A History of the English Language

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Revised edition

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Preface to the first edition (2006)

There are a number of well-known histories of the English Language (Baugh & Cable, Pyles & Algeo, Barber, and Fennell). The justification for yet another book on the history of English comes from having taught a course on this topic at the undergraduate and graduate levels for almost 10 years and not finding any of the books completely satisfactory. The present book will be different from others in being more grammatical and typological in focus, i.e. language-internal, although this can of course not be a course on Old and Middle English or on historical linguistics and therefore only parts of the grammar are covered. I have used the change from synthetic to analytic as a leitmotiv.

A lot of emphasis is placed on linguistic (phonological, morphological, syntactic, and semantic) analysis of Old, Middle, and early Modern English texts. This means students will learn how to approach older texts and to work with these. Most examples and texts will be authentic and the use of facsimile editions is encouraged. Incorporating these texts in this book, rather than in an (optional) workbook, makes it easier to see working with texts as an integral part of a class on the history of English. I have provided possible answers to the in-text questions and the other exercises. In my classes, we usually go over the texts and exercises and the answers provide a review. Having the answers in the back makes the book usable for self-study as well.

The book differs from, for instance, Fennell in that there will be less emphasis on sociolinguistic theories, though many descriptions will be given of, for instance, *h*-deletion, prescriptive forces, and pronoun shift. External history is dealt with in Appendix III (where a timeline of historical events is provided), in Chapter 1 (in general), Chapter 5 (for Old and Middle English), Chapter 7 (for Early Modern English), Chapters 8 and 9 (for the modern period). There are sections on literacy, the re-emergence of English, the printing process, authorship debates, and world Englishes. Throughout most of the book, I use the term English in its general sense, including all varieties, but I sometimes use British or American if this makes the point clearer.

There are many smaller differences in emphasis between this book and similar histories of English. In Chapter 1, I divert from the usual chronological order by going into the history of English a little before discussing phonetics, grammar, and Indo-European. This is done to justify Chapters 2 and 3. Chapter 2 first explains the need for a phonetic alphabet and all the phonetic terminology before actually giving it. In Chapter 3, there is information on language prehistory based on Cavalli-Sforza's and Greenberg's work, not found in most textbooks. This is an area students (and the general public) are interested in. Most other textbooks start with Indo-European. The chapters on Old, Middle, and Early

Modern English are relatively standard, but each chapter includes many examples and has additional texts at the end. The texts are chosen because they represent the typical 'canon' and also because audio versions exist on the web in most cases.

Chapters 8 and 9 examine English after 1700, the different Englishes around the world, and the role English as an international language, with some emphasis given to the plight of endangered languages as an example of drastic change leading to elimination. The organization in these chapters differs from other textbooks, in that I have tried to group linguistic phenomena together rather than group them as varieties. I have only looked at spoken and written English since ASL, BSL, and other signed varieties require a different expertise than mine. Chapter 10 provides a brief introduction to some theories of language, language change, and acquisition.

Another difference between this book and other history of English books is the incorporation of electronic resources in the textbook and exercises. Recent years have seen a wealth of electronic resources for historical linguistics research, more so perhaps than in any other humanities field. The OED online is invaluable; the Old and Middle English corpora so helpful; websites with Old and Middle English audio files are abundant, as are sites focusing on the history and providing detailed maps; and pictures of manuscript facsimiles are very easily accessible. No earlier textbook incorporates these. I will attempt to do so with a particular focus on using the OED (and even without online access, this should be possible). For the printed version, I will only include URLs that can be expected to remain up, e.g. university sites. The associated website (http://dx.doi.org/10.1075/z.183.website) contains many more links, and these links will be updated regularly. The ones in the book that will 'fail to open' after a while will be listed on that website too.

As mentioned, I will focus on internal changes, in particular on the change from synthetic to analytic. I also discuss the influence of external factors on internal changes. The book is not theoretical in orientation. I do not discuss sociolinguistic theories, or theoretical issues in historical linguistics, except for mentioning e.g. grammaticalization in the context of the change from synthetic to analytic and briefly in Chapter 10. The book can be used at the advanced undergraduate and beginning graduate levels. It is designed for a semester, but, depending on what other courses the particular institution offers, it can be used for a shorter course, e.g. by leaving out Chapters 3, 8, or 9.

The book has many idiosyncrasies due to the author being a non-native speaker, having taught English and linguistics in the Netherlands, Canada, and the United States. Electronic texts provided by the Oxford Text Archive, the Gutenberg Project, and the Dictionary of Old English project have been extremely valuable; the concordance program used is MonoConc. I would most like to thank Johanna Wood for thinking through many problems of content and organization with me and for extensive comments on the writing and examples. Viktorija Todorovska is the best (copy-)editor I know; she is someone who understands the issues and has such a grasp of the English language in all its forms. Tim Gades was wonderful in developing the website that accompanies this book; he was creative and knowledgeable. I am very grateful to Olga Fischer for going through the chapters very carefully

and for giving me so many good suggestions which I hope I have incorporated. For other comments and lots of assistance, I would like to thank Harry Bracken, Chen Chen Sun, and Shane Drews. I would also like to thank several anonymous reviewers and Mariana Bahtchevanova, James Berry, Jean Brink, Jade Corn, Nancy Hawkes, Lisa Genuit, Dhira Mahoney, Nicteha Martinez, Brenda McTighe, Donka Minkova, Elizabeth Moreau, Laura Parsons, Amy Shinabarger, Lynn Sims, and many others. Using this book before it was published was very helpful and Emily Hsu, Kristen LaRue, Tyler May, Victor Parraguinaldo, John Ryan, and Olena Tsurska really helped discussing this text in a small seminar.

Preface to the revised edition

The year "2006 was a bumper-crop year for books on the history of English" as Donka Minkova writes in a 2009 review in *Language*. Apart from the first edition of the current work, several other works appeared in 2006: *A History of the English Language* edited by Richard Hogg and David Denison, *The Oxford History of English* edited by Lynda Mugglestone, *The Handbook of The History of English*, edited by Ans van Kemenade and Bettelou Los, and *The English Language: a linguistic history* by Laurel Brinton and Leslie Arnovick. The current book remains sufficiently different from these to warrant a new edition. It remains the most succinct and accessible yet comprehensive of linguistic histories.

I am very lucky to have John Benjamins as publisher, not only in being willing to put out a revised edition and also for their always incredibly beautiful, fast, and accurate work. It is much appreciated! The history of English in its complex shapes and forms changes fast and, after eight years, chapters such as 8 and 9 need refreshing with more current examples and some of the research I report on in Chapter 3 needed to be updated. A number of suggestions brought up by users and reviewers have been incorporated as well, e.g. the unclear origin of Chancery English in Chapter 2, a family tree for Germanic in Chapter 3, and more on Celtic influence in Chapter 5. Some reviewers commented that the 'why' of linguistic change was ignored. I have written on the 'why' questions, e.g. in my 2011 *The Linguistic Cycle: Language Change and the Language Faculty*, but didn't want to push a particular theoretical position on the reader here. I have added more detail on internal and external change in Chapter 1 and I hope that helps. I have also mentioned the stress shift as a possible reason for the change from synthetic to analytic (although that begs the question why the stress changes). Chapter 10 listed some theories on the causes of change are and I have left it that way;

One of the main challenges in any work on the history of a particular language is to attribute the ideas on changes to the first people who came up with them. For instance, I don't know who first suggested that English was losing the endings on nouns and verbs. It was probably 'in the air' in the same way that a linguistic cycle was implicit in the work of many (e.g. de Condillac 1746, Bopp 1816, Gardiner 1904).

The philosophy of the revised book remains the same with an emphasis on the linguistic history and on using authentic texts. In my own use of the book, I divide the core chapters 4, 6, 7, 8, and 9 into several parts: sources/spelling/sounds, morpho-syntax, vocabulary, and something special to the period. I use a class period to work on each aspect and we then use a text (from the Appendices) and an audio version (where relevant) to discuss the state of that particular stage of the language. The goals of the class and the book are to

come to recognize English from various time periods, to be able to read each stage with a glossary, to get an understanding of typical language change, internal and external, and to understand something about language typology through the emphasis on the synthetic to analytic cycle.

My audience remains undergraduates (and beginning graduates) and I have therefore ignored such topics as Indo-European vowels and laryngeals, the satem/centum divide, most discussion on stress, and the distinction between phonemes and allophones. I know having the latter would make various discussions easier but it is a real road-block for some students not majoring in linguistics.

I have minimized the use of URLs in this edition to very safe ones. The website connected to this book has updated information and should be used for additional sources. I typically start a chapter by going over the electronic resources in class and the timeline for the period in the appendix. The *OED* recently changed its interface so I have changed that in the appendix and made it less dependent on a particular interface. Unfortunately, the *OED* is still not freely available and we can only use it via a library. I will point out ways to use freely available sources whenever possible.

As before, I would most like to thank Johanna Wood for making extremely valuable suggestions as she was using the book in a very different context (Denmark). Remus Gergel, Lynn Sims, Grover Furr, and James Berry have provided excellent feedback. Eric Haeberli, Donka Minkova, Jeannette Marshall Denton, Susan Fitzmaurice, and Steven Gross have made many valuable points in published reviews and I thank them for their very helpful work. Further thanks are due to Victor Parra-Guinaldo, Hui-Ling Yang, Yvonne Maat, Kagnarith Chea, Robert Mailhammer, Charles Edmisten, Ed Keenan, David White, Jerzy Nykiel, and Uthairat Rogers.

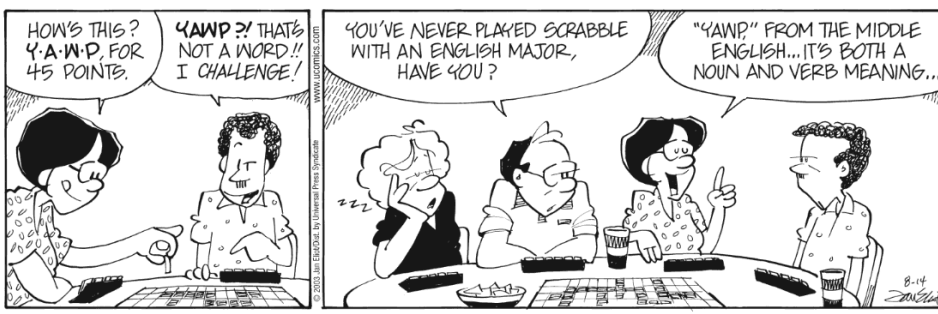

Figure 0.1 Why study HEL? ©2003 Jan Eliot. Reprinted with permission of Universal Press Syndicate. All rights reserved.

Notes to the user and abbreviations

In the text, I use italics when a certain word is discussed. So, if I am talking about the word *word*, it will be in italics. If that word is a foreign word, e.g. *mot*, I will put the translation right after it in single quotation marks: *mot* 'word'. Once in a while, a new concept appears in **bold**.

There are two kinds of glosses to the Old and Middle English examples. The one is a word-for-word gloss, using abbreviated symbols; the other, enclosed in single quotation marks, provides a freer translation. Both are not always provided since the meaning is often clear from the word-by-word gloss; and sometimes a word-by-word gloss is redundant. If there is a gloss, the example will be in italics. The glosses only list morphological features such as accusative (ACC) in cases where this is relevant for our discussion.

Abbreviations

ACC	accusative (case)
ADV	adverb
ASL	American Sign Language
BBC	British Broadcasting Company
BCE	before common era
BNC	British National Corpus (cited according to BNC abbreviations)
BP	before present
BSL	British Sign Language
c	circa, i.e. around
CE	common era
CED	*Chronological English Dictionary*
cf.	short for 'see'
CHEL	*Cambridge History of the English Language*
CSE	Corpus of Spoken (Professional American) English
CT	*Canterbury Tales*
CV	consonant-vowel sequence
DAT	dative (case)
DECL	declarative
e.g.	short for 'for example'
EIL	English as an International Language
ELF	English as a Lingua Franca

EModE	Early Modern English
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
ESL	English as a Second Language
F	feminine
F1	First Folio
FAM	familiar
GEN	genitive (case)
GVS	Great Vowel Shift
HC	Helsinki Corpus (see primary sources)
ICE	International Corpus of English
i.e.	short for 'namely', from Latin *id est*
IE	Indo-European
INF	infinitival ending
KJV	King James Version
LALME	*Linguistic Atlas of Late Middle English*
LLL	*Love's Labor's Lost*
LOC	locative
M	masculine
ME	Middle English
ModE	Modern English
N	neuter
NOM	nominative
OE	Old English
OED	Oxford English Dictionary
ON	Old Norse
PL	plural
PAST	past tense
PC	*Peterborough Chronicle* (see Thorpe 1871)
POL	polite
Q1	First Quarto
SG	singular
UG	Universal Grammar
1	first person
2	second person
3	third person
*	reconstructed word, or ungrammatical sentence, or wildcard in a computer search
~	nasalized sound
>	becomes
<	derives from
'…'	encloses gloss

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Chapter 1

The English language

Language is a fundamental human faculty used for the expression of our thoughts and creative ideas, face-to-face communication, scientific inquiry, and many other purposes. Most humans are born with the ability to acquire language automatically and effortlessly if provided the right input by their environment. It is estimated that there are 6,000 to 7,000 languages in the world. We differentiate languages from dialects based on whether they are mutually understandable, but this distinction gets murky and many linguists consider a language to be a "dialect with an army (or navy)," i.e. a political construct. The number of languages is decreasing rapidly as some languages disappear and a few others – Chinese, English, Spanish, Indonesian/Malay, and Hindi – become more widespread.

