sense constitutes a cultural entity that functions at the level of discourse, register, or genre.

HEL has traditionally dealt with diverse genres, many of which are excluded from the narrow definition of literature: governmental documents, familial letters, religious or scientific treatises, conduct books, advertisements, to name a few. By becoming familiar with genetically diverse texts, we realize that each genre has a history of its own. Some, like advertisements, change their form and format as fast as material culture and media technology, whereas others, like the epistle and the homily, have

sustained a certain formality that cuts across the boundaries of periods or states. Cookbooks comprise yet another case. The following passage comes from a fifteenth-century recipe for *sauce galentyne*:

> Take faire crustez of broun brede, stepe þem in vinegre, and put þer-to poudre canel [i.e. cinnamon powder], and let it stepe þer-wyþ til it be broun; and þanne drawe it þurwe a straynour .ij. tymes or .iij., and þanne put þerto poudre piper and salte: and let it be sumwhat stondynge, and not to þynne, and serue forth. (Austin 1964: 108–9)

This culinary instruction has a tone and a contour that are familiar to anyone who has used modern cookbooks: it consists of a series of imperatives followed by the names of ingredients, methods of preparation, and desired outcomes including how the product should be consumed. We recognize a similar pattern in the following passage, this time taken from an Old English medical book:

> Wið hwostan: nim huniges tear and merces sæd and diles sæd; cnuca þa sæd smale, mæng ðicce wið ðone tear, and pipera swiðe; nim ðry sticcan fulle on nihtnihstig.
>
> [For cough: Take honey droppings and marche seed and dill seed. Pound the seeds small, mix into the droppings to thickness, and pepper well. Take three spoonfuls after the night's fast.] (Grattan & Singer 1952: 100–1)

The examples from Old and Middle English demonstrate that the genre of recipe writing has not undergone major change at the discourse level. They are also the reminder that some of the linguistic characteristics of English have remained unchanged for more than a thousand years.

History: Two Models

What does "history" mean when applied to a language? One commonly invoked model distinguishes an "internal" or linguistic history of English from an "external" or cultural history. As Cable makes clear, the study of language in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was almost exclusively philological. Sound shifts, developments in vocabulary, and syntactic changes were of primary interest, while historical events were at best secondary. Throughout the twentieth century, scholars became more interested in the relationship between language and history. In 1935, the first edition of Albert Baugh's famous textbook promised "a proper balance" between internal and external history (Baugh & Cable 2002: v). Still, as the term "external" implies, cultural and political history remained outside language itself. The latter part of the twentieth century saw the publication of new textbooks (e.g., Gerry Knowles' *A Cultural History of the English Language* in 1979, and Dick Leith's *A Social History of English* in 1983) that foregrounded what had been called the external history. In such books, external history was transformed into a "sociolinguistic profile" of a

language (Leith 1997: 8), with emphasis on the social function of language rather than on its grammar, phonology, syntax, etc.

Today, the usefulness of "internal" and "external" as defining conceptions within HEL may have run its course. Above we referred to a "feedback loop" running between language and its "environment"; these terms seem salient to us because they acknowledge that a language makes up part of the environment it inhabits. Language is recognized simultaneously as an agent of history and as a product. For example, the rate of linguistic change did slow following the time of Swift and other prescriptivists. But can we really identify a simple cause-and-effect relationship? Their efforts would likely have been impossible without the earlier invention of print media and would have been unnecessary if England had not entered the nascent global economy. The argument can be made that the printing press itself created the prescriptivists' attitude. In fact, the language may well have regularized even without their efforts, because the market forces were driving the use of the press. Ironically, the printing technology that made the "fixing" of English necessary and possible would later facilitate its global spread, which has, in turn, led to the current period of radical linguistic change. The history of the English language abounds with such cyclical developments, effects becoming causes.

While the division between internal and external history is being blurred, a second model of history, the chronological development of language, still holds sway. The tripartite history of Old, Middle, and Modern English defines two historical moments as central to English's development: the Norman Invasion of 1066, and the rise of the Tudor Dynasty and the Protestant Reformation. These events are traditional dividing lines for good reason – they do in fact represent moments when language, politics, religion, and economics underwent radical transformations. But the model defined by these terms is linear, tracing a straight-line trajectory for a well-defined, unitary language, thus denying a full history to the offshoots, the non-standard dialects, the conservative backwaters, or the avant-garde neologisms of a given historical period. But even if we grant that the "standard" language has until recently had enough momentum to pull along most variants in its wake, such a single straight-line trajectory is insufficient to capture the current global spread and multidimensional changes in the world's Englishes. It may be time to consider the "Old–Middle–Modern" triptych as complete, and to seek new models for representing English in the world today as well as for the processes that led to it.

Recent schematic models of English in today's world include Braj Kachru's "Concentric Circles" model which emphasizes the larger and ever-growing number of non-native speakers over time (see WORLD ENGLISH IN WORLD CONTEXTS). Somewhat different is Tom McArthur's "Circle of World English" with a hypothetical World Standard English at its hub, and increasingly local variants, including those in Anglophone countries, radiating outward. McArthur's arrangement radically decentralizes British and American Standard English, projecting a future of English in the world uncontrolled by British or American hegemony. We cannot offer here a unified image that captures all aspects of the history of English; the result would of necessity be a

schematic chimera of chronological lines, branching trees, holistic circles, interactive networks, and evolutionary processes. Such a chimera cannot be easily imagined, but we anticipate that the essays in this collection will illuminate individually for students the many possible approaches to the study of HEL that, taken together, provide more than a single model or historical emphasis might do.

How to Use this Book

The current collection is intended as a *Companion* to the history of the English language rather than a comprehensive textbook. The chapters are written to stand alone so that readers may dip into them at will. Readers might also use the extensive cross-referencing among the chapters as well as the recommended further reading to develop a fuller picture of a given topic. We have provided below a list of available HEL textbooks with brief annotations. Some of the textbooks, including Pyles/Algeo and Baugh/Cable, have accompanying workbooks.

HEL Textbooks

Baugh, A. C. & Cable, T. (2002). *A History of the English Language*. 5th edn. London: Routledge. [Offers a narrative explanation of linguistic evolution in relation to social and political changes in Britain and America]

Crystal, D. (2003). *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of the English Language*. 2nd edn. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. [Arranges historical and contemporary material by theme; offers abundant visual aids]

Culpepper, J. (2005). *History of English*. 2nd edn. Routledge Language Workbooks Series. New York: Routledge. [Focuses on student-friendly linguistic analyses of language change; includes exercises and "discussion points"]

Fennell, B. A. (2001). *A History of English: A Sociolinguistic Approach*. Oxford: Blackwell. [Provides a linguistic history informed by issues like multilingualism and creolization]

Gelderen, E. van. (2006). *A History of the English Language*. Philadelphia: John Benjamins. [Gives a detailed introduction to linguistic topics and historical principles]

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2

History of the History of the English Language: How Has the Subject Been Studied?

Thomas Cable

The earliest single-volume, narrative histories of the English language came late in a period of remarkable linguistic progress. These were Victorian and Edwardian distillations of scholarly traditions that flourished throughout the nineteenth century. The discoveries in comparative and historical linguistics by Rasmus Rask, Jacob Grimm, Franz Bopp, and other philologists in Continental Europe provided the foundations of the study as early as 1818. In England the Philological Society's sponsorship of a *New English Dictionary*, beginning in the middle of the century, and the textual support for that project by the Early English Text Society, displayed the English language on a scale beyond the reach of eighteenth-century writers. Samuel Johnson's 1755 *Dictionary of the English Language* included a perfunctory "History of the English Language," but his history was simply a selection of older texts available to him and a thin connecting thread.

Three-quarters of a century later Noah Webster's understanding of the history of the English language was even less adequate than Johnson's. Accepting the scriptural account of the dispersion, the folk hero of American lexicography ignored the discoveries that were transforming historical linguistics in Europe. The basis of Webster's etymologizing in his 1828 *American Dictionary of the English Language* has been described as "simple fantasy" (Sledd & Kolb 1955: 197). Inevitably, however, advances in historical linguistics had their effect on dictionaries and histories. Gneuss (1996) names Latham (1841 and its later editions) as a main precursor to modern histories of the English language, especially because Latham was better informed than most British and American philologists about advances in Germany. Other early treatments include Bosworth (1836), Marsh (1862), and two three-volume historical grammars in German, Koch (1863–9) and Mätzner (1860–5).