The focus of this book is the English language. The word 'English' has a number of widely different meanings. For instance, it describes the people from a particular part of Great Britain. It also refers to a particular language, the English language, and is used very broadly in this sense. English is Germanic in origin but roughly half of its words derive from contacts with French and Latin. As we will see, English has expanded from having a few speakers in one area to having many speakers in many geographic areas.

One way to define English is through its origins and history and we will do so in this book, briefly in Section 1 and in more detail later on. We find Celtic and Roman presence in Britain before the coming of the Germanic tribes who brought with them what is to become English. Later, we also see Scandinavian, French, and Latin influences.

Another way to define English is to compare it to other languages and earlier stages. In Section 2, we will apply this approach and compare Modern English to Old English and other languages. We will keep this approach in mind since we will see English changing from one type of language to another in fewer than 1,500 years. Finally, Section 3 of this chapter will examine some reasons for language change – linguistic (or internal) and socio-historical (or external). This too will be relevant throughout the remainder of the book.

1. The origins and history of English

As mentioned earlier, the meaning of 'English' can be given through its origin and history. The British Isles have been inhabited by different peoples for a long time and before they were islands. The excavations at Boxgrove in southern England show that early humans were present possibly 500,000 years ago in what we now call England. These hominids, however, are assumed not to have had language. They used tools to wound and kill big animals and may have continued to live there until the Ice Age. After the Ice Age, humans

again start to occupy Britain around 10,000 years ago and 5000 years ago sees the construction of Stonehenge. We know very little about the pre-Indo European languages these people spoke. Vennemann (2003b) argues that the ancestors of one of them, Pictish, may have spoken a Semitic language.

After the coming of the Celts around 3,000 years ago, we start to know a little more. The Celts encountered the Pictish speakers and possibly influenced that language. Celtic languages were spoken all over Europe and there were many tribes and some migrated to England/Britain. One of these tribes may have been given a name such as *pritaini* from which the **names *Britain* and *British*** may derive (see Snyder 2003). In Britain, the Celtic languages survive to the present in Wales, Scotland, and Ireland. Irish English and Scottish English are varieties of English influenced by the Celtic languages. Just as the Celts displaced or mixed with the people inhabiting Britain before them, they and the languages they spoke were later displaced and pushed further west. Nowadays, some of these languages are being revitalized (e.g. Welsh in Wales and Gaelic in Scotland and Ireland).

The Celts in Britain came into contact with the Romans and Latin when the Romans came to Britain 2000 years or more ago. The Roman Empire ruled much of Europe up to that time. It collapsed and the troops were withdrawn from Britain around 410. Because of the political power of the Roman Empire, Latin was spoken in parts of Britain and the European continent and it exerted a strong influence on Celtic and Germanic languages. Words such as *wall, kitchen, wine, mile* and *street* were **borrowed** from Latin into Germanic and came into English via Germanic. The settlements and roads of the Romans were extensive and remained important even after they left the island in 410. The Latin influence continues through medieval and renaissance times, not through actual migrations but through the Catholic Church and intellectual developments such as Humanism and the Renaissance.

English officially starts when the Germanic tribes and their languages reach the British Isles, in 449. One account tells of Hengist and Horsa being invited by the Celtic king Vortigern to help fight the northern Picts and later turning against Vortigern. There are of course earlier contacts between the continent and Britain. For instance, during the Roman occupation, many speakers of Germanic dialects served in the Roman army; there were many trade contacts as well. Slavery was also widespread in Europe, and it provided another means of contact between Celtic and Germanic speakers and Roman culture. *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, one version of which was completed in 1154, tells the history of England from the time of Julius Caesar to 1154 (available in Modern English at www.omacl.org/Anglo). As the map below shows, several Germanic tribes – the Frisians, the Angles, the Saxons, and possibly the Jutes – occupied the British Isles. The **word 'English'** derives from one of these tribes – the Angles.

The Germanic tribes (e.g. the Franks, Goths, Angles, Saxons, Vandals, and Lombards) differed culturally from each other, but it is not clear how distinct their languages were. Some of the ones around the North Sea may have spoken a North Sea Germanic.

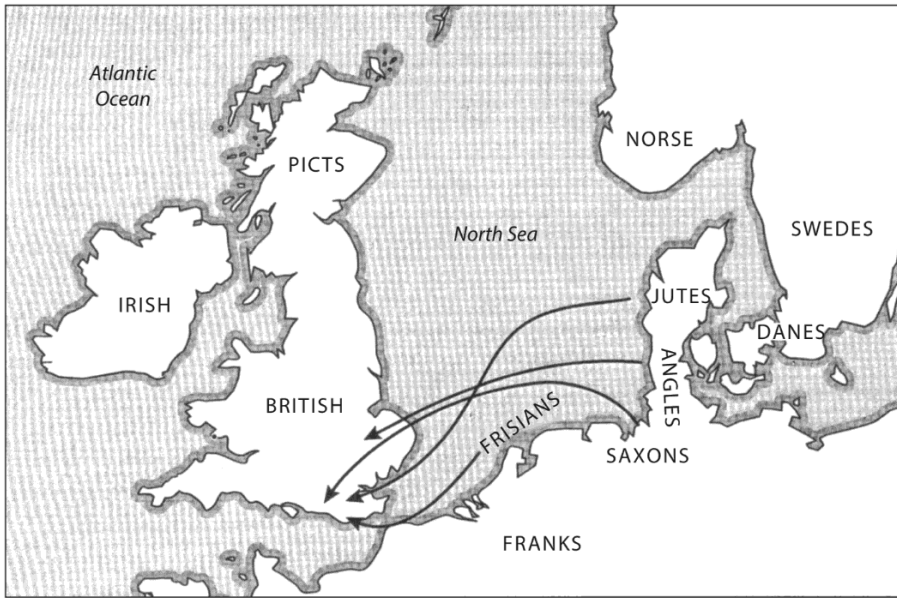

Figure 1.1 Map of Germanic migrations starting 1,500 years ago (from Millward 1996: 78)

What started as a Germanic dialect spoken in a small part of England is now a language spoken by over a billion people in many parts of the world (as a first or second language). Even though it is a Germanic language, English has adopted a large number of words from other languages. We will examine the influence of other languages on English in Section 3; it is estimated that half of the vocabulary of English comes from French and Latin. To get an idea for the level of borrowing, please look at the text below, where the loanwords are in bold, and the words of unclear origin in italics.

> **Involuntary Conversions, Preemptive Counterattacks**, and **Incomplete Successes**: The World of **Double**speak
>
> There are no potholes in the **street**s of **Tucson, Arizona, just "pavement deficiencie**s." The **administration** didn't **propose** any new **taxe**s, **just "revenue enhancement** through new **user**'s fees." Those aren't bums on the **street, just "non**-*goal* **orient**ed **member**s of **society**." There are no more **poor people, just "fiscal** under**achiev**ers." There was no **robbery** of an **automatic** teller **machine, just** an "un**authoriz**ed withdraw**al.**" The **patient** didn't die be**cause** of **medical malpractice**, it was **just** a "**diagnostic misadventure** of a high **magnitude**." The **U.S. Army** doesn't kill the **enemy** anymore, it **just "servic**es the **target**." And the **double** speak goes on.

Figure 1.2 Text marked for loanwords, adapted from Lutz's *Doublespeak* (1990: 1)

As you can see, the most frequent words – *the, a(n), did, it* and *of* – are 'native', as are the affixes – plural *-s* and third person singular *-s*. Mostly, they are the shorter, more general words. The above text is a bit extreme in the number of French and Latin loanwords; almost half of the words are borrowings and many of them are euphemisms. **Euphemisms** make things seem better than they are: *filing a property irregularity report* means having to tell an airline that it lost your bags (and this phrase was used by British Airways). French and Latin loanwords are also used in English to add formality to language. As we will see, some people prefer 'native' words or more archaic speech for this purpose.

Table 1.1, taken from Roberts (1965), shows the origin of the 10,000 most frequent English words, and Table 1.2, from Williams (1975: 67), shows the origin of the first, second, and third thousand most common words.

Table 1.1 Percentages of English word origins

Old English	French	Latin	Other Germanic	Other
32	45	17	4	2

Table 1.2 The first, second, and third 1,000 most frequent words and their origins

	Old English	French	Latin	Scandinavian	Other
1000	83	11	2	2	2
2000	34	46	11	2	7
3000	29	46	14	1	10

We will come back to loanwords and text types in Chapter 5.

The language we currently refer to as English is the partial result of the borrowings discussed above and it can be defined as the collection of words that were selected to appear in a particular dictionary. The collections of different dictionaries differ in number considerably: some contain 60,000, others 600,000 words. Most native speakers of English are estimated to have a vocabulary of 40,000 to 60,000 words (see Bloom 2002). (It is debatable whether pairs such as *read* and *reader* are two words or one, and that affects the numbers). The *Oxford English Dictionary* (hence *OED*) is undoubtedly the best resource on the English language and its history. Many libraries nowadays have access to the *OED* online and we will use it often later on in this book.

However, even if we knew all the words in the *OED* (and many are archaic), we still would not 'know' the English language. We need rules to put the words together into sentences or, in other words, a grammar. Grammar generates a language: the structure of the sounds (phonetics and phonology), words (morphology), sentences (syntax) and the rules for understanding the meaning (semantics) and appropriate use (pragmatics). The goal of this book is to describe the structure of English and how its words and structures have emerged and changed over the last 1,500 years. In the next section, we briefly examine the structure of English by comparing Modern English and earlier stages of English; this examination of the structure of English will be revisited in more detail later.

2. Modern English compared to earlier English and other languages

Even though we lack the technical vocabulary to discuss in detail differences among languages – that vocabulary will come in Chapter 2 – we will examine some of the major differences on three levels: **sounds, words, and sentences**. Read the first sentence of the famous *Caedmon's Hymn*, from a manuscript dated 737, and compare it with a word-by-word gloss and the Modern English translation. Glosses for Old English (OE) are usually done as in (1). I have put in the hyphens to show the endings but they are not in the Old English manuscripts; look at the list of abbreviations for what PL, and INF, and GEN mean. You can also listen to it at http://www.wwnorton.com/college/english/nael/noa/audio.htm. What do you observe?

(1) *Nu scyl-un herg-an hefaenrica-es uard*
Now should-PL praise-INF heaven.kingdom-GEN guardian
'Now we should praise the guardian of the heavenly kingdom'.

You might notice that there is no letter *v* in *hefaen* 'heaven' and that the *u* in *uard* 'guard' is pronounced differently – like *w* and unlike the present day *u* in *guard* or *tune*. It is not completely clear how the Old English *sc* and *g* are pronounced: *sk* and *g* or *sh* and *y*. With respect to the words and sentences, we notice the lack of grammatical words such as *of, the*, and *a*. The Old English sentence in (1) contains five words, whereas the Modern English one has twice as many. The additional words in Modern English fulfill a grammatical function performed by endings such as *-es* in Old English. As is obvious, quite a number of changes have occurred on all three levels mentioned above. First, we will look at the sounds of Modern English.

Depending on the variety, Modern English has 13 or 14 different **vowels**: *bit, beet, bait, bet, bat, but, bye, boy, boat, boot, bout, bath*, and *bore* all contain different vowel sounds. Languages such as Inuit and Navajo have four vowels and Hawaiian and Spanish have five. However, Navajo has nasalized and lengthened vowels (and a few other extras). Thus, every language has a unique sound system.

English has at least 25 **consonants**. Other languages have different numbers: Polish has 35, Hawaiian eight, and Finnish 13 (not counting the ones used only in loanwords). The most unusual English consonant is perhaps the one spelled as *th,* which, as we will see, represents two different sounds. Many other languages, and many varieties of English, do not have this sound. When speakers of such languages first learn a variety of English where *th* does occur, they often pronounce *th* as *d* in *that*, as *t* in *thing*, as *f* in *mouth,* or as *v* in *mother*. In New York City English, for instance, *that* is often pronounced *dat*. Substituting *d, t, f,* or *v* for *th* does not happen randomly, as we will see in Chapter 2.

English **syllable structure** is complex: there are English words such as *strikes* and *splits*, with three consonants at the beginning of the syllable/word and two at the end. Czech has more elaborate structures as in *zmrzlina*, meaning 'ice-cream', as does Croatian in *cvrst*, meaning 'hard'. Japanese, Korean, Navajo, and Hawaiian do not have consonant clusters and use special strategies for adapting loanwords from English. For instance, *strike* will

sound like *suturaike* in Japanese, with the consonant clusters broken up. Spanish speakers will adapt an initial *sk*-sound, as in *school*, to *eskool*. Across the world's languages, perhaps the most common syllable pattern is consonant-vowel (or CV) and that is what languages like Japanese have. Even in English, CV seems preferred, as shown in Figure 1.3.

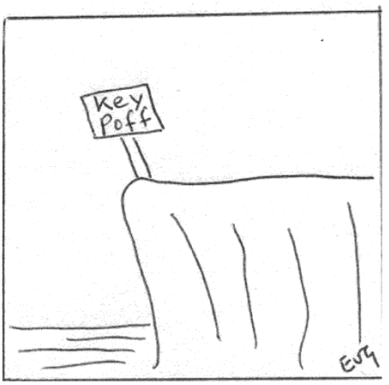

Figure 1.3 *Keep off* as *Key Poff*

To make sense, sounds need to be combined into words and words into sentences. One of the major functions of language is to indicate who does what to whom (and where, when, how, and why that occurs). Languages differ in how they mark these functions – through **endings** on the verbs and nouns or through **word order and grammatical words** (prepositions and pronouns). Languages such as Chinese have almost no endings and use word order and grammatical words to mark the functions of the different elements in a sentence. On the other hand, many languages of the Americas have multiple prefixes on the verb and the verb can represent an entire sentence. For instance, Navajo *naashné* has two prefixes and a stem (na-sh-né), and it means 'around-I-play'; English would translate that as 'I am playing', using three words.

Modern English is more like Chinese than like Navajo, since no marking on the verb (or the noun) is required to understand a sentence like (2). Even if the case of the pronouns is 'wrong', as in (3), we understand that *her* is the subject because it is in the position of a subject and *I* the object because it follows the verb.

(2) That dog loves me.

(3) Her gave Mary and I a cake.

Old English is more like Navajo than Modern English because it has a number of endings; the difference is that in Old English the endings are on the nouns and the verbs, while in Navajo they are only on the verbs. The endings in Old English express what word order and prepositions do in Modern English. This is one of the major changes that occurred between Old and Modern English, a change **from synthetic to analytic**, and we will discuss

it throughout this book. For now, don't worry about these terms; more will be said in the next chapter.

One last issue to be introduced is that of **varieties** within a single language. Linguists often distinguish among varieties of region, social class, and register, or level of formality. The branch of linguistics that is particularly interested in varieties is called **sociolinguistics.** What is often referred to as the standard language is the language of one social or regional group and is typically taught in schools, spoken (and written) by journalists. It is a formal variety or style or register. Formal styles use more (Latinate) loanwords, as shown in Figure 1.2 above. As we will see, throughout the history of English, standard varieties were established in a somewhat arbitrary fashion. For now, we introduce a few terms. Later, in Chapters 8 and 9, we will provide additional examples.

Table 1.3 Some terms for styles and varieties of English

Styles:	formal style, usually taught in schools and used by journalists/editors; it has grammars and dictionaries; often referred to as the standard
	colloquial, informal style, often used in speech, with slang as one kind of colloquial speech
Varieties:	regional, variety typical for a region, also called dialect
	social, variety typical for a social group, e.g. African American, men, upper class, also called sociolect
	register, variety typical for an occupation or situation, e.g. computer engineers, church, chess or baseball game, also called jargon

Varieties and styles overlap: regional speech is colloquial, and varieties due to register (e.g. computer jargon) can be related to social class. Slang, for example, can be used in colloquial speech as well as in regional and social varieties. The terms introduced above can also be used to discuss Australian or Kenyan English, for example, or varieties spoken by non-native speakers, such as Chinese English, as we will discuss in Chapter 9. Some people are using the term **English Language Complex** (ELC) to refer to all varieties of English (see e.g. Mesthrie & Bhatt 2008).

3. External and internal change

The question of language change is really a question of why varieties develop within a language. For instance, Canadian and South African English have developed their own identities even though they are still 'English' in their grammars. In this section, we discuss politically, geographically, and socially motivated change – known as external change – and linguistically motivated change, or internal change. External and internal change are sometimes ascribed to 'chance' and 'necessity', respectively (Lightfoot 1979: 405). Many times, internal and external change interact.

External changes are brought about by language contact (between speakers of different languages), or innovations by speakers, or issues of political or social identity. Recent adoptions of new words such as *goji berry, to overshare,* and *lol* are instances of external change. Oceans may facilitate contact whereas mountain ranges may stop it. External changes are unpredictable since it is impossible to foresee who will migrate where, or what fashion will catch on. Looking at when loanwords first appear in a language gives a good clue to social change: the appearance of lots of French loans around 1250 tells us something about a change that happened to society as a whole. Appendix III at the end of the book provides a chronology of historical events and they are often responsible for starting external change in the language.

Internal changes may have to do with ease of articulation. For instance, the sound represented by *m* is easier to say before a *p* than before a *k* and languages often change towards what requires less effort. However, Labov (2010: 89) chronicles vowel shifts that result in making communication harder, so ease is only one possible factor. Internal change also occurs when speakers stop using endings (or inflections) on verbs and nouns and start to rely on words such as *of, for, the*, and *have*. The traditional reason for the loss of endings is that the stress shifted in Germanic to a fixed position, namely the root of a word, and that the endings became phonetically less prominent. You could in turn ask what caused the shift of stress, and we don't know!

The loss of case marking on *who* and stranding the preposition in *Who did you talk to* are instances of internal change. Regularization, such as the loss of *gone* in favor of *went* in *I shoulda(v) went*, is also internal change as well as the change in the category of a word as, for instance, when prepositions start being used to introduce sentences, i.e. as complementizers. *Like* is a preposition in *She swims like a fish* but is extended to introduce sentences in *She did like I said*. Finally, changes in negatives are frequent and many varieties double the negative or use *never* for the weakened *n't*, as in *I never did that* for *I didn't do that*. Internal reasons have to do with children analyzing the language they hear in a slightly different way from the generation before them (and building their grammars accordingly).

The two types of change are summarized in Table 1.4. There are, however, factors that inhibit internal change, namely **prescriptive rules**. These rules typically have to be explicitly taught in school and include 'don't split infinitives' and 'don't end sentences with

Table 1.4 Examples of external and internal change

External	Internal
new words due to contact, e.g. *capybara, cashew*	ease of articulation (= economy)
new words due to social change, e.g. *aldultescent, oversharenting*	loss of case marking, e.g. *who did he see?*
words going out of fashion, e.g. *cool*	regularization, e.g. *I shouldav went* (= economy)
	new use of old words, e.g. *like* as complementizer
	renewal of *n't,* e.g. by *never*

a preposition'. They are based on a prestigious language such as Latin or on logic or on attempts to conserve an older stage of the language. Split infinitives, such as *to boldly go*, have occurred in the English language since the 14th century, but prescriptive forces still prevent many writers from using them. In cases such as these, native speakers seem to enjoy being able to cite a rule only to ignore it in their own language. The use of the 'proper' case endings, such as *whom*, and the third person *-s* are also strongly encouraged. If these prescriptive rules were not reinforced in schools and writing programs, however, they might not persist.

As to external change, there has generally been little opposition to incorporating new words into English (but see Chapter 7 for the inkhorn debate), unlike in French. Perhaps French speakers do not oppose loanwords, such as *hotdog*, *e-mail*, and *computer*, but the French Academy establishes French equivalents, *chien chaud*, *courrier électronique*, and *ordinateur* respectively. The French equivalent for 'e-mail', i.e. *courrier électronique*, is very long and the Academy has decided to allow *courriel* though most French speakers use *e-mail*. If they use *courriel*, it is only for official purposes (Daniele Robert p.c.).

Often the changes caused by external factors lead to changes in the actual grammar or sound system. As we will see in later chapters, the influx of French and other loan words may have led to the incorporation of *v* and *z* into the English sound system. The opposite occurs as well. Internal changes, such as the frequent use of *like* by certain age groups or Canadian *eh*, can in turn become markers of identity, as Figure 1.4 shows. If a factor such as identity helps a change, we consider that an external reason.

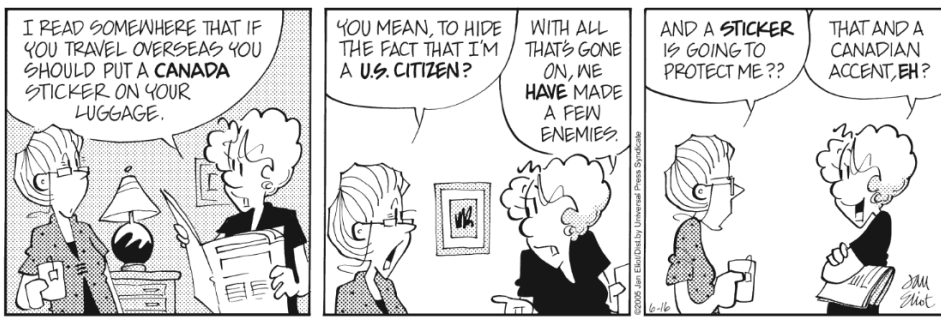

Figure 1.4 'Eh' as a marker of identity. c2005 Jan Eliot. Reprinted with permission of Universal Press Syndicate. All rights reserved.

The *OED* online has a very helpful timeline feature when you go to its homepage. The timeline will tell you when new words came into English, see Figure 1.5, and you can choose words in the arts or agriculture, or words that came in from African, or Australian languages, and many other choices. The reason the number for the last period is low is because we have just started that period. Do you find it surprising that the peak is between 1850 and 1900?

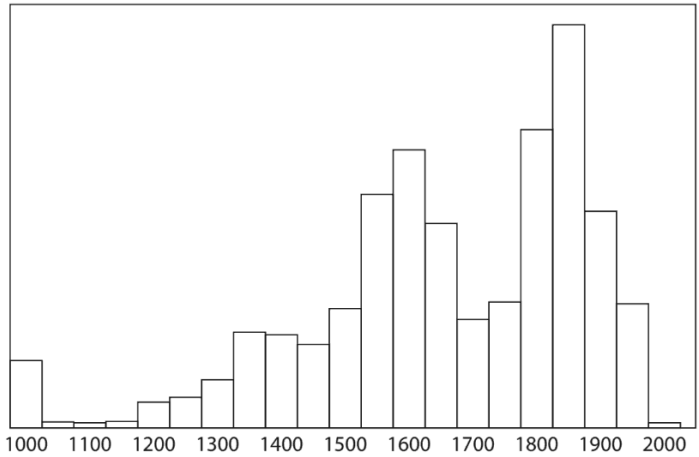

Figure 1.5 New words throughout history, from the *OED*

Figure 1.6 presents a timeline of the major **external changes in English** in the last 2,000 years. The dotted lines indicate the influences on English before and after Germanic was introduced to Britain around 450. The straight line represents Germanic before 450 and English after 450. In a later chapter, a timeline will be given for internal changes after we have discussed those.