With Lounsbury (1879) the history of the English language acquired a shape that can be compared with textbooks of the next hundred years. During the three decades after Lounsbury several similar surveys appeared: Emerson (1894), Bradley (1904), Jespersen (1905), Wyld (1906), and Smith (1912). From the perspective of the

English Language in America" is approximately in its chronological order, although the English settlement of the American continent and the colonial history, of course, reach back to periods already treated in British English.

Pyles (1964) used much the same format with a core of chapters for the major periods in the center of the book, preceded and followed by chapters on topics of special interest to the author – two chapters on letters and sounds after the introductory chapter and three chapters on words after the six chronological chapters. John Algeo kept this format as co-author in subsequent editions, and he added a workbook, a feature that went a long way toward solving the main problem that had vexed one-volume histories from the beginning – how to include all the material.

Another way of getting at the instruction in linguistics that is necessary for the history of any language was used successfully by Strang (1970). By beginning with Modern English and working back, her history reviewed the most accessible stage of the language at the same time that it introduced phonetics.

As for the later stages, current histories are much fuller than Edwardian histories and not simply because another century has passed. Even in 1900 the English language in America had a history that could have been explored but was not; and English as a world language was ignored until the mid-twentieth century. The incorporation of these subjects is partly a story of an increasingly liberal attitude toward language and its users. The study of American English was greatly facilitated by Krapp (1925). Within Britain itself, varieties other than RP were hardly mentioned in the early histories: English in Scotland, Wales, and Ireland, Cockney, and the rural dialects of England had to wait until the 1920s.

Advances in linguistic theory during the twentieth century had varying effects on the traditional histories. The "phonemics" of structural linguistics between the 1930s and 1950s caused little disruption in the way sounds were presented. In fact, a vaguely phonemic transcription was easily adaptable as a "broad" transcription, and if anything it made life easier. In a textbook designed for an undergraduate course, it was simpler to make phonemic distinctions than to try to justify the exact phonetic values of, say, the configuration of sounds in the Great Vowel Shift at a certain moment.

Generative-transformational grammar was another story. The complexity of the constantly changing theory required, in effect, a separate course to cover even the basics, but neither the curriculum nor the economics of book publishing allowed adequate treatment of a "generative" approach to the history. Such syntheses as McLaughlin (1970), with pages of deep structure trees, as deep structure was conceived at the time, have been abandoned.

Instead, the emphasis of the past four decades has been on social varieties following William Labov's pioneering studies, and on national and areal varieties around the world. The most thoroughly studied variety of American English within a sociolinguistic approach has been African American Vernacular English. (See MIGRATION AND MOTIVATION IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF AFRICAN AMERICAN VERNACULAR ENGLISH; see also LATINO VARIETIES OF ENGLISH.)

As late as 1970 one of the few guides to English as a world language was Partridge and Clark (1951), despite sources such as dictionaries of Australian, Indian, and South African English going back to the turn of the century: Morris (1898), Yule, Burnell, and Crooke (1903), and Pettman (1913). During the past thirty years, a wealth of information has been published on English in individual countries along with dictionaries in the *OED* tradition. Anthologies such as Bailey and Görlach (1983) have made summaries and overviews available for classroom use. English as a world language, including English pidgins and creoles, has become an essential component of the history of the English language, and some universities offer a separate course in the subject. (See CREOLES AND PIDGINS; WORLD ENGLISH IN WORLD CONTEXTS.)

A final development in both research and teaching is the use of the computer in "corpus linguistics." The digitalized retrieval of tagged data is widely familiar to scholars and students in commercial products such as the online *OED* and the Chadwyck-Healey literature databases. Several universities in North America and Europe currently sponsor projects that focus either on a broad sweep of the English language or on a particular period. Between the *Helsinki Corpus of English Texts* and *A Representative Corpus of Historical English Registers* (*ARCHER*), the language can be displayed from its earliest records to the present. The *Helsinki Corpus* collects texts from Cædmon to the beginning of the eighteenth century, while *ARCHER* (supported by the University of Northern Arizona and the University of Southern California) goes from the mid-seventeenth century to 1990. The University of Toronto provided one of the first electronic resources in the database for the *Dictionary of Old English* (in progress); the University of Michigan has combined its materials for the *Middle English Dictionary* with other archives into the *Middle English Compendium;* and both Oxford University and the University of Virginia publish Middle English texts in digital form. The University of Edinburgh, which supported the invaluable *Linguistic Atlas of Late Mediaeval English* in four volumes (McIntosh, Samuels, & Benskin 1986) is currently sponsoring the *Corpus of Early Middle English Tagged Texts and Maps.* For a comprehensive survey of resources in corpus linguistics, see Rissanen (2000). (See also CORPUS-BASED LINGUISTIC APPROACHES TO THE HISTORY OF ENGLISH.) An excellent example of the insights that can come from the use of the computer for historical English linguistics is Nevalainen (2000), which combines the new technology with both old topics (the spread of the *–es* present tense ending) and current topics (gender and language) to show developments that had not been noticed.

A casual observer might imagine that 200 years of modern scholarship on 1,300 years of the recorded language would have covered the story adequately and that only incremental revisions remain. Yet the subject continues to expand in fructifying ways, and interacting developments contribute to the vitality of the field: the recognition that cultural biases often narrowed the scope of earlier inquiry; the incorporation of global varieties of English; the continuing changes in the language from year to year; and the use of computer technology in reinterpreting aspects of the English language from its origins to the present.

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3
Essential Linguistics

Mary Blockley

How much linguistics is necessary in a History of the English Language course for a literature student? How much should a student of literature know about language studies? I take these questions as an invitation to think about the minimal amount of linguistics needed to convey change in English over at least the last thousand years. I chose not to focus on the outcomes of the four or so main stages of English that provide the organizing principle of most overviews. For one thing, the number of necessary topics and amount of detail vary dramatically with the centuries that an instructor chooses to cover, whether starting from Proto-Indo-European or no earlier than Early Modern English. N. F. Blake (1996) and Dick Leith (1997) have gone to some effort to avoid using those periodizing terms, probably because of the assumptions that go along with such metaphors, recasting the ever-renewable life of a language as the stages of a single human life.

My approach in this overview is rather to direct attention to a few disparate linguistic objects of various sizes, from the phoneme to the sentence, and a few terms for the linguistic descriptions that are claimed to affect such objects. Some, such as fronting, repeat themselves over the centuries, but as significant are other concepts, like phonemic length, that are almost inaccessible to those who know only Present-Day English.

These topics are therefore "essential" not so much in representing core concepts of linguistics as a science, but rather in the paramedic sense of indispensable – whether or not these perceived units and processes turn out to be central to the history of English, you cannot describe the set of language changes that encompass English without knowledge of and reference to them. That so many of them remain or have become controversial is part of the terror for novice lecturers, who find contradictory dicta everywhere they turn, and part of the continuing attraction they have as topics for research. The selection here is therefore relentlessly practical. A grasp of the issues involved with any of these topics is the crucial bridge into understanding the more demanding books. I hope that even those who find this cross-training teasingly

Stress Shift

The shift of word stress to the initial syllable in Germanic languages has contributed to the orthographic untidiness of English paradigms, leaving its traces in the voicing of medial fricatives that account for the *was/were*, *seethe/sodden*, *lost/lorn* contrasts. With the exception of a few suffixes like *–eer* and *–ee*, the trend since Early Modern English, sometimes detectable from meter, is for any loanword to shift its stress forward. Yet in Present-Day English, even disyllabic words are not always predictable. In contrast to *debit* and an increasing number of *re-* verbs like *recap* "recapitulate," even some nouns (*demand* and *result*) resist initial stress. Changes in lexicographic pronunciations reveal patterns of antepenultimate stress for polysyllables, sometimes supporting transparency (Bauer 1994: 95–103), as when the silent *n* of *autumn* resurfaces in *autumnal*.