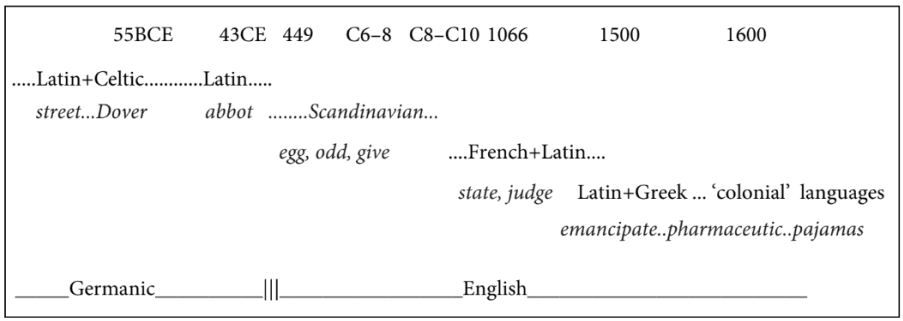

Figure 1.6 External influences on English and pre-English (C stands for century)

In 55 BCE, Julius Caesar came to Britain and in 43 CE Emperor Claudius led an army of 40,000 and eventually subdued the people of what is now England, excluding those in Scotland and Wales. These external influences are both indicated on the timeline. The words borrowed at this time are similar to those borrowed by other languages that came into contact with Roman civilization, and a few of them have been mentioned above, e.g. *wine* and *street*. Celtic, however, remained spoken during this time, as shown by the dotted line. It provided many geographical names, such as *Kent, Avon*, *Dover*, and *loch*,

and possibly influenced the different regions in grammar and pronunciation. When the Germanic tribes began to settle in Britain around 450, the Germanic dialects eventually pushed out the Celtic languages to the periphery (e.g. to Wales; see Chapter 5 for a more complete story). In the 6th century, the conversion to Christianity introduced Latin words, such as *abbot, altar,* and *hymn*, into English, sometimes through Celtic since many missionaries came from Ireland.

Between the 8th and 10th centuries, the Scandinavians raided Britain. They also started extensive settlements. Scandinavian may be the most important of the external influences on English grammar and vocabulary. Words such as *bask, call, crave, egg, fellow, ill, keel, leg, odd, screech*, and *thrive* are borrowed from it. The disappearance of Old English endings and the switch to a stricter word order might also be the result of the Scandinavian influence on the grammar. Scandinavian words are often not seen as 'foreign' since they are very similar to words of English origin and are often 'everyday' words. The latter shows the Scandinavian and English lived in close contact.

In 1066, William of Normandy arrived and defeated Harold during the **Battle of Hastings** (see Appendix A of Chapter 4 for a contemporary account of this defeat). As a result, French became the language of the nobility and the court and much new vocabulary was introduced, shown in Tables 1.1 and 1.2 above. The borrowed words include many political and cultural terms, such as *government, authority*, and *judge*, in contrast to the 'everyday' vocabulary borrowed from Scandinavian.

The external history after 1066 is described in Chapters 5, and 7 to 10. Important are the love in the Renaissance for Greek and Latin terms, the post-1700 spread of English to the colonies – resulting in new words being adopted and varieties being formed – and the changes in the technology from the 19th century to the present.

Table 1.5 lists the major periods that English is usually divided in.

Table 1.5 Periods of English

Old English (OE)	450–1150
Middle English (ME)	1150–1500
Early Modern (EMod)	1500–1700
Modern (ModE)	1700–now

Except for the beginning, which is arbitrary, the division is a mixture of external and internal factors. Internally, there is a difference between Old and Middle English in that Old English has numerous endings on nouns and verbs whereas Middle English uses more grammatical words, such as prepositions, articles, and auxiliaries. However, many people argue that external changes – such as the Norman conquest of 1066 – may be seen as a direct cause of the transition from Old to Middle English.

Most people who study the history of English agree that Old English does not abruptly change around 1150 but develops into Middle English over a period of time. The reason

1150 is chosen here is that texts are written (e.g. the last part of the Peterborough version of the *Anglo Saxon Chronicle*) that are definitely 'modern' in having lost many of the endings and in starting to make use of grammatical words The year 1500 is chosen as the end of the Middle English period because by then most grammatical changes have taken place and the Great Vowel Shift is under way. An external reason for this date is that printing is introduced. The Early Modern period is difficult to date exactly. It depends on whether we take political events such as the Restoration (of the British monarchy) in 1660, or the Declaration of (US) Independence in 1776, or some other external date to be important. The year 1700 has been chosen because the spelling is more or less standardized, the Great Vowel Shift is nearly complete, and English speakers start to spread the language around the world.

Section three provided a brief overview of how political and historical events can have strong influences on language. This is one cause of language change, also known as external change. The other cause of change, known as internal change, is not directly triggered by an outside event but by the language learner and user regularizing and changing what is heard.

4. Conclusion

In this chapter, we explored definitions of English. It can be defined as the language of a group of Germanic tribes after they arrived in Britain. It can also be defined as the grammar and words a speaker knows and uses to construct English sentences. We also discussed the fact that the structure of Modern English is significantly different from that of Old English and other languages in that English has lost many endings and acquired grammatical words. The reasons for the changes are many but can be divided into two categories: internal and external. Internal causes have to do with linguistic reasons; for example, it is easier to say *an apple* than *a apple*. External causes have to do with social, economic, geographical, political, and historical reasons such as migrations and trade contacts and internal cause with the way children (and others) learn a language.

Keywords

English, British, Germanic, an internalized grammar, characteristics of English (vowels, consonants, syllable structure, grammar), Old English, Middle English, Early Modern English, Modern English, internal and external change, prescriptive rules, the influence of borrowing from other languages.

Topics for class discussion and exercises

1. What are some instances of recent changes in English? Discuss whether they could be internal or external changes.
2. How can we stop or encourage language change? Think of an actual example.
3. Is there a word in the text of Figure 1.2 whose status (as loan or not) you find surprising? If so, which one(s)? Look up this/these word/s in the *OED*.
4. Use the Ethnologue website www.ethnologue.com to find out what languages are spoken in France, the United States, Canada, or a country of your own choice.
5. Look at four 'weird' words (http://www.quinion.com/words/weirdwords/index.htm) and decide who first used them and when they come into English by consulting the *OED*.
6. How would you go about figuring out how many words you know (actively)?
7. Describe very briefly how English differs from another language you speak or know something about.
8. Look at the sentence below from the beginning of Bede's *Ecclesiastical History of the English People*. The *Æ* and *æ* represent the short *a*, as in *cat*, the *ð* a *th*, as in *then*, and the *7* is short for 'and'. Guess, on the basis of the word-by-word gloss, which Modern English words are later loanwords. Check the *OED* to see if you are right:

   Old English

   Ærest me wæs fultumiend 7 lareow se arwurða abbad Albinus, se wæs wide gefaren 7 gelæred, 7 wæs betst gelæred on Angelcynne.

   Word-by-word gloss

   Earliest me was assistant and teacher the honorable abbot Albinus who was widely traveled and learned, and was best scholar in England.

   Modern English

   'My first assistant and teacher was the venerable abbot Albinus, a man who had traveled much and studied, and was the best scholar in England'. (from Miller 1890)

Chapter 2

English spelling, sounds, and grammar

In Old and especially in Middle English, variable spellings are common, even within the writings of one scribe. After 1500, the first English dictionaries and word lists start appearing, but the English spelling system remains irregular. The main reason for this is that changes occurred in the spoken language which were not reflected in the spelling because by then the spelling had been standardized. In addition, over time English – or rather its speakers – borrowed many words from other languages. As a result, English spelling does not represent the way the language sounds: *Plato* could also be spelled *play-dough*, at least in American English. To indicate the pronunciation of words, we therefore need a phonetic alphabet.

Section 1 of this chapter offers examples of spelling irregularities and Section 2 describes some of the reasons behind them. Section 3 introduces the phonetic alphabet, which represents spoken language as accurately as possible, and Section 4 provides background information on phonetics, which helps explain many of the changes that have occurred in English. Section 5 discusses morphology and syntax since they are relevant to the linguistic changes discussed later in the book.

1. English spelling

George Bernard Shaw, the well-known Irish writer, is credited to have said that *fish* could just as well be spelled *ghoti*. The *gh* could sound like the last sound in *enough*, the *o* like the first vowel in *women*, and the *ti* like the middle part of *nation*. It turns out there isn't much evidence that Shaw ever used the *ghoti* example. Zimmer (2010) reports that the true origins of *ghoti* date back to 1855 and that the word was invented by William Ollier. Shaw never used it apparently but someone misattributed it to him. Shaw considered the English spelling system inadequate and in need of reform. The following quote from the Preface to Shaw's *Pygmalion* indicates his views on English spelling:

> The English have no respect for their language, and will not teach their children to speak it. They cannot spell it because they had nothing to spell it with but an old foreign alphabet of which only the consonants – and not all of them – have any agreed speech value. Consequently no man can teach himself what it should sound like from reading it.

When Shaw died in 1950, he left money to devise a new writing system for English. Although such an alphabet was indeed invented and a book was published using it, it never caught on (the alphabet can be seen at www.shawalphabet.com).

The vowels in bold in (1) provide examples of irregular spelling. They are all spelled differently but sound the same. The phonetic symbol we will use for the sound they have in common is [i].

(1) sh**e**, Harry, bel**ie**ve, C**ae**sar, s**ee**, p**eo**ple, s**ei**ze, s**ea**s, am**oe**ba, k**ey**, mach**i**ne, s**ui**te, and q**uay**.

There are also many ways to spell what we will represent as [u], as shown in (2).

(2) t**o**, t**oo**, t**wo**, thr**ough**, thr**ew**, cl**ue**, S**ioux**, s**uit**, fl**u**, l**ieu**, P**ooh**, L**ou**, and sh**oe**.

Sometimes the opposite occurs: what is spelled the same sounds very different, as demonstrated by the sounds spelled as *ou* in the words in (3).

(3) t**ough**, previ**ous**, **ought**, thr**ough**, d**ough**, and **out**.

As you will notice, most variation in spelling and pronunciation occurs with vowels. The French philosopher Voltaire is quoted as saying that vowels count for nothing (and consonants for very little). For some speakers of American English, there is no distinction in sound between *pin* and *pen* and others do not distinguish between *Mary* and *marry,* and for some speakers of British English *tower* and *tar* sound the same. Some consonants also show a variety of spellings. For instance, the *k* sound of *keep* is spelled *ck* after short vowels (*lack, sick, Rick, deck*), *k* after long vowels (*week, soak, shake*) and before front vowels (*keep, kin, kettle*), and *c* before back vowels (*cool, could, cold, cup*). (We'll learn what front and back vowels are in Section 4). The same *k* sound is spelled differently in borrowed words such as *psychology* and *choral*.

There are many jokes and poems about spelling irregularities, such as the poem below from an unknown source.

I take it you already *know*
Of *tough* and *bough* and *cough* and *dough*?
Some may stumble but not *you*,
On *hiccough*, *thorough*, *slough*, and *through*?
So now you are ready perhaps
to learn of less familiar traps?
Beware of *heard*, a dreadful *word*
that looks like *beard* and sounds like *bird*,
and *dead* is *said* like *bed*, not *bead* or *deed*.
Watch out for *meat*, *great*, and *threat* that
rhyme with *suite*, *straight*, and *debt*.

Figure 2.1 Some spelling irregularities

As we have seen, in English the correspondence between sound and symbol is not straightforward. Therefore, we need a **phonetic alphabet**, and one is provided in Section 3. However, first we will look at how English spelling became irregular.

2. Why English spelling is irregular

The English spelling system has been around for centuries. During this time, it has absorbed words from many other languages and has been used for many varieties of spoken English. The result is that the symbols do not accurately represent the sounds. Also, unlike in Modern German and Dutch, for instance, there has never been a **spelling reform** in English. In later Old English, there is a standard for West-Saxon Old English for the manuscripts produced at Winchester by Ælfric and others. The Middle English period shows much variety, but after 1400, some standards arise, as we will see later in this section. After 1500, there are advocates for spelling reform: John Hart (*Orthographie* 1569), William Bullokar (*Booke at Large* 1580), and Richard Mulcaster (*Elementarie* 1582). We will revisit these attempts in Chapter 7. Even today, some groups advocate spelling reform, e.g. The English Spelling Society (google their website for more information).

The arguments against spelling reforms are many. One is that pronunciation varies so much in the English spoken around the world that it would be hard to come up with one spelling system. A practical problem would be that the various governments and newspaper and book editors in areas where English is an official language would have to agree. Alternatively, several different spellings could be 'allowed'. In that case, however, we would have multiple systems, and English speakers from India, for instance, might no longer be able to read what speakers in the United States write.

As has been mentioned already, the main reason English spelling is irregular is that many sound changes have occurred since it was (unofficially) standardized. First, we will discuss **standardization** and then we will address the sound changes. In Old and Middle English, scribes used a modified Roman alphabet to transcribe their own speech or to copy from other manuscripts. There is often a lot of variation within the writings of one scribe as well as between different scribes from the same area: *sealm, selm, salm, spalme, sphalme* and many others are listed in the *OED* for 'psalm'. Examine, for instance, the variations of *shirt* and *though* in the *OED*. The current online version of the *OED* lists 23 different spellings of *shirt* and 29 of *though* throughout the history of English! Despite the variation, a standard came to be established since scribes often copied earlier manuscripts and many indeed copied the symbols indicative of an earlier pronunciation. At the end of the Middle English period (in 1420 to be precise), scribes working at the Chancery began writing in English rather than Latin and seem to have been following a Midlands variety, i.e. the area to the North of London. The exact source of the standard is still a matter of debate (see e.g. Samuels 1963, Fisher et al. 1984, Benskin 1992; 2004).

The Chancery produced a huge number of documents, and this was connected to the rise of London as a major center for trade and politics. Chancery English is characterized by relatively free spelling, but some rules evolve (a) *gh* at the end of *high* even though the consonant is no longer pronounced, (b) *th* endings for third person verbs, as in *he doth* 'he does' even though many varieties already have *he does*, (c) past tense *(e)d* endings and not *t* even though many sound like *t*, and (d) *such* and *which* for *su(l)ch* and *(h)wi(l)ch,* respectively (there are many other variations; see Fisher 1996).

Chancery English may be the beginning of a written standard, one that does not necessarily represent spoken English. Smith (1996), Hope (2000), and Wright (2000) – among others – have looked at migration patterns into London and confirm that the Midlands was crucial for a steady influx of workers. All medieval cities needed immigration to maintain their population levels and the Midlands was characterized by population growth and the rise of a middle class. It also generated scientific and religious texts such as Wycliffite sermons and texts. Thus, the Midlands and London were important to the development of an unofficial standard, where 'unofficial' refers to the fact that English has never had an Academy or any other body regulating it.

A major boost to the standard comes after the introduction of the printing press in 1476. William Caxton started the printing press in London, physically close to the Chancery, even though he himself came from Kent and had spent much time abroad. Standardization is automatically established when a document, book, or pamphlet is reproduced the same way many times. Caxton relied on the writings of scribes rather than inventing a new system and was not himself interested in standardizing spelling. One of his first books, Malory's *Morte d'Arthur*, was published in 1485, based on an older manuscript. The printed result contains a lot of variation (*duke* and *duk, when* and *whanne*, *hyr* and *hir* for 'her'); it is quite possible that words no longer sounded the way Caxton printed them. Spelling variations stay around for a long time; Shakespeare's First Folio of 1623 contains many of them (*heart* and *hart, do* and *doe*). Other important developments towards standardization were the publication of the first English dictionaries around 1600 (see Chapter 7) and the King James Bible in 1611.

Thus, between the 1430s and the 1480s, a standard began to evolve. However, beginning around 1400 and continuing until after 1600, perhaps the most 'disruptive' of all changes – the **Great Vowel Shift** (GVS) – occurs. This change started around the time standardization was taking place and is a major reason that English spelling doesn't correspond to the way it sounds. The GVS involves long vowels – such as those pronounced as [a, e, i, u, o] – becoming [e, i, aj, aw, u] respectively. For instance, before 1400 *name* was pronounced the way it would if you pronounced it in Spanish, Dutch, German, or French. In present day English, the *a* of *name* sounds more like the first vowel in Spanish words such as *edición* 'edition' or French *école* 'school'. We will come back to the GVS below and in Chapter 7.

Other factors that contributed to the irregularity of English spelling are **etymological respellings** and the incorporation of words from other languages with changed pronunciation but keeping the original spelling. An instance of an etymological respelling is the English word for *debt*. It is borrowed from French and occurs for the first time in 1300 as *dete, dette,* and *dett*, without a *b*. Because the Latin forms have *b*s in the same word, the *b* is introduced by writers wishing to sound learned. The *OED* says that it was "artificially spelt *debte*, after which *debt* has become the English spelling since the 16th c." The same happens with *doubt*, borrowed as *doute*, and *fault*, borrowed as *faute*, and *soldier* borrowed as *sauder*. There are many spelling variants of these words in Middle English. Thus, *soldier* appears, for instance, as *sauder, sawder, souder, saudiour, soudour*, and many other spellings

but only around 1500 does the *-l-* come into the word (and we have of course started to pronounce it in later English). Other examples are *receipt, perfect,* and *indict*, borrowed as *receyt, parfit,* and *endyte*. The Old English word *igland* 'island' is mistakenly considered to be like the French word *isle* and therefore the *s* is introduced into the Modern English *island*. Johnson's dictionary of 1755 has the following inconsistent spellings: *deceit* and *conceit* versus *receipt* and *fancy* versus *phantom*. Spenser (the author of the *Fairy Queen*) is supposedly responsible for respelling *delite* as *delight* so it would form an 'eye-rhyme' with *light* and *night*.

Instances of **loan words incorporated into English** in terms of the sounds, but not the spelling are listed in (4):

(4) Phoenix, suite, xylophone, quota, chagrin, gnomic, euphemism, debris, glacier

These words are usually pronounced as if they were English words, although some may attempt to pronounce *chagrin* as French. They could easily be spelled *feeniks, sweet, zailofone, kwota, shagrin, nomick, youfimism, daybree/duhbree*, and *glayshir*. Other languages have borrowed words and changed the spelling: Dutch borrowed *cadeau* 'present' from French but now sometimes spells it *kado* and, in the Dutch edition of Harry Potter, *phoenix* becomes *feniks*. Sometimes, it is not the word that is borrowed but the letter combination. For instance, the French combination *qu* replaced Old English *cw* and *cwene* became *queen*. This is due to the influence of the Anglo-Norman scribes.

Spelling pronunciation is a phenomenon where speakers pronounce words as they are spelled. For instance, pronouncing the [t] in *often* and the [l] in *salmon* are hypercorrections that regularize spelling. Above, the [l] in *soldier* was mentioned as well. It also happens in the incorporation of loans, e.g. pronouncing the [l] in loans from Spanish, such as *tortilla* and *cholla,* rather than the expected [j]. The latter sometimes occurs for external reasons (see Hill 1993).

As we have seen in this section, English spelling is irregular. We therefore need to have a way to represent spoken English; we will explore this in the next section.

3. The phonetic alphabet

The symbols for the vowels are given in Table 2.1. In the text, the pronunciation of the sounds will be provided in square brackets, according to convention. There is a great deal of variation in the way speakers pronounce certain vowels, especially [ɑ], [a] and [ɔ]; hence, the exact number of vowels is debatable. The reason for the organization of the table will become clear in Section 4. The table also provides an English word in which the sound is used. Check their possible pronunciation in American English at http://www.uiowa.edu/~acadtech/phonetics. Several ways to transcribe the vowels of English can be found in the literature. Mine mostly follows the International Phonetic Alphabet (see www.langsci.ucl.ac.uk/ipa), except in the use of [j] for sounds like [aj] and [ɔj].

Table 2.1 Phonetic symbols for English vowels

sound	word	sound	word	sound	word
i	teeth			u	too
ɪ	miss			ʊ	book
e	make	ʌ	putt	o	moat
ɛ	bet	ə (=schwa)	roses	ɔ	hot
æ	bat			ɑ	father
				aj	mice
				ɔj	boys
				aw	house

Some speakers pronounce a [j] sound after long vowels such as [i] and [e], as in [sij] for *see*, [lejt] for *late*. It is up to you to decide how to represent these, depending on how you pronounce them or hear them pronounced.

Table 2.2 lists the symbols for English consonants and provides words starting with those consonants. (In Chapter 4, we will see that the 'ʒ'-like symbol is also used to **spell** the [j] sound in earlier English).

Table 2.2 Phonetic symbols for English consonants (*no word starts with [ŋ] or [ʒ] or ['']; see therefore the consonant in bold)

sound	word	sound	word	sound	word
p	pet	b	bet	m	met
t	ten	d	den	n	no
k	cat	g	get	ŋ	si**ng***
f	for	v	very	l	late
s	sorry	z	zoo	r	roll
θ	thigh	ð	that	j	yes
ʃ	shoe	ʒ	rou**g**e*	w	wit
ʧ	chirp	ʤ	judge	(ʍ)	where (for some speakers)
h	he	(')	bo**tt**le* (some speakers)		

Consonants are less likely to change, but – as we will see – Old English lacks a few of the Modern English consonants; for example, it does not have [ʒ], typically found in loans from French, such as *rouge* and *pleasure*.

4. Phonetics and sound change

As we will see, sound change is regular, unlike the resulting spelling system. To understand that it is regular (and that an [m] does not change to a [k], etc), we need some background on how to describe sounds – **phonetics**. In this section, we will first look at vowels, then at consonants, and then at how sounds affect each other.

English vowels can be described using three features: (1) whether the tongue is high or low, (2) whether the tongue is front or back, and (3) the length of the sound. Explore the **height** differences by pronouncing [i], [e], and [æ]. You should feel your tongue moving down as you proceed from one sound to the next. The same downward movement should happen if you pronounce [u], [o], and [ɑ]. The difference between **front and back** vowels can be felt by pronouncing [i], [e], and [æ] versus [u], [o], and [ɑ]. The former are pronounced with the tongue in the front of the mouth, the latter with the tongue in the back.

The third feature, **length**, can be observed, for instance, when comparing [ɪ] with [i] and [ʊ] with [u]. There is a slight difference in height and frontness between long and short pairs, which we will not pay much attention to. In English, [i, e, aj, aw, o, ɔj, u] are long vowels and [ɪ, ɛ, æ, ɑ, ʌ, ə, ɔ, ʊ] short. Using the features listed above, [e] can be described as a mid, front, long vowel, and [o] as a mid, back long vowel. Most consider [aj, aw, ɔj] diphthongs, two sounds in one.

In languages such as Old English, a fourth feature, **round**, is relevant for categorizing vowels. Front vowels such as [i] and [e] are produced with the lips in a spread position, whereas back vowels such as [u] and [o] are made with rounded lips. Make these sounds to feel the difference. In addition to these vowels, some languages have rounded front vowels (e.g. [y] in Old English *mys* 'mice', German *Küche* 'kitchen' and French *tu* 'you') or unrounded back vowels (e.g. [ɯ] in Vietnamese).

Figure 2.2 presents the vowels for languages with five vowels (mentioned in Chapter 1, Section 2) and Figure 2.3 the vowels for a language like English. These diagrams are shown as if we were looking at the left side of someone's mouth and could see the tongue's position through the cheek.

	Front	Back
High	i	u
	e	o
Low	a	

Figure 2.2 Five vowel system

	Front			Back
High	i			u
		ɪ		ʊ
		e	ə	o
		ɛ	ʌ	ɔ ɔj
Low		æ	aj aw	ɑ

Figure 2.3 English vowels

How is this division relevant to language change? In Section 2, we mentioned that the Great Vowel Shift (GVS) is responsible for many of the irregularities in the spelling system. Based on work by Karl Luick, many linguists have analyzed this shift, e.g. Jespersen (1909, Chapter 8) and Chomsky and Halle (1968, Chapter 6).We will describe the shift using relatively simple linguistic terminology. When [a] becomes [e], we say that it raises (and fronts), when [e] becomes [i], it raises; the same happens when [o] becomes [u]. Thus, the GVS involves raising the long vowels. The two vowels that are 'pushed out of the system' are [u] and [i]. They become diphthongs – [aw] and [aj], respectively. Figure 2.4 represents this raising in very general terms but see Chapter 7 for more detail.

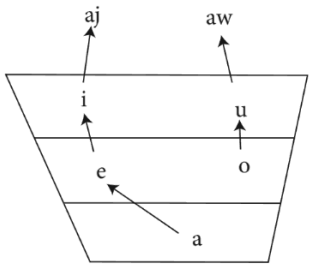

Figure 2.4 The main direction of the GVS

Since the GVS only affected **long vowels**, English has pairs such as *serene–serenity, profound–profundity,* and *divine–divinity*. The second vowel in the first word is long; the same vowel in the second word is short. The long vowels have shifted to [i], [aw], and [aj] respectively, but the short ones have remained more or less the same. Thus, the second vowel in *serenity* is not pronounced as [ɪ] but as [ɛ]. Other long and short vowel pairs occur in (5).

(5) sane/sanity, vain/vanity, grain/granary, humane/humanity, clean/cleanliness, malign/malignant, crime/criminal, sign/signify.