Grammaticalization

As "the change whereby lexical items and constructions come in certain linguistic contexts to serve grammatical functions, and once grammaticalized, continue to develop new grammatical functions" (Traugott & Hopper 2003: xv), grammaticalization accounts for much historical syntactic variation. Examples include adverbs like *indeed* and *really* and all the modal auxiliaries of English, such as *will*, which began life as main verbs. Grammaticalized items cross part-of-speech boundaries and even create parts of speech out of reduced phrases or words; grammaticalization theory has revived the study of the role of adverbials, a part of speech neglected by early formal linguistics, even though "no other Teutonic language has developed to the same degree the faculty of expressing so much by a single adverb as English" (Western 1905: 97).

Phonemic Length

Phonemic length, a distinction wholly lost in Present-Day English, is perhaps the most difficult of these topics in that the evidence is correspondingly difficult to grasp for those who know only Present-Day English. Phonemic length is nonetheless important for what it indicates about spelling conventions that underspecify the quantity of vowels in medieval texts and yet provide more if not always adequate specification of consonants. The loss of phonemic length raises questions of how and why a wide-ranging set of contrasts disappears so completely, and why digraph spellings did not generally emerge for long vowels. The contrast that separated *īs* "ice" and *is* "is," *āc* "oak" and *ac* "but," and *gōd* "good" and *god* "God," indicates that phonemic length was a living force in OE.

Complementation

Complementation is the syntactic art of making clauses bigger to make them smaller, that is, to convert them from wholes into parts of larger wholes. For example, the conjunction "because" in "The king died because the queen died" makes the second clause grammatically dependent on the first. In this instance it also makes the implied temporal order of events explicit and contrary to the order of the clauses themselves. To work without conjunctions, complementation requires that some left-edge boundary be apparent, some marker for the subordinate clause that acts as a noun. Sometimes, as in the next example, a complement even acts as a modifier of a noun that is understood from context alone. In "I can serve *whoever's next*," the indefinite relative "whoever" does this, but a clause boundary is somehow clear to speakers for whom "I can serve *who's next*" is its equivalent. Intonational contours or punctuation occasionally disambiguate structures, but complement status can be difficult to diagnose. Gender differences in the use of sentential complement clauses in spoken and written Present-Day English has a yet-to-be-explored link with the preposed, left-handed complement clauses in earlier prose, including Old English. Mondorf (2004: 87–100) indicates that the fronted adverbial complement clause, such as "when the queen died, the king died," is more characteristic of men than women.

Diphthongization

"The most prominent feature of our present English is its tendency towards diphthongization," wrote Henry Sweet. A diphthong is two vowels doing the phonemic work of one; for example the /aɪ/ of *I*. Diphthongization raises questions that have endured longer than any answer to them. Are the seven new ME diphthongs proper assimilations of vowels with the subsequent semivowels of OE /w/, /j/, and /v/, as seen in *sew* and *gray*? What are we to make of Present-Day English's retention of /ɔɪ/ as a diphthong borrowed from French, when the usual tendency is to assimilate loans to native norms of realization; that is, why do we have a diphthong in *joy* but not in *fruit*? What makes [əi], the centralized but unrounded EMnE diphthong that preceded [aɪ], so difficult and foreign-sounding for students of Shakespearian English (Crystal 2006: 115)?

"You was" Declared Ungrammatical Though Not Plural

The loss of "thou" meant that "you" had to cover singular as well as plural second-person reference, and second-person verbs had already lost the distinction of number. A sentence like "you was there" embodies an obsolete innovation that jabs the prescriptive nervous system of many English speakers. The singular "you was" is distinct

from dialects with the loss of "were" in all persons. Anecdotal evidence doesn't always bother to distinguish these two causes of "you was," and both seem condemned in a letter reporting the mathematician John Nash reproaching the grammar of his twelve-year-old illegitimate son and namesake to his sister Martha Nash Legge, May 1, 1966: "all John David had to do was let a 'you was' slip out and Nash would be all over him" (Nasar 1998: 315). The acceptability of "you was" as a distinctive singular is noted in Jespersen, and in Algeo and Pyles (2005: 186), who give examples from the prose of John Adams as well as Samuel Johnson and hail the result as the rare victory of a mere schoolmaster over educated use. Tellingly, the eighteenth-century grammarian Robert Lowth criticizes the "enormous Solecism" without having the courage to admit the singular "you were" into his paradigms, resorting instead to the *thou* form that he acknowledged to be "disus'd" (Lowth 1762: 51–3). It is less well known that "you was" persists beyond the eighteenth century. McWhorter (2001: 229–31) notes it in the otherwise style-conscious letters of a self-educated man in the 1830s. As late as 1892, the readers of Richard Grant White, a nineteenth-century equivalent of the *New York Times*'s language maven, were answered that "*you was* has the support of eminent example" (White 1892: 446), though White himself preferred the plural form of the verb with the plural form of the pronoun.

Raising and Fronting

Vowels are notoriously underspecified in writing systems. With the evidence for raising and fronting, like that for palatalization, we end with changes that proceed audibly but invisibly, sometimes leaving no trace in orthography. The terms "raising" and "fronting" also leave surprisingly little trace in introductory linguistics textbooks, though scholarship in historical phonology continues to use them (Lutz 2005). When one English speaker's "Adam" sounds like "Edam" to another, we can say that the first speaker's vowel has raised, relative to the phonetic boundaries of the auditor's phonemic [æ]. Similarly, fronting is relative. Fronting often correlates with the loss of lip rounding of vowels. One of the clearest breaks with continental Germanic appears in the early OE fronting of the mid low [a] to [æ], still heard, after the raising and diphthongization caused by the Great Vowel Shift, in the *day*/*Tag* contrast between English and German. In the US, Northern Cities fronting (Labov 1991) of the lax mid-back vowel to [æ] means that inner-city Detroit "blocks" sounds to other Americans like "blacks." Is fronting easier to detect than backing? Stockwell and Minkova (2001: 100) provide an intriguing generalization about the direction of assimilation.

There you have it. These ten linguistic ideas surface in any phase of description that goes above the level of the lexical word or plunges below the surface of standardized spelling's imperfect record of sound. Unlike the pages of the texts that are the basis for evidence of change, they are abstract, and like any scientific abstraction they are subject to revision or even retirement by ideas with more to offer.

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Part II
Linguistic Survey

attested in the earlier part of the same century. The English vocabulary of poverty was subsequently enriched by loanwords from more prestigious languages: *privation* from French (mid-14th c.), *destitute* from Latin (late 14th c.), and *penury* from classical Latin (15th c.), to name but a few. As for prosody, Old English poetry consistently employed alliterative meter, a traditional verse form common to all early Germanic poetry. In later medieval periods, English poets used continental verse forms such as regular rhymes and syllable-based prosody, although alliteration continued to be used in many poems as it kept adapting, with remarkable resilience, to the ever-changing phonology and morphology of Middle English. The alliterative tradition lasted until the early sixteenth century when the native prosody finally became incompatible with the language because of the systematic loss of the final *-e*.

Haruko Momma

4
Phonology: Segmental Histories

Donka Minkova and Robert Stockwell

The Stressed Vowels in Old English

Evidence for the vowel system of Old English (OE) is of two types: the systematic orthography developed at Winchester in the late tenth century, and the study of the sound changes which lead up to the Winchester usage and which to some extent enlighten us about the graphemic regularities and anomalies found there. We depart from nineteenth- and twentieth-century interpretations of the orthographic evidence that over-value the assumption that the orthography is entirely phonemic and that vowel symbols should be read in strict accord with their values in Latin. Instead we present a compromise view which gives greater weight to evidence from sound change. However, at all times we cite also the orthographic paradigm which Anglo-Saxonists have generally endorsed.

The earliest records of Old English (the *Corpus*, *Épinal*, and *Erfurt Glossaries*, 8–9th c.) require us to posit a simple six-vowel system, all six vowels occurring as both long and short. Peripherality (relative closeness to the edge of the vowel space) as an additional feature of long and short vowels is redundant: the long vowel is always peripheral, and the short vowel is always non-peripheral. If we discount peripherality, we are left with an (idealized) familiar vowel triangle (figure 4.1).

These six vowels provide the launch pad for a survey of the English vowel system from earliest times. Two more vowels played almost no continuing role in English – the rounded front vowels [ö(:)] and [ü(:)]. Early OE had the three back-gliding diphthongs [iw], [ew], and [æw], but it had none of the front-gliding diphthongs that are so prominent in Present-Day English (PDE), namely [ey], [ay], [oy], as in *bait*, *bite*, *void*. The system found in "classical" Old English is essentially the same, plus one maverick [ü(:)], usually spelled <y>, to be explained below. The back-gliding diphthongs change into in-gliding (V-w → V-ə) and eventually into long vowels which merge with the pre-existing long vowels. The result is the system in figure 4.2, where the late OE mergers are circled.

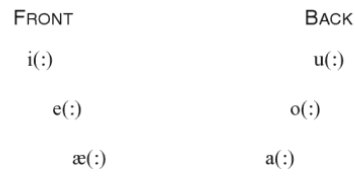

Figure 4.1 Idealized vowel triangle for early Old English

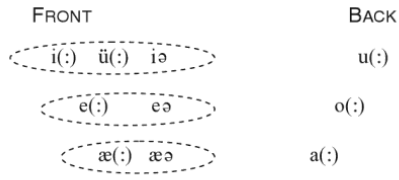

Figure 4.2 Vowel triangle for late Old English

The OE scribes did not distinguish between short and long vowels; the insertion of macrons over etymologically long vowels in printed texts is a modern editorial convenience.

The so-called "short diphthongs" have not appeared in our summary to this point. These are the vowels spelled <ea, eo, io> when followed by [-rC, -lC, -h] and [-w], the last with a back vowel in the following syllable. They are etymologically short, they count as short in the prosody, and they merge with simple short vowels later. They have attracted a great deal of scholarly controversy, and no fully satisfactory solution to the problem exists; they require special treatment. Some examples are <**ea**rm> 'arm', <h**ea**lf> 'half', <h**eo**fon> 'heaven', <n**ieh**t> 'night'. Since contrasting sets of "short" and normal bimoraic diphthongs are typologically unattested, we treat them as simple short vowels. Thus, for the pronunciation of the exotic "short diphthongs," since in all instances they soon merge again with the vowels that they sprang from, we recommend the corresponding short vowels: *earm* is [ærm], *heofon* is [hɛvən], *nieht* is [nɪht].

That leaves the high front rounded [ü:] vowel, spelled <y>. The only source for this vowel in OE was the process known as "I-Mutation" (ca. 6–7th c.). It is a right-to-left (regressive) assimilation: back vowels, both long and short, became front, and low front vowels were raised, when an inflectional or a derivational suffix beginning with [-i, -y] was added to the root. All back vowels, short and long, underwent mutation; among the front vowels only [æ(:)] was mutated, and the first element of diphthongs was raised to a high front vowel [i:]. The changes are shown in figure 4.3; the dashed line indicates the direction of the sound change from early OE to late OE and ME.

Both the long and the short vowels were subject to I-Mutation. The change created stem alternations such as FULL-FILL, FOOT-FEET, MAN-MEN:

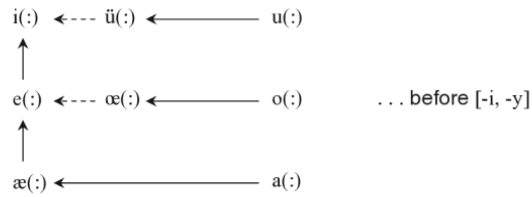

Figure 4.3 Effects of i-mutation

OE *full* 'full', adj. – *fyllan*, v. < **full* + ***y****an* 'to make full, to fill'
OE *fōt* 'foot', sg. – *fēt*, < **fōt*-***i****z* 'feet', pl.
OE *mann* 'man', sg. – *menn*, pl. < **mann* + ***i****z*- 'men', pl.

In late OE times the vowels represented by <y> generally merged with [i]. Another option was a retraction back to [ʊ/u:], spelled <u>; this type of spelling was retained, mostly in the Southwest Midlands, until the fourteenth century. A third option, which involves both unrounding and lowering to [ɛ/e:], spelled <e>, is associated with the dialect area south of London (Kentish). This results in some unexpected dialect forms surfacing in PDE: *bury* [bɛri] < OE *byrgan* [büryən] is a dialectal hybrid – the spelling is Southwestern, the pronunciation, from Kentish. Other examples are *merry-mirth* < OE *myrie*, *busy* < OE *bysig*.

Transition to Middle English

Simplifying somewhat, three types of sound changes took place after 1150–1200 which had the effect of massively reorganizing the system. They were:

- Long vowels tended to move upwards in the vowel space.
- All OE diphthongs became monophthongs, and new diphthongs arose.
- Vowel length came to be almost completely predictable.

The quality of the *short vowels* remained stable, except for the mergers shown and exemplified in figure 4.4.

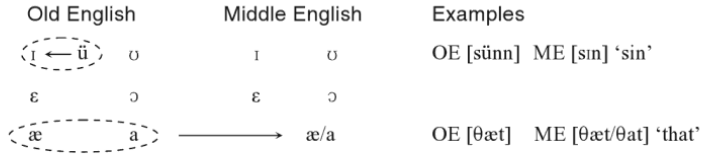

Figure 4.4 Short vowels from Old to Middle English

The *long vowels* were also generally stable. The changes in that subsystem are shown in figure 4.5.

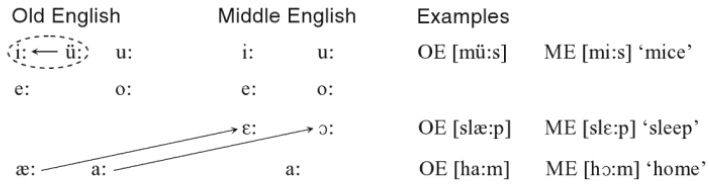

Figure 4.5 Long vowels from Old to Middle English

Note that the long and short vowels are mismatched in terms of vowel height. As we will see below, this affects the outcome of quantitative changes, e.g., when /e:/ shortens, for any reason, the new vowel is not [ɛ] but [ɪ], as in OE/EME *selig* [se:lig] → *silly*, OE/EME *redels* [re:dəls] → ME/PDE *riddle*. When the short high vowels are lengthened, they emerge as [e:] and [o:], as in *wicu* > ME [we:k] 'week', *wudu* > ME [wo:d] 'wood'. The long low front vowel [æ:] was raised to [ɛ:]; words that had been spelled with <æ> came to be spelled with *<ea*, *ee>*. Even before Chaucer's time there were two kinds of "long *e*": "close long *e*" [e:], and "open long *e*" [ɛ:]. They were consistently spelled alike, generally *<ee>*, but they were clearly different since they do not rhyme freely with each other in Chaucer's verse.

The monophthongization of all OE diphthongs in ME was noted above. The formation of new diphthongs came about in two ways: by reanalysis (resyllabification) of the post-vocalic [y, w] as the coda of the syllabic nucleus on its left, whereas it had previously been the onset of the syllable on its right; or by epenthesis of a glide before a velar fricative [h]:

V + [y, w] → Vi/Vu	OE dæg [dæy]	ME [dai] 'day'
	OE cnāwan [kna:wən]	ME [knɔu(ə)n] 'know'
V (front) + [h] → Vi	OE ehta [ɛhtə]	ME [eiht(ə)] 'eight'
V (back) + [h] → Vu	OE bōhte [bəhtə]	ME [bɔuht(ə)] 'bought'

Although referred to as "new," these diphthongs are rooted in the phonology of late OE. They are the result of co-articulatory changes occurring when a vowel and a following [y, w], or the voiceless fricative [h], come in contact within the same syllable. The vocalization of [y, w] is an easy step – these sounds are on the borderline between vowels and consonants. When they are no longer consonantal, they produce diphthongs that merge with the diphthongs found in borrowings from Scandinavian, as in ON *hreinn* 'rein(deer)', ON *heill*, 'salutation', ON *lágr* > [lo:w] 'low, flame'. As noted above, the innovative types of diphthongs are front-gliding – it is the type predominant today.