Why do sounds shifts, such as the GVS, take place? There has been much debate on this. Some think the GVS was caused by external events (Fennell 2001); others by internal factors (Martinet 1955); and yet others through a combination of internal and external events (Labov 2010). It is well-known that vowels tend to be distributed relatively evenly in the space where vowels can be produced. Thus, languages with just front vowels do not occur. If, for some reason, a vowel shifts, another vowel may enter that space. Long vowels typically raise or front, as in the GVS, but some change must have started it and that initial trigger is not clear.

Sound changes did not just happen in the past. Various changes are still happening today (as described in e.g. Labov et al. 2005). There are descriptions of the Northern Cities Shift, the Southern Shift, and Canadian Raising. The Northern Cities Shift can be heard in Buffalo, Chicago, Cleveland, Detroit, Rochester, and Syracuse. It has occurred since the 1950s and involves short vowels, e.g. the [ɑ] of *father* and *Chicago* becoming [æ], and the [æ] in *cat* in turn becoming [eə] and [iə]. The changes proceed in a chain shift, *stuck* → *stalk* → *stock* → *stack*. The Southern Shift has the high and mid back vowels fronting and the front vowels shifting position (http://www.ic.arizona.edu/~lsp/ provides a good chart). Canadian Raising involves the raising of the first part of [aj], as in *ice,* to [ʌj] and [aw] in *house* to [ʌw]. This change occurs only before voiceless consonants, and the result is that the vowels in *ice* and *eyes* are different.

In Section 1, we examined a spelling irregularity involving [k]. This irregularity can be explained using the front-back distinction in vowels. Words that are originally English use a *c* before a back vowel (*cool, could, copper*) and a *k* before a front vowel (*king, kitchen, keep*). Length is also relevant: after a long vowel (or a consonant), the spelling of [k] is *k* (*wake, week, snake, work, wink*) and after a short vowel, it is *c(k)* (*sick, Nick, sack*).

Let's now describe consonants using the three features typical of them. While vowels let the air through completely, with consonants the air is constricted in a particular place in the mouth. For instance, in pronouncing [p] and [b], the air is constricted by the closing of the lips; in producing a [θ] and [ð] it is constricted by the tongue and teeth. The air is also restricted in a particular manner, e.g. complete or partial constriction as in [p] and [f], respectively. Another difference between vowels and consonants is that all vowels are voiced, but that is not true of all consonants. Therefore, the features relevant to consonants are: (a) manner of articulation, (b) place of articulation, and (c) voicing.

The airflow can be restricted through a complete closure, as in [p, b, t, d, k, g]; the resulting sounds are called stops. Fricative sounds such as [f, v, s, z, ʃ, ʒ] let the air through. Affricates, [tʃ, dʒ] in English, are mixtures of a stop and a fricative. Nasals and liquids have a lot in common with vowels in that they are voiced and can be syllables on their own. Nasals are formed by letting the air out through the nasal cavity. Liquid is a cover term for [l] and [r], sounds that are perhaps the hardest to define and the most variable across languages. Glides, such as [w, j], are vowel-like and immediately precede or follow vowels.

Place of articulation refers to the place where the air is constricted: the lips for labial [p, b, m, f, v], the teeth for dental [θ, ð], the ridge behind the upper teeth for alveolar [t, d, n, s, z, l, r], the front of the palate for alveo-palatal [ʃ, ʒ, tʃ, dʒ], the palate for [j], the back of the palate for velar [k, g, ŋ], and the glottis for glottal [', h].

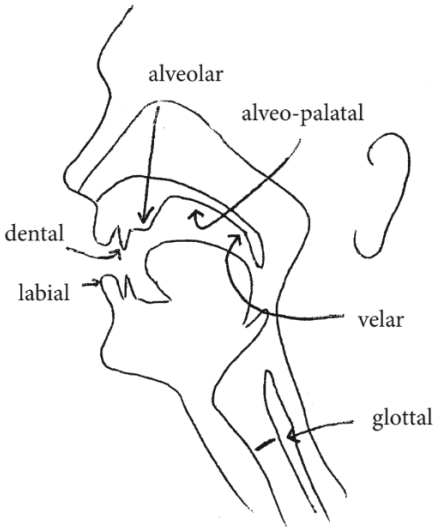

Figure 2.5 Places of articulation

Most consonants come in pairs of a **voiced** and a **voiceless** sound. Voiced sounds are made when the vocal folds in the larynx vibrate. For instance, [f] and [s] are voiceless, and [v] and [z] are voiced. Try feeling this by putting your finger on the middle of your throat and alternating between saying *ssssss* and *zzzzzz*. The pairs are indicated as sets in Table 2.3 (except for the liquids which are both voiced).

Table 2.3 English consonants (*w is labio-velar)

Manner Place	stop	fricative	affricate	nasal	liquid	glide
labial	p/b	f/v		m		w*
dental		θ/ð				
alveolar	t/d	s/z		n	l and r	
alveo-palatal		ʃ/ʒ	ʧ/ʤ			j
velar	k/g			ŋ		
glottal	’	h				

To simplify matters, in Figure 2.3, the labio-dentals [f] and [v] are listed as labials, and the palatal glide [j] as alveo-palatal. The liquids can be further divided according to manner: [l] is lateral and [r] is retroflex (in English)

How are manner, voice, and place of articulation relevant in language change and variation? The **manner** in which a sound is produced changes when stops become fricatives, as shown in Latin *pater* corresponding to English *father*. This change is part of Grimm’s Law which we will come back to in the next chapter. Stops often become fricatives between two

vowels, as in Latin *faba* 'bean' to Portuguese *fave*. In these cases, one sound **assimilates** to become more like another; this particular kind of assimilation is referred to as frication and it happens because fricatives are more like vowels in letting some air through. Nasalization of vowels (often indicated by a [~] above the vowel) is common when they precede nasal consonants, e.g. for some speakers of English, the vowels in *fake* and *fame* are different. It is another instance of manner assimilation on the part of the vowel.

Voiceless consonants surrounded by vowels can also assimilate and **become voiced**: the [t] in the words in (6) starts to sound more like a [d] in American English (and then it is called a 'flap' and represented as [ɾ]):

(6) literature, spaghetti, butter, bottle

British English has an alveolar stop [t] or a glottal stop [ʔ] in *butter* and *bottle*. **Devoicing** occurs as well, as described by Grimm's Law: Latin *ager* corresponds to English *acre*, with voiced [g] changing to voiceless [k].

As for assimilation in **place** of articulation, nasals provide good examples in English fast speech. They adapt their place of articulation to that of a following stop: *in Paris* is pronounced [ɪmpærɪs] and *in Canada* [ɪŋkænədə]. Another frequent assimilation in place of articulation involves **palatalization** – velar consonants such as [k] and [g] becoming palatalized to [ʧ] and [j] respectively. This usually occurs because of the presence of a front vowel. Palatalization happens frequently to Old English words: *cirice* with an initial [k] becomes *church* with an initial [ʧ] (in Scotland, one can still hear *kirk*); *cinne* becomes *chin*; *ceop* turns to *cheap* (the latter changes from the noun *ceop* 'buy' in *god ceop* 'a good bargain' to the adjective *cheap*); and *ceorl* becomes *churl* (but Dutch keeps *kerel*). These and other examples are summarized in Table 2.4. The actual change occurs in Old English but I have given pre-change and post-change words.

Table 2.4 Palatalization in the history of English

Old English		Modern English	Old English		Modern English
[k]		[ʧ]	[g]		[j]
cirice	>	**ch**urch	we**g**	>	wa**y**
cinne	>	**ch**in	cæ**g**	>	ke**y**
ceop	>	**ch**eap	**g**eard	>	**y**ard
cicen	>	**ch**icken	**g**eornan	>	**y**earn
ceose	>	**ch**eese	**g**ellan	>	**y**ell

Other processes that occur to facilitate pronunciation are dissimilation, deletion, insertion (or epenthesis), metathesis, and l/r shift. **Dissimilation** occurs when there are too many sounds of the same kind in a row. For instance, in *fifths*, many speakers make the middle fricative [θ] into a stop. They can also apply **deletion** to *fifths* and pronounce it like [fɪfs]. **Insertion or epenthesis** helps makes consonant clusters easier to pronounce: [mɪlk] becomes [mɪlək] in many dialects. Many of these processes occur when languages borrow words that

do not fit their phonetic system. Latin *astru,* for example, is borrowed into Basque as *asturu* with an inserted vowel. Languages such as Japanese have a strict Consonant-Vowel syllable pattern and borrow English words by inserting vowels into consonant clusters.

Metathesis, a process that switches sounds, also changes consonant clusters. For instance, the initial [spə] cluster in *spaghetti* is often switched to [pəs], as in [pəsgɛti]. Other instances are *precise* becoming [pərsajs], *prescription* becoming [pərskrɪpʃən], and *relevant* turning into [rɛvələnt]. Related words where one has undergone metathesis but not the other one are *third/three, nutrition/nurture, promiscuous/mix*. Examples of metathesis from Old English to Modern English can be found in Table 2.5.

Table 2.5 Metathesis from Old to Modern English

Old English		Modern English	Old English		Modern English
beornan	>	ME brennen	wæps	>	wasp
beorht	>	bright	hriddel	>	riddle
tux	>	tusk	gærs	>	grass
acs(ian)	>	ask	cerse	>	cress
hros	>	horse	irn(an)	>	run

Rhotacism is a process involving the sound [r] and the change of certain consonants into [r]. You can see rhotacism in the alternation between *was* and *were*, *rise* and *rear*, *opus* and *opera*, and between *flos* ('flower' in Latin) and *floral*. A final change to be mentioned is the **l/r switch**: from *peregrinus* to *pilgrim*, *pruna* to *plum*, and *arbor* to *arbol*. The reason for this switch is that [l] and [r] are both liquids and are very unstable over time. This is also shown by their many variants. For instance, Dutch is said to have 13 different [r] sounds in different varieties of Dutch and [l] sounds are variable as well, witness the 'dark' [l] in Scottish English, an [l] pronounced very far back in the mouth.

5. Some grammatical terminology

This section provides some terminology and context for how words and sentences are built. These fields are called **morphology** and **syntax** respectively and this knowledge will become relevant when we start examining Old English in Chapter 4. English changed from a **synthetic** language, with many endings on nouns and verbs indicating grammatical functions such as subject and object, to a mostly **analytic** language with almost no endings.

In English, words can be formed by means of prefixes, such as *pre-* and *anti-*, or suffixes, such as *-ness* and the plural *-s*. First, we will look at the prefixes and suffixes that add to the meanings of words (and can change their categories). These word-building rules have not changed much in character since Old English and involve **derivational** prefixes and suffixes. There are also other ways to construct new words, such as compounding and shortening. Examples of some English word formations are given in (7):

(7) mark-ed-ness, human-ity, friend-ship, product-iv-ity, comput-er, double-speak, nanny state, green-house-effect, PC, yuppy

The first five words involve derivational markings and their affixes are indicated; *double-speak, nanny state* ('too much government interference'), and *greenhouse effect* are compounds; *PC* is short for 'politically correct'; and *yuppy* is short for 'young urban professional'. There are many other word formation rules and we will discuss these in later chapters as they become relevant. As mentioned, derivational endings are present in Old, Middle, and Modern English more or less to the same extent.

Words can also be marked as being the subject or object of a sentence, for plural and possession by means of **inflectional** markers, more commonly known as grammatical endings. The endings that mark these functions have changed considerably over time, however. As mentioned, indicating the functions of subject and object is essential; otherwise, we would not know what the sentences of a language mean. There are two basic strategies for representing the functions of subject and objects: (a) by means of word order, pronouns, and grammatical words such as *of* and *by* and (b) by means of markers on nouns (case) or on verbs (agreement). Languages using (a) are called **analytic** and languages using (b) **synthetic**. I have summarized some characteristics in Table 2.6, where NOM stands for nominative, ACC for accusative case, and 2SG for second person singular agreement.

Table 2.6 Characteristics of analytic and synthetic languages

Analytic	Synthetic
use of prepositions, e.g. *the leg **of** the table*	use of endings, e.g. *the table**'s** leg*
use of word order to indicate subject, e.g. ***The man** saw his friend.*	use of case to indicate subject, e.g. ***De-r Mann** sah sein-en Freund* (German) [the-NOM man saw his-ACC friend]
no markings on the verb to indicate subject but frequent pronouns, e.g. *They leave tomorrow.*	verb is marked for subject, and pronoun may be there e.g. *þriowa me **onsæc-est**.* (Old English) [thrice me deny-2SG] 'You will deny me three times'.