The increased predictability of vowel length in ME came about through a series of processes, some of which go back to OE. Already in pre-OE times, the vowels in *lexical monosyllables* like *hwa* 'who', *swa* 'so', *hwi* 'why' became long (if they were not already). This accounts for the constraint against lexical monosyllables ending in short vowels, to this day.

We know that in childhood all speakers build their own grammars. When it comes to learning language, everyone is an island. From that point of view, when people are still immature and haven't traveled much or mixed in wider social circles, [əy] and [əw] (Canadian or Virginia pronunciations) may not immediately be perceived as allophonically related to [ay] and [aw] at all. As we expand our linguistic horizons and talk with Australians and Cockneys and Canadians and Virginians and Philadelphians, these dialect variants become functionally single phonemes and "Canadian raisings" are hardly noticed by the rest of us because they are increasingly familiar diaphones of [ay] and [aw].

The upper half of the vowel shift was completed by about 1550. The lower half was still taking place (Lass 1999: 95–8) into the eighteenth century. And the center drift continues (to different degrees in different dialects) to this day.

By Shakespeare's time the language he spoke would have been (except for some lexical items) almost fully intelligible to a twenty-first-century speaker of English – probably easier for an American than for an RP speaker or a Yorkshireman or a Scot, just because American English is retrograde in many accentual features, especially the post-vocalic [-r] (see below). Dialectal differences continue, of course, especially after the explosion of new varieties of English that went with the adventurers and settlers who took the language around the world.

Unstressed vowels

The vowels in unstressed syllables had started to lose distinctiveness in Proto-Germanic, when stress began to fall on the first (root) syllable. By the time of the OE texts the inherited long vowels in unstressed syllables had been shortened. The set of unstressed vowels around the ninth century was limited to [e, a, o]. Orthographic interchangeability of the unstressed vowels in late OE suggests that some kind of schwa [ə], most commonly spelled <e>, was already in place before the Norman Conquest. Word-medially, vowel reduction is attested in widespread syncope and epenthesis of word-internal <-e->, thus <myc(e)le> 'much', <heof(e)nes> 'of heaven'. In the following two hundred years <-e> became the default spelling for post-tonic final vowels: <bane> 'killer' (OE <bana>), <deme> 'judge' (OE <dema>), <nose> 'nose' (OE <nosu>).

The process of vowel reduction culminated in the complete loss of schwa in ME, especially word-finally. Except for [-i] in the suffix <-y> (<OE *–ig*), all uncovered vowels in final unstressed syllables in native words were lost during ME: OE <hwæte>, ME <whet(e)> 'wheat'; OE <(to) scipe>, ME <(to) ship>. Schwa loss is amply attested in the earliest ME syllable-counting verse texts, *The Owl and the Nightingale* and *The Ormulum*: e.g., *bitæch(e) icc*, *bliss(e) inoh*, where the parenthesized <-e>'s are elided. Metrical and orthographic evidence shows loss of final vowels in trisyllabic words: *almes(se)*, *lover(e)*, *loved(e)*. Apocope of final <-e> also occurred early in words likely to occupy prosodically weak positions: pronouns, conjunctions, auxiliaries.

Parallel to schwa loss in open final syllables was the reduction and eventual syncope of schwa in the inflectional suffixes: <-e(n), -es, -eth, -ed>. The process was blocked in stems whose final consonants would create phonotactic incompatibilities: [-s, -z, -š, -ž, -č, -ǰ] for the <-es> suffix and [t, d] for the <ed> suffix; this gives rise to the PDE patterns *rates* vs. *aces*, *faked* vs. *lauded*. The rate of syncope is considerably higher before vowels and weak <h>, and stems ending in a sonorant (*berth* < *bereth*, *comth* < *cometh*) are more prone to undergo the change early.

Consonants

Compared to the complexity of the vocalic developments, the consonantal changes in English have been less dramatic, and the evidential bases for their reconstruction are less controversial. The major differences between the consonantal system of OE and the PDE consonantal system are:

- Simplification of long consonants
- Phonemicization of the voiced fricatives [v, ð, z]
- Vocalization or loss of [ɤ], [x], [ç] and distributional restrictions on [h]
- Loss of [-r] in some varieties of English
- Simplification of the consonant clusters [kn-], [gn-], [wr-], [-mb], [-ng]

The system that we take to be the input for these changes is shown in table 4.1.

The table shows only the short consonants. From West Germanic, OE had inherited geminate consonants: *pytt* 'pit', *tellan* 'to tell', *cuppa* 'cup'. Historically, consonant gemination was restricted to stems in which the vowel was short; that restriction holds for OE too. By the tenth century the geminates began to be simplified in

Table 4.1 The consonants of Old English

	Labial	Labio-dental	Dental	Alveolar	Palato-alveolar	Palatal	Velar
Voiceless Stops	p		t				k
Voiced Stops	b		d				g
Voiceless Fricatives		f	θ	s	š		h
Voiced Fricatives							
Affricates					č, ǰ		
Nasals	m		n				
Liquids				r, l			
Approximants	w					y	

unstressed medial syllables: OE <gyldenne> 'golden' > ME <gyldene>. Word-final geminates were simplified in early ME. Consonant degemination started in the northern dialects where the loss of final <-e> was more advanced. The commonly posited preservation of geminates in disyllabic forms in the south until the end of the fourteenth century (Chaucer's *knobbe*, *wynne*, *calle*, *happe*), is deceptive: the final vowels there were already provably unstable, so the forms would not have been disyllabic. The system disallowed final geminates; therefore these forms would have been pronounced with simple consonants every time the schwa was dropped. We assume the orthographic doubling of consonants in late ME simply marked the preceding vowel as short, a practice initiated by Orm at the end of the twelfth century.

Fricative voicing

"Fricative voicing" refers to the lenition of the fricatives [f, θ, s] to [v, ð, z] in OE. The only other voiced fricative in OE was [ɣ]; it had been phonemic in early OE, but by the second half of the tenth century it had become a positional allophone of [g]; it is therefore excluded from this set.

The voicing contrast in the pairs [f-v], [θ-ð], and [s-z] in OE was allophonic: voicing/lenition occurred if the consonant was the onset of an unstressed syllable. In all other environments the fricatives were voiceless (figure 4.8).

The voicing is also morphologically conditioned. For voicing to occur, the fricative must not be the initial consonant of the root, so in OE *gefara* 'travel companion', *asyndran* 'separate', *beþencan* 'bethink, consider' were not subject to voicing. The consonants of the fricative-initial adjectival suffixes *-fæst*, *-feald*, *-full*, *-sum* were not affected by voicing, suggesting that these suffixes maintained root-like properties; their affiliation with roots is confirmed by their ability to fill a metrical ictus in verse. The verbal suffix *-sian*, however, is treated like an inflection and its initial consonant is voiced, as in OE *clænsian* 'to make clean'. The OE voicing of fricatives root-finally before a vowel-initial grammatical suffix accounts for PDE alternations of the type found in *lose-lost*, *leave-left*, *nose-nostril*, *thrive-thrift*, *staff-staves*, *calf-calves*, *dwarf-dwarves*, *wife-wives*, *woof-weave*, *glass-glaze*, *brass-brazen* (originally 'made of brass'), *cloth-clothe*, *mouth* (n.) – *mouth* (v.), *wreath-wreathing*.

	<f>		<s>		<ð>/<þ>	
	[f]	[v]	[s]	[z]	[θ]	[ð]
OE	*<freo*	*ofer*	*sur*	*nosu*	*ðreo*	*hæþen>*
	'free	over	sour	nose	three	heathen'
OE	*<wulf*	*wulfas*	*græs*	*grasian*	*suð*	*suðerne>*
	'wolf	wolves	grass	to graze'	south	southern'

Figure 4.8 Allophonic voicing contrast in Old English fricatives

In ME the clear-cut complementary distribution of the voiceless and voiced fricatives was put in jeopardy. Intense lexical borrowing in Middle English obscured the inherited restriction on voiced fricatives at the left edge of the root. A search of headwords and forms in <*va-*, *vo-*, *vi-*, *ve-*> in the *MED* yields more than 800 borrowed items, including common words like *voice*, *vomit*, *void*, *virtue*; this would have been a leading factor for establishing an [f]-[v] contrast initially. About 45 words with initial [z] were also borrowed in ME, but for the [s]-[z] contrast in initial position the most important evidence would have been dialectal: the initial fricatives in native words had been voiced already in OE in the dialectal areas south of the Thames, and especially Kent, where we find spellings such as <vaire> 'fair', <vo> 'foe', and large numbers of spellings like <zong> 'song', <zalt> 'salt', <zwo> 'so'. While words beginning with [ð] were not borrowed, lenition of [θ] to [ð] in all dialects in late ME occurred in weakly stressed words as in *the*, *this*, *then*, *thus*, *there*, *them.*

In word-final position the phonemicization of the voicing contrast was driven by the loss of the unstressed vowels which had previously provided the context for voicing, e.g., before final schwa loss, <knave> 'knave' would have [-v] and <bathe> 'bathe' would have [ð] in word-final position. Similarly, the voicing contrast would be preserved in pairs such as <wif> 'wife' and <wif(e)s> 'of the wife', even after the schwa was lost and the fricative was adjacent to an obstruent. The degemination of the earlier voiceless [-ff-, -ss-, -θθ-] in word-medial position depleted further the input evidence for complementary distribution. By the end of ME such evidence was completely lost and the consonantal system of the language with respect to the labiodental, dental, and alveolar fricatives had reached its modern state, i.e., [f, v, θ, ð, s, z] were independent phonemes, contrasting in all positions: ***vine-fine***, ***silver-sulphur***, ***sieve-if***, ***zeal-seal***, ***visor-nicer***, ***laze-lace***, ***either-ether.***

As noted above, in OE the voiced velar fricative [ɤ] was an allophone of [g]; it appeared medially between back vowels. In that position [ɤ] underwent further lenition and developed into the approximant [w] in ME, e.g., OE [laɤu] > ME [law(ə)] 'law'. The preservation of the original [g] in later borrowings from Old Norse results in etymological doublets (table 4.2).

Table 4.2 Etymological doublets

Old English	Middle English	Loanword
dragan 'to draw'	draw(en)	drag (1440) < ON draga
sagu 'saying'	saw(e)	saga (1709) < ON saga

The historical instability of {h}

Another set of changes targets the velar fricative [h]. In OE it could appear freely initially, finally, and in consonantal clusters: <hu> 'how', <heah> 'high', <mihtig> 'mighty', <hring> 'ring', <hlot> 'lot'. Although the evidence for its allophonic

realizations – [x] after a back vowel and [ç] after a front vowel – is inconclusive (Lass 1994: 74–5), its ME developments support the reconstruction of [x, ç] in the respective environments. The history of this consonant is one of progressive weakening and loss, reversed only comparatively recently under the influence of orthography.

The loss of [h-] in word-initial consonant clusters was already under way in the eleventh century. By the middle of the thirteenth century [hl-, hr-, hn-] had become [l-, r-, n-]:

OE <hlot>	ME <lot>
OE <hræfn>	ME <raven>
OE <hnecca>	ME <neck>

The simplification of [hw-] to [(h)w-] started around the same time in ME.

In intervocalic position [-h-] had been lost in early OE, but it was preserved in geminates: <cohhetan> 'to cough', <hlæhhan> 'to laugh'. After the loss of geminate consonants in ME, the [h] in this position formed the basis of new diphthongs in [-w] and [-y]. In word-final position and before [-t] the fricative [h] was also unstable. Beginning in the fourteenth century that instability resulted either in lenition, taking the consonants through the stage of being an approximant into a glide, or in fortition, strengthening the [h] to [f]. The vocalization of [h] occurs both after front and back vowels, while the change of [h] to [f] can only occur after back vowels, suggesting that the input consonant for that change was the velar allophone [x] whose fortition was most likely perceptually driven (figure 4.9).

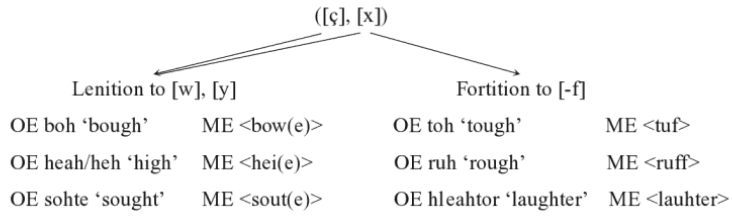

Figure 4.9 Lenition and fortition of [ç] and [x]

In word-initial position before vowels the realization of [h-] in ME depends on regional, prosodic, and etymological factors. Broadly speaking, in the north [h-] maintained its consonantal nature, while in the south evidence for early h-dropping is plentiful. Weakly stressed words (pronouns, auxiliaries) were more likely to undergo h-loss. The etymology of a word was also of consequence: Late Latin had started losing [h-]; the change had affected French prior to the massive introduction of Romance words into ME. Words like *heir*, *arbor* came into English without [h-], though cognates borrowed later may preserve it: *heir* (1275) – *heredity* (1540), *able* (1325) – *habilitation* (1612), *arbor* (1300) – *herbarium* (1700), *hour* (1225) – *horologic* (1665), *honor* (1200), but *honorarium* (1658) with or without [h-] in British English.

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5
History of English Morphology

Robert McColl Millar

When non-specialists think of linguistic change, this is often envisaged in terms of alterations in word meaning, or the replacement of some words by others. But whilst it would be wrong to downplay the importance of semantic and lexical change to our understanding of language change, this is only part of a much broader pattern. Changes to the morphology of a language – the ways that meaning and function are represented by how a word is constructed – are central to our understanding of the manner in which a language as a whole changes.

In order to illustrate this, this essay will discuss morphological change in English, concentrating, due to space considerations, and in the interest of clarity, on changes in the noun phrase inflectional morphology. Even this limited introduction should demonstrate that morphological change has had profound effects upon what *type* of language English is.

Linguistic Typology

Linguists categorize languages not only according to genetic relationship, but also according to *type*: unrelated languages can be similar in their phonological, morphological, and syntactic structures. A number of types are recognized; but the typological distinction which has particular relevance for the history of English inflectional morphology is that between *synthetic* and *analytic* language types.

A purely *synthetic* language describes the function of a phrase within a clause only according to form. Thus, in Finnish, *nuori tyttö* means 'young girl' in a sentence equivalent to ***The young girl*** *saw the film*, while *nuorelta tytöltä* means 'young girl' in a sentence equivalent to *The beautiful music was coming* ***from the young girl***. In Modern English, this distinction is made by position in the sentence and through the use of a preposition; in Finnish, however, it is supplied using inflectional morphemes on both adjective and noun. In highly synthetic languages, element order is flexible

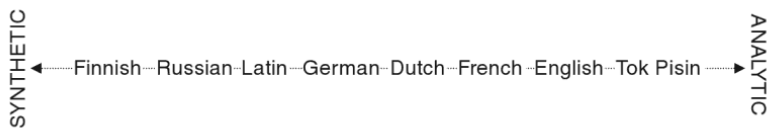

Figure 5.1 Synthetic–analytic language continuum

because denotative meaning is represented by word form rather than position in the clause.

At the other end of the scale, context alone reveals the relationship between clause elements in a purely *analytic* language. A language of this type must employ a rigid element order system. Many creole languages demonstrate a highly analytic typology. For instance, Tok Pisin, an English-based creole, does not generally express even plurality through inflections, so that *man* can be either singular or plural, depending on the context (Holm 1989: II.529–41). Present-Day English is not as analytic as Tok Pisin; it is not rich in inflectional morphology, however. The position of Present-Day English on a typological continuum is seen in figure 5.1.

Old English, however, would fall in between Latin and German. This essay will give some idea of how this change in type occurred in English.