Synthetic languages indicate subjects either by a marking on the subject, called nominative case, or by marking the person and number of the subject on the verb, called agreement. Old English, a synthetic language, has both of these, but Modern English, an analytic language, has limited case and agreement. In (8), the subject is marked by being a nominative *she* rather than an accusative *her*, and the verb is marked by a third person singular agreement marker *-s*:

(8) **She** walks regularly.

It is more common, however, for Modern English nouns and verbs not to be marked for case and agreement, as in (9a). The word order has to be strictly observed, however, and (9b) is ungrammatical (indicated by *):

(9) a. **Rabbits eat** mallow without hesitation.
b. *Mallow without hesitation rabbits eat.

In many languages, objects are signaled by a special case marking – *him, me, us*; sometimes, there is a marking on the verb as well. In Old English, there are cases other than nominative and accusative, namely genitive and dative. This will become relevant in Chapter 4; right now we will examine only the background to cases and a few other grammar points.

In Old English, objects get accusative, dative, or genitive case. In the glosses, these are ACC, DAT, and GEN, respectively. The nominative will be abbreviated as NOM. Nowadays, the dative of Old English is often replaced by the prepositions *to* or *for* and the genitive is replaced by the preposition *of*. The made-up Old English sentence in (10) would be translated as (11) in Modern English, with the ending *-e* on *cyninge* 'king' replaced by the preposition *to*. (If the ending cannot clearly be separated, I use a period between the word and the grammatical abbreviation; if it is clear, I use a hyphen).

(10) *þæt folc geaf cyning-e aþ-as*
that people.NOM gave king-DAT oaths-ACC

(11) The people gave oaths to the king.

In Old English, the main functions of the **nominative** (NOM) are subject – *se cyning* in (12) – and subject predicate, *se cyning* in (13).

(12) ***Se cyning*** *for ofer Humbre muþan*
the.NOM king.NOM went over Humbre mouth
'The king went across the mouth of the Humber'. (adapted from Chron 867)

(13) *þæt is* ***se cyning***
that is the.NOM king.NOM
'that is the king'. (adapted from Alfred)

The main functions of the **genitive (GEN)** are (a) to express possession, *engles* in (14), replaced by *of* in Modern English; (b) to indicate objects after certain verbs, where only part of the object is involved, as in (15); and (c) to indicate measure or number, as in (16).

(14) *mid* ***engl-es*** *fingr-um awritene*
with angel-GEN finger-DAT.P written
'written by the fingers of an angel.' (*Wulfstan Homilies*)

(15) *Ic gyrnde* ***þa-ra fisc-a***
I desired those-GEN fish-GEN
'I wanted some of that fish.' (adapted from the *Blickling Homilies*)

(16) *7 þær forwearþ cxx* ***scip-a*** *æt Swanawic*
and there perished 120 scips-GEN at Swanwick
'and 120 ships perished at Swanwick.' (*Chronicle A*, for the year 877)

The **dative** (DAT) case is used for the object of most prepositions, as in (17), the indirect object, *cyninge* in (10), the regular object with certain verbs, as in (18), and to express means or manner, as in (19).

(17) *Her on* ***þys-um gear-e*** *for se micla here*
Now in this-DAT year-DAT went the great army
'In this year, the great army went'. (*PC* for the year 892)

(18) *ðæt heafod sceal wisian* ***þæm fot-um***
the head shall guide the.DAT feet-DAT
'The head shall guide the feet.' (from *Pastoral Care* 131.22)

(19) ***sweord-e*** *ne meahte on ðam aglæcean wunde gewyrcean*
sword-DAT not might on that creature wounds make
'with a sword he could not inflict wounds on that creature' (*Beowulf* 2904–5)

The **accusative** (ACC) is often used as object, *aþas* in (10), and object of a preposition, *ofer* in (12) and *geond* 'through' in (20), when the preposition indicates movement.

(20) *geond* ***þa wud-as and þa feld-as***
through the.ACC woods-ACC and the.ACC fields-ACC
'through the woods and the fields'.

We will use these cases a lot more in the chapter on Old English. A summary of the cases and their main functions is given in Table 2.7. The subject predicate is marked by nominative case in Old English but this is not true for all languages, so I have ignored that in the table.

Table 2.7 Cases and their main functions

	function	**example**
Nominative	subject	***I** see the examples*
Genitive	possession; object	*the roof **of** the house; I ate **of** the apple*
Dative	object of a preposition; indirect object	*mit mir* (German) [with me.DAT]; *Give **me** some apples*
Accusative	object	*The woman saw **them.***

Verbs in Old English also have endings to indicate which noun is the subject of the sentence. This is called verbal agreement and the endings are considered inflectional endings. As mentioned earlier, we will use the word 'ending' rather than 'inflection'. We will leave Old English verbal endings until Chapter 4, however, since they are more straightforward than case endings.

Languages – or their speakers, to be more precise – perceive words as belonging to certain categories. The main lexical categories are Noun (e.g. *table*), Verb (e.g. *see*), Adjective (e.g. *yellow*), Adverb (e.g. *quickly*), and Preposition (e.g. *across*). These categories are called *lexical* because they carry meaning (they have synonyms and antonyms). There are also grammatical categories: Determiner (e.g. *the, a*, and *those*), Auxiliary (e.g. *might*), Coordinator (e.g. *and*), and Complementizer (e.g. *because*). These categories are called *grammatical* since they determine the syntactic relationships in a sentence. Prepositions and adverbs do a little of both. The distinction between lexical and grammatical categories is important because the change from Old to Modern English involves an increase in the number of grammatical categories, as mentioned in Section 2 of Chapter 1, a process often referred to as **grammaticalization**. The use of grammatical categories is typical for analytical languages.

When languages borrow new words, those words are usually nouns, verbs, and adjectives, i.e. lexical categories. Relatively recent examples are the nouns *pizza, angst, patio, pita* and *sudoku*. Therefore, the difference between lexical and grammatical categories is often rendered in terms of open and closed categories, the lexical categories being open (new words can be added), the grammatical ones being closed (new words are not easily added). Prepositions are an in-between category and are borrowed very infrequently.

6. Conclusion

This chapter provided background information on the spelling, sounds, and grammatical terminology of English. Because the spelling is irregular, we need a phonetic alphabet. We also need to know something about how English sounds are produced since that allows us to explain and describe language change. Syntax and morphology have also been introduced, and the Old English case system explained briefly; we will go into this more in Chapter 4.

Keywords

irregular spelling; standardization; Great Vowel Shift; phonetics; manner, place, and voicing of consonants; height, frontness, and length of vowels; assimilation; dissimilation; epenthesis; metathesis; morphology; syntax; lexical and grammatical categories; analytic and synthetic; derivational and inflectional endings; nominative, genitive, dative, and accusative case; agreement for number and person; lexical and grammatical categories.

Exercises

Spelling

1. Look at texts A and B below in which certain sounds have been left out. Which words do you recognize and which text is easier to read? What implications does that have for possible spelling reforms?

   Text A Th Mn M Hv Wtr

   Scntsts thnk th hv dtctd wtr n th Mn. Sddnl, vsns f ppl lvng n lnr clns tht stp ff t rfl n th w t Mrs r lss fr-ftchd. ftr tw yrs f crfl nlss, scntsts sd ystrd tht rdr sgnls frm n mrcn spccrft ndctd th mn ws nt bn-dr. Th spccrft's rdr sgntrs sggstd th prsnc f wtr c n th prmnntl cld shdws f dp bsn nr th lnr sth pl.

   Text B e oo ay ae ae

   iei i ey ae eee ae o e oo. uey, iio o eoe ii i ua ooie a o o o eue o e ay o a ae e a-ee. Ae o ea o aeu aayi, iei ai eeay a aa ia o a Aeia aea iiae e oo a o oe-y. e aea aa iaue uee e eee o ae ie i e eaey o ao o a ee ai ea e ua ou oe.

2. Which words do you think are most commonly misspelled? Look in the OED to see if these words have had different spellings over the centuries (see also www.barnsdle.demon.co.uk/spell/error.html for some common 'errors').

3. Discuss arguments for and against spelling reform.

Phonetics

4. Please write the symbol for a

   voiced bilabial stop: [ ] voiceless dental fricative: [ ] high back long vowel: [ ]
   voiced affricate: [ ] velar nasal: [ ] low front short vowel: [ ]

5. What feature (voice, manner, place) distinguishes

   [b] and [m]: [k] and [g]:
   [p] and [f]: [d] and [g]:

6. Circle the sound that does not fit in the sets of sounds and say why.

   a. t d z k s
   b. g k b d
   c. æ a ɪ aw

7. Please describe the following sounds in terms of voice, place, and manner.

   [k] [n] [f] [d]

8. Read the following line aloud as best as you can. Is your pronunciation different?

   [læŋgwɪdʒ ɪz ə fəndəmɛntəl hjumən fækəlti juzd fər krietɪv ɪkspreʃən fes-tu-fes kəmjunəkeʃən, sɑjəntɪfɪk ɪnkwəri ænd mɛni ðər pərpəsəz].

Changes

9. How could you best describe the differences between:
   a. Old English *hlaf* and *loaf*?
   b. German *brennen* and English *burn*?
   c. Old English *thurgh* and Modern English *through*?
   d. Early Latin *inpossibilis* and Late Latin *impossibilis*?
   e. Old English *heofod* and Modern English *head*?

Grammar

10. Identify the subjects and direct objects in the text (adapted from the Wikipedia article on Gila Monsters):

    The Gila monster is a species of venomous lizard indigenous to the southwestern United States and northwestern Mexican state of Sonora. It is a heavy, slow-moving lizard and the only venomous lizard native to the United States. The animal produces venom in modified salivary glands in its lower jaw, unlike snakes, whose venom is produced in the upper jaw. The Gila monster lacks the musculature to forcibly inject the venom; instead, the venom is propelled from the gland to the tooth by chewing. Because the Gila monster mainly eats eggs, small animals, and otherwise "helpless" prey, it is thought that its venom evolved for defensive rather than for hunting use.

11. Using the Old English text and its translation below (from King Alfred's version of Orosius), try to identify a few subjects, objects, indirect objects, and prepositional objects (dative and accusative). What Modern English words might *bude* and *þeah* be related to? In Old English, the *æ* represents the short *a*, as in *cat*, and the *ð* and *þ* both represent *th*.

    Old English

    Ohtere sæde his hlaford-e, Ælfred-e cyning-e, þæt he eal-ra Norðmonn-a norþmest bude. He cwæð þæt he bude on þæm land.e norþweardum wiþ þa Westsæ. He sæde þeah þæt þæt land sie swiþe lang norþ þonan; ac hit is eal weste, buton on feaw-um stow-um stycc-emælum wici-að Finn-as.

    Word-by-word

    Ohtere.NOM said.SG his lord-DAT Alfred-DAT king-DAT that he all-GEN Norsemen-GEN northmost lived.SG. He said.SG that he lived.SG on that.DAT land-DAT northward along the Westsea. He said.SG however that that land.NOM is very far north from.there, but it is all waste, except.for few-DAT places-DAT here.and.there live-P Finns-NOM.P (i.e. Sami).

    Free translation

    Ohtere said to his lord, King Alfred, that he of all Norsemen northmost lived. He said that he lived in that land northward along the Westsea (sea to the west of Norway). He said, however, that that land is very far north from there, but that it is all a wasteland except in a few places where Sami live (nomadically) here and there.

Chapter 3

Before Old English

Chapters 1 and 2 briefly explained that English originated around 450, when Germanic tribes first settled in Britain. The Germanic dialects that became English have their origins in another language (or set of languages). Germanic belongs to the Indo-European group of languages, which is itself related to other language groups (e.g. Afroasiatic and Uralic).

In this chapter, we will discuss the ancestors of English. In Section 1, we take a step back and examine the origins of humans and when they first might have acquired language, probably 80,000 or more years ago. We also consider how people and languages spread. This section is the most speculative because new (archeological) research surfaces almost weekly. Section 2 examines the earliest writings, from over 6,000 years ago. Changes can be observed between these writings and later ones and we assume this reflects how the spoken language changed. Some observations regarding these changes led to the formulation of linguistic laws in the 19th century, as discussed in Section 3. Section 4 shows that Old English inherits its synthetic character from its predecessors; Section 5 reviews a number of methods for reconstructing an earlier stage of a language when we have no access to written material; and Section 6 addresses some broader questions.

1. Origins of language

Scholars are uncertain when humans first started using language and how it spread. In this section, we will examine early **archeological evidence, genetic findings, and linguistic reconstruction** in an attempt to shed some light on these questions.

Humans and chimpanzees split off from a common ancestor probably 7 million years ago. They split up in many branches of early humans. Some of these descendants die out and there is a lot of debate as to which of the early hominids that have been found is the ultimate ancestor of modern humans. For instance, the fossil named Ardi was found in Ethiopia and dates to 4.4 million years ago and the famous fossil Lucy was an early (bipedal) hominid that lived over 3 million years ago in Ethiopia. Because we cannot get DNA from most very old remnants, we don't know if these hominids are the ancestors of modern humans. They precede *homo ergaster* (found in Africa) and *homo erectus* (found in Asia). The latter in turn is the ancestor of the Neanderthals in Europe and Asia. Present-day humans, also known as *homo sapiens (sapiens)*, descend from *homo erectus*.

Homo erectus originated two million years ago and early *homo sapiens* is argued (based on DNA dating and fossil evidence) to have split off 500,000 years ago, long before language originated. The skull of early *homo sapiens* does not yet resemble that of present-day

humans; that of later *homo sapiens* does. This resemblance starts developing around 100,000 BP at the point when the culture of *homo sapiens* becomes diverse. That is why language is assumed to have appeared between 150,000 and 80,000 BP.

Among the earliest humans in Europe and Asia are the Neanderthals, who may or may not have had language but who made music, cared for the sick, and buried their dead. A 2010 article in *Science* provides a draft sequence of the Neanderthal genome and argues that the Neanderthal "shared more genetic variants with present-day humans in Eurasia than with present-day humans in sub-Saharan Africa, suggesting that gene flow from Neandertals into the ancestors of non-Africans occurred before the divergence of Eurasian groups from each other" (Green et al. 2010: 710, who spell *Neandertal* without the *h*). The issue of gene-flow between our immediate ancestors and Neanderthals may remain controversial for some time. More generally, the Out-of-Africa Replacement Model argues that each wave of peoples replaced earlier populations whereas the Multiregional Continuity Model argues there was gene-flow after *homo erectus* left Africa and that *homo sapiens* may have emerged in different regions. Some background can be found at http://actionbioscience.org/evolution/johanson.html.

To see how humans are related and how they spread around the world, geneticists have examined relationships in the genetic material of people from different continents, archeologists have studied early habitation sites, and anthropologists have looked at physical characteristics such as teeth. Figure 3.1 represents some of the genetic relationships. The genetic similarities and differences between the various populations suggest that humans **migrated** from Africa to Australia and Oceania, then to Asia, then to Europe and to America.

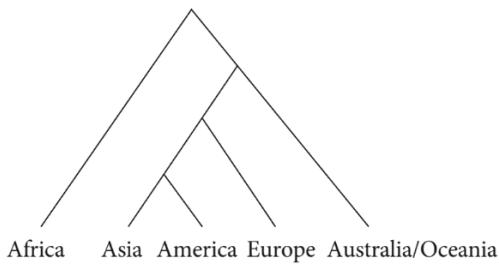

Figure 3.1 Genetic relationships between people (from Cavalli-Sforza 2000: 39)

This figure implies the greatest affinity between the people of Asia and those of the Americas, indicating that the Americas were settled by Asian (Siberian) peoples. Looking at changes in mitochondrial DNA (inherited through the female), the ancestors of modern humans may have moved as in Figure 3.2.

Mutations in Y-chromosome DNA (passed from father to son) point to similar migrations. Hypotheses about genetic relationships, as in Figure 3.1, and migrations also predict relationships between languages. This means that language likely originated in one place: it is monogenetic rather than polygenetic. The reason behind this monogenetic assumption is that the world languages have similar properties.

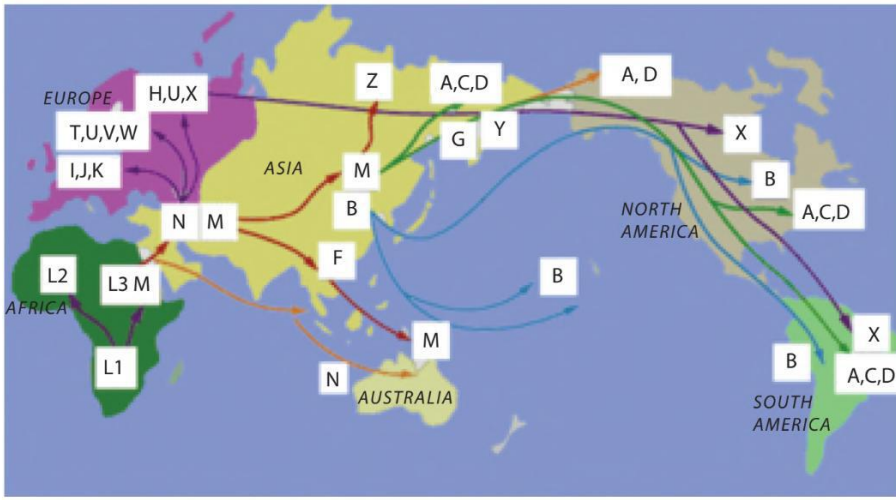

Figure 3.2 Mitochondrial DNA in various populations
(from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Human_mitochondrial_DNA_haplogroup)

If humans already had language by the time they started migrating from Africa, Figure 3.1 predicts that the languages of Asia are closest to those of the Americas, and the languages of Africa and Australia the most distinct since they developed independently of each other over a longer period of time. Linguistic work confirms this prediction. For instance, Greenberg, Ruhlen, and others have linked the genetic tree in Figure 3.1 to a tree of linguistic relationships between most of the world's languages, i.e. Figure 3.3. This grouping is controversial, as will be discussed later. If a language is not attested in early writings, we call it a proto-language; all the languages/families below are proto-families but I have added a few contemporary languages and families to make it clearer.

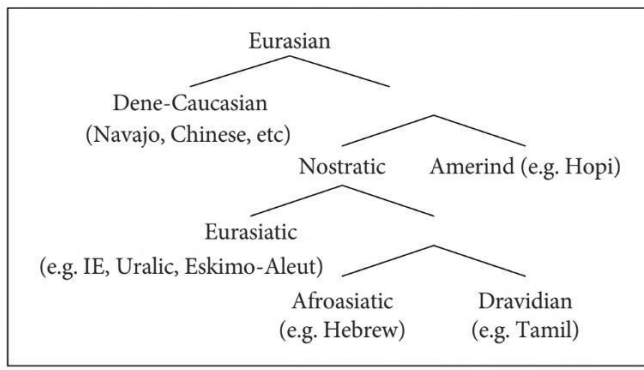

Figure 3.3 Linguistic relationships (Ruhlen 1994: 192)

The connection of the branches indicates which languages are most closely related. The Afroasiatic languages include North African and Semitic languages: Arabic, Hebrew, and Berber. They are argued to be related to Dravidian, which includes languages such as Tamil, Malayalam, and Brahui. Dravidian is the name for a group of languages that was at one point spoken in Northern India but that was later pushed to the South of India (and to Sri Lanka). If you consider this migration, the assumption that the Dravidian and Afroasiatic families are related is not far-fetched.

Eurasiatic incorporates eight language families from Indo-European to Altaic. It includes English, Italian, Bulgarian, Japanese, Korean, Finnish, and Inuktitut. Together with Afroasiatic and Dravidian, Eurasiatic forms a well-known super-family – Nostratic – an idea advocated by Illich-Svitych and Dolgopolsky in the 1960s and by Shevoroshkin, Ivanov and others more recently.

The next most closely related family is Amerind. This is a large (and controversial) language family; Greenberg suggests that it includes most of the languages of the Americas – Hopi, Nahuatl, and Quetchua. In this scenario, Na-Dene (including Apache and Navajo) is grouped with Sino-Tibetan and North Caucasian into Eurasian. The only language families not accounted for in a superfamily are the three African language families – with the exception of Afroasiatic – the Australian families, and some Pacific ones.

The linguistic representation in Figure 3.3 mirrors the genetic ones in Figures 3.1 and 3.2 only up to the split between Asia and Europe. As mentioned, it leaves out three African language families as well as the Polynesian and Australian languages. If Figure 3.1 is correct, Australian and Polynesian languages are the first to split off and are therefore most distantly related to the Eurasian languages.

There is a lively debate on how much to include in Eurasian and Nostratic (e.g. Greenberg 2000) and whether this kind of reconstruction is possible at all. One linguistic argument against such a reconstruction is that reconstruction going more than 6,000 years back is not possible because most words will have been replaced in such a long period (e.g. Kaufman 1990; Ringe 2002). Another argument is that genetic and linguistic similarity need not go hand-in-hand. Thus, languages can be replaced without the relevant genes being transmitted and vice versa. For instance, the language of the Sami in Northern Scandinavia is in the same family as that of the Finns but the genes of the two peoples are different. The most significant debate about reconstructions such as the one in Figure 3.3 is probably the one surrounding the existence of Amerind(ian). The assumption that Na-Dene and Eskimo-Aleut are language families of the Americas is mostly accepted but the one that Amerind is one family is not. The alternative to Amerind is to posit 200 or so separate language families.

In short, genetic and linguistic reconstructions indicate that certain people and languages are more closely related since they separate at later points. Some researchers (Cavalli-Sforza, Greenberg, and Ruhlen) argue that genetic and linguistic relationships go hand-in-hand; others (Ringe and Kaufman) criticize such an approach. The debate about the origin of language has always been full of speculation so much so that the Linguistic

Society of Paris banned discussions on this topic in 1866. The controversy regarding the languages of the Americas is still very strong. Next, we turn to more tangible evidence of linguistic relationship – written records.

2. Earliest writings

In this section, we discuss older writing systems and writing systems in general. Early writings provide evidence of linguistic change, which will be discussed further in Sections 3 and 4.

There is a large gap between 70,000 years ago, when humans probably had started to use language, and the time from which we have historical evidence for language in the form of writing. Writing found in Henan, China dates back 8,000 years and the Vinca inscriptions found widely over southeastern Europe date back 7,000 years. Most scholars doubt that the former is a systematic writing system and the latter is but will most likely not be deciphered. The Harappan/Indus Valley writing dates back 5,500 years, Egyptian 5,300 years, and Mesopotamian cuneiform is over 5,100 years old. The Chinese Oracle bone inscriptions go back 3,500 years and Mesoamerican (Mayan) writing is 2,500 years old. While the origin of language seems monogenetic, writing systems develop independently in at least Mesoamerica, greater Mesopotamia, China, and Southeastern Europe.

First, we will survey the types of writing systems. Writing probably evolves from drawings on wood or stone (petroglyphs) that tell a story. Later, the simplified symbol comes to represent one word or idea. Egyptian records use three kinds of writing: logographic, syllabic, and phonetic. The symbols in Figure 3.4, for instance, are based on actual images. This system, where one word is expressed in one symbol, is called **logographic**.

Figure 3.4 Egyptian logograms

The second type of writing is **syllabic** – the symbol represents the pronunciation of a syllable. For instance, in Egyptian, the symbol for 'basket' represents the sounds [neb]; it also stands for 'every' since that too is pronounced [nɛb].

The third type of writing system is **phonetic, or alphabetic**, where one symbol represents one sound. This system is very common in African, Semitic, and Indo-European languages. Thus, Swahili, Arabic, Hebrew, and Russian all use a phonetic writing system.

In principle, Modern English is phonetic but, as we discussed in Chapter 2, in practice, that is not the case.

Some languages use a combination of writing systems: Egyptian uses three systems and Japanese four, each for conveying different kinds of information. English is also starting to include some syllabic symbols in informal writing. An example is *CUL8R* for 'see you later' and *W8 4 the image 2 download*. Good information on writing systems can be found at http://omniglot.com and at http://ancientscripts.com.

Deciphering the writing systems of Old Egyptian (over 5,000 years old), belonging to the Afro-Asiatic language family and Old Indian (2,250 years old), Old Persian (2,500 years old), and Hittite (3,500 years), all belonging to Indo-European, resulted in theories about the relationships among languages. It also provided, and continues to provide, insight into linguistic change. The 'discovery' of Sanskrit in the eighteenth century was especially important for formulating laws for sound changes, as will be shown in Section 3. In Section 4, we will see that syntactic and morphological changes between Sanskrit and Modern Hindi/Urdu, its descendant, involve a transformation from synthetic into analytic, the same transformation that happens in the history of English. The change from Old Egyptian to Coptic involves a cyclical shift from synthetic to analytic to synthetic (see Hodge 1970). In Chapter 10, we will investigate whether a similar