Noun Phrase Morphology in Indo-European

In proto-Indo-European, seven grammatical cases were used to represent function through inflections: the *nominative* case, largely employed when a phrase represented the subject; the *accusative* case, largely triggered when a phrase represented the direct object; the *dative* case, largely used when a phrase represented something which is being given, often the indirect object; the *ablative* case, representing where something has been brought from; the *locative* case, referring to the place where someone or something is; the *genitive* case, largely associated with the expression of possession; and the *vocative* case, used when someone or, occasionally, something is being called by someone. These cases were marked on nouns, pronouns, and adjectives (Fortson 2004: ch. 4). Although some cases have been retained by many contemporary Indo-European languages, a general *drift* (Sapir 1921: 144) towards the simplification of case-marking has occurred in most. This is particularly true for languages originating in central and western Europe.

Nouns, pronouns, and adjectives were also marked for number. This means of distinction has, of course, survived into Present-Day English, with nouns and pronouns, although not adjectives, still normally marked for singular and plural. In proto-Indo-European, however, these word classes were all potentially marked for singular (one being or item), dual (two beings or items), and plural (more than two beings or items). Dual marking has not survived well in the Indo-European languages as a

whole. Indeed, by the time English began to be written, dual number was only marked for first and second person pronouns.

Elements of the noun phrase were also marked for grammatical gender, according to a tripartite division, termed *masculine*, *feminine*, and *neuter*. These classes did not always coincide with natural sex associations, so that, in Old English, words which had obvious female denotation, such as *wifmann* and *wif*, 'woman', were members of the masculine and neuter gender-classes, respectively. Grammatical gender has survived fairly well in the modern Indo-European languages, although "simplifying" from three genders to two is widespread, as seen, albeit in different ways, in many modern Germanic and Romance languages. Some modern Indo-European languages, such as Bengali and Afrikaans, do not preserve grammatical gender; nor does Modern English.

Beyond these broad means of "corralling" the nouns, the Indo-European languages also had smaller noun-classes, often termed *declensions*, membership of which appears to have been dependent upon the phonology of a word. Although declined following the same criteria – gender, case, number – the formal expression of these was often strikingly different from declension to declension. Similar declension forms were also present for the adjective. Each case, number, and gender "cell" was represented with a separate inflectional morpheme.

Whilst some of these features have been maintained by many Indo-European languages, very few retain absolute formal distinctiveness for the paradigms of all declensions, in all cases, with all genders, in all numbers. Instead, even in the most synthetic of the daughter languages, *syncretism*, the "falling together" of two or more originally separate forms representing separate categories, has taken place. Indeed, even the earliest recorded Indo-European languages have already passed through some, albeit limited, syncretism of this type (for instance, Sanskrit, as discussed by Fortson 2004: 193–4). (See also ENGLISH AS AN INDO-EUROPEAN LANGUAGE.)

Noun Phrase Morphology in the Germanic Languages

In the first recorded Germanic languages, five cases are given expression: the nominative, accusative, dative, genitive, and instrumental (Prokosch 1939). The instrumental, which replaced (or developed from) the ablative (and possibly also the locative), should express the means or instrument by which an action takes place. Those examples which we have of this case in the early Germanic languages do not bear this out entirely (Mitchell 1985: 3–8); indeed, ascertaining why this case is triggered rather than the dative is often difficult. The case went through syncretism with the dative very early, leaving only a few "fossilized" usages, such as Modern English *the more, the merrier*, where *the* is descended from a demonstrative in the instrumental (Small 1926, 1930).

A further feature of the Germanic noun phrase is the distinction between "strong" and "weak" adjectives, which survives in all Germanic languages except English and

Afrikaans. In Modern German, 'the poor man' is *der arme Mann*, while 'a poor man' is *ein armer Mann*. Case, gender, and number are identical for these forms; what distinguishes them is the level of case and gender information necessary to express concord between adjective and noun. In the first example, the determiner *der* tells us that the noun is a member of the masculine gender-class in the nominative case. Because this functional information is so explicit, there is no need for the "weak" adjective to carry this level of information. With the second example, however, the indefinite article *ein*, while carrying some grammatical information (for instance, the noun cannot be feminine), is not as explicit or thorough in its presentation of this information. The "strong" adjective form, *armer*, carries more grammatical information, therefore, informing us that the noun modified is masculine. Old English also made this distinction, the "strong" equivalent being *se earm mann*, the weak, *sum earma mann*.

All of these distinctions survived into Old English. With the exception of noun and pronoun plurality, however, practically nothing has come down to us. What happened?

The Old English Noun Phrase

Noun declensions

In Old English, a number of noun declensions existed, to which we can only give a cursory examination. Generally, they can be divided into two sets: the *strong* and the *weak* nouns (these terms refer to the level of case, gender, and number distinctive inflectional morphology shown). A typical "weak" masculine noun is *nama*, 'name' (table 5.1).

Very similar paradigms are found for feminine and neuter nouns. The lack of distinction between cases, genders, and numbers is significant.

With the strong nouns, however, a great deal more case, gender, and number distinction is possible, although there are similarities which bind the declensions together. One of the central of these is the *a*-declension (table 5.2), where *stān* 'stone' is masculine, while *word* 'word' and *scip* 'ship' are neuter.

Word represents the "ancestors" of the *zero* plurals of which a small number survive into Modern English, such as *sheep* and *fish*.

Table 5.1 Weak declension: *nama* 'name'

Case	Singular	Plural
Nominative	nama	naman
Accusative	naman	naman
Dative	naman	namum
Genitive	naman	namena

Table 5.8 Simple demonstratives

Case	Masculine	Feminine	Neuter	Plural
Nominative	sē	sēo	þæt	þā
Accusative	þone	þā	þæt	þā
Dative	þǣm	þǣre	þǣm	þǣm
Genitive	þæs	þǣre	þæs	þāra
Instrumental	þȳ, þon		þȳ, þon	

Table 5.9 Compound demonstratives

Case	Masculine	Feminine	Neuter	Plural
Nominative	þes	þēos	þis	þās
Accusative	þisne	þās	þis	þās
Dative	þis(s)um	þisse	þis(s)um	þis(s)um
Genitive	þis(s)es	þisse	þis(s)es	þāra
Instrumental	þȳs, þīs		þȳs, þīs	

Whilst to native speakers of English the use of a definite article is natural, indeed necessary, there are a great many languages which do not have such a discrete form. It does not appear to have been an Indo-European feature; a number of Indo-European languages, such as Russian, do not have an equivalent. Although article function existed in Old English, there was no separate article form. Instead, article function was carried by the simple demonstrative pronoun paradigm, as it still is in German. The creation of a discrete definite article was the product of the changes the morphology of the noun phrase went through in late Old English and early Middle English (Millar 2000).

The Old English system

Let us look at a short piece of "classical" Old English:

> **Vercelli Homily** 5 (tenth century)
> Her segð þis halige godspel be þære hean medomnesse þisse halgan tide þe nu onweard is, ⁊ us læreð þætte we þas halgan tiid gedefelice ⁊ clænlice weorðien, Godes naman to lofe ⁊ to wuldre . . .
>
> "Here this holy gospel tells about the high dignity of this holy season which is now upon us, and teaches us that we should make this holy season worthy with dignity and purity, for the praise and glory of God's name . . ."

This is obviously English, but an English based upon grammatical and morphological precepts we no longer have. Element order, for instance, is more variable, with the

Subject–Verb–Object order so necessary for comprehension in Modern English not so obvious, even in this brief passage. The use of each noun, adjective, and demonstrative form is predicated upon the relationship between case, gender, number, and (with the adjectives) level of grammatical information carried by the determiner. Thus, in the phrase be *þære hean medomnesse þisse halgan tide*, the form of *þære* tells us that the following noun is dative, when taken in combination with *be*, which triggers that case; *hean* is a weak adjective, because *þære* carries sufficient case and gender information for concord between elements to be expressed, while *medomnesse*, by the use of *–e*, announces itself not to be in the nominative or accusative case. *þisse* is the compound demonstrative form for either genitive or dative case with feminine nouns; the former case can be seen to be the one intended as this noun phrase is subordinate to the prepositional phrase. *Halgan*, again, is a weak adjective, because of the level of function information carried by the demonstrative; *tide* uses *–e* to mark (at least to some extent) case.

That we have to go into such complexity to parse a brief and essentially simple phrase is primarily due to our having to learn Old English as if it were a foreign language; to native speakers, these distinctions would have been natural and would have aided them (unconsciously) to follow the meaning of what was being said.

The Breakdown of Gender and Case Systems

Even in early Old English, the inherited system was beginning to "fray round the edges," with considerable syncretism apparent. This process, of originally distinct forms gradually being "worn down," is particularly common with endings, since there is a tendency for such morphemes to be unstressed. This is also apparent with noun declensions. In the more conservative dialects of Old English, the vowels in the endings ,<-a>, <-o>, and <-u> were probably distinct. By the early Middle English period, however, there is considerable evidence suggesting that they have fallen together as /ə/ generally spelled <-e>.

In northern England, this loss of distinctiveness developed, from an early period, into what Samuels (1989a) termed "phonetic attrition": the ongoing loss of almost all case-, number-, gender-, and declension-sensitive endings (Blakeley 1948–9). Tracing these developments from northern to southern England from the tenth to thirteenth centuries, Jones (1988) argues that these "mistakes" were actually part of an attempt to shore up one part of the inherited system – marking function by form – by sacrificing another – grammatical gender. Instead of having a system where forms and endings were normally associated both with gender and case (table 5.10), a reinterpretation took place, with – in theory at least – only one form being associated with one function in one number (table 5.11 – in the table I have retained the traditional case names, despite the fact that this subsystem was used to denote function, not case).

This "simplification" cannot explain how the loss of case forms also came about, however.

Table 5.10 Forms associated with gender, number, and case

Case	Masculine	Feminine	Neuter	Plural
Nominative	se/þe	seo/þeo	þæt	þa
Accusative	-ne	þa	þæt	þa
Dative	-m	-re	-um	-m
Genitive	-s	-re	-s	-ra

Table 5.11 Forms associated with number and case only

Case	Singular	Plural
Nominative	þe	þa
Accusative	-ne	þa
Dative	-m/n	-m/n
Genitive	-s	-ra

The problem appears to have been that, as part of the same process which broke down gender reference, many originally distinct forms in the same paradigms began to fall together. Thus, with the simple demonstratives, accusative masculine *þone* and dative masculine and neuter *þæm* coalesced as *þVn* (where *V* stands for any vowel), due to the loss of *–e*, in particular, at least originally, before a vowel, as seen in

Vices and Virtues (Kent; late thirteenth century) 13/30–1
ȝewiss hafð godd forworpen *ðan* ilche man

"indeed God has cast out that very man"

where we would expect accusative *þVne*, but also elsewhere, as in

Peterborough Chronicle First Continuation (southeast midlands; early twelfth century) 1123/41
he sæde *þone* king þet hit wæs togeanes riht

"he told the king that it was against the right way [of doing things]"

where a dative form would have been expected in Old English, combined with the considerable confusion between nasal consonants possible in English (for instance, Old English *hænep* becoming Modern English *hemp*) (Minkova 1991). I have termed these developments "ambiguity in ending" (Millar 1995, 2000).

An analogous phenomenon can be found with the compound demonstratives, where the originally distinct forms *þes* (nominative masculine), *þeos* (nominative feminine), *þis* (nominative and accusative neuter), and *þas* (accusative feminine) began to be confused, before falling together as *þis* or *þes* (in unstressed contexts, probably both

/θəs/, the ancestor of modern *this*. Some evidence for this can be found in the variation within a single text of the demonstratives realized with the feminine noun *miht*, whether this be the descendant of the "correct" form:

Vices and Virtues 29/ 32–4
Ðies ilke haliȝe mihte . . . makeð him unwurð

"this same holy power makes them unworthy"

a descendant of the historical masculine form,

Vices and Virtues 105/ 9
Ðes ilche hali mihte iusticia

"this same holy power justice"

or the neuter,

Vices and Virtues 25/ 10–1
Ðis hali mihte . . . is an soþ almihti godd

"this holy power is one true almighty God"

I have termed this development "ambiguity in form" (Millar 1995, 2000).

These processes did not work independently, moreover. With the simple demonstratives, ambiguity in ending between *–ne* and *–m* was exacerbated by ambiguity in form between *þe* (nominative masculine), *þeo* (nominative feminine) (these <þ> forms, originating in the north of England in the late Old English period, gradually replaced the <s> forms, due probably to analogy with the rest of the paradigm, in all but the most conservative dialects), and *þa* (accusative feminine); with the compound demonstratives, the ambiguity in form was matched by ambiguity in ending between *þisne* (accusative masculine) and *þissum* (dative masculine and neuter).

These ambiguities imperilled the inherited system: neither case-marking nor gender-marking could be maintained; the functional categories which underlay them were rendered unworkable and, eventually, meaningless, as with the "mistakes" made by a number of Middle English authors attempting either to copy Old English texts (see, for instance, Franzen 1991; Millar & Nicholls 1997) or to make their texts appear older than they actually are (Stanley 1988).

If this breakdown was dangerous for the distinctive demonstrative paradigms, the results were devastating for the noun declensions, where gender and case information expressed through form was not always transparent in "classical" Old English. Whilst the more conservative dialects in southern English maintained final *–e* on nouns (as well as adjectives) until the end of the fourteenth century, this survival was vestigial, "fossilized," rather than information-carrying (Samuels 1989b).

In all dialects of English, grammatical gender and case could no longer be marked for demonstrative pronouns, adjectives, or nouns by the end of the fourteenth century.

A number of exceptions to this general tendency exist. In the first place, possession in English can still be expressed through what are apparently noun endings, for instance *the king's daughter* where <'s> is the descendant of the Old English masculine and neuter genitive ending *–es*. It should be noted, however, that the modern use of <'s> is different from its ancestor. In Old (and Middle) English, a phrase such as *the king of Norway's daughter* would have been impossible, the closest "correct" phrase being *the king's daughter of Norway*. By being placed at the end of the phrase, rather than with the head noun, <'s> reveals itself as a possessive marker instead of a genitive noun ending (Janda 1980).

It should also be noted that some function marking is retained for some personal pronouns (for instance, *she* in relation to *her*) and relative pronouns. Nevertheless, not all pronouns show this (for example, *you*); the distinction between *who* and *whom* is one which, for most native speakers, has been learned at school rather than directly in speech from parents and peers.

The Partial Breakdown of Noun Declensions and Plurality

For the nouns, declension distinctions were largely, although not fully, leveled, with a general drift from the weak declension to the strong. Within the strong declensions, loss of gender distinctions meant that nouns in other declensions moved towards what had been the masculine *a*-class, with the proviso that the pronunciation of the descendant of *–as* was affected by the context: thus the plural markers in *maps*, *tabs*, and *horses* are pronounced differently, but derive from the same source. "Irregular" plurals, such as those realized through a change in root vowel, where *–r* is used as a plural marker, or where there is no overt plural marker, have generally also moved to the *–s* declension.

These processes are by no means complete, however. The "mutation" plurals, such as *men*, are still quite common, even if the plural of *book* is *books* rather than the expected **beek*. There are still a few *–en* plurals found in Standard English, such as *oxen*. Zero plurals, such as *fish* or *sheep*, are still normal. The only *–r* plural remaining in the Standard is *children*. This form actually has the remnants of three kinds of plural marking. In Old English, the plural of *cild* was *cild*. Since this marking quickly became opaque, the *–er* plural was added (this form is retained in some dialects). Because *–er* ceased being analyzed as a plural marker, *-(e)n* was added.

There is dialectal evidence for more survival. Many English speakers would refer to *twenty pound* rather than *pounds*, for instance. In Scots, the plural for *ee*, 'eye', is *een*, and in the dialect of northeast Scotland, the plural of *brou*, 'brow', is *breer*, and for *cou*, 'cow', *kye* (although analogical plurals such as *brous* and *cous* are also found, particularly with younger speakers) (Beal 1997).

A counter-indicative development is that Modern English has also borrowed plural morphology from other, "classical" languages, such as Latin, *foci* (< *focus*), Greek, *stadia* (< *stadium*), and Hebrew, *cherubim* (< *cherub*). The artificial, somewhat contrived, nature

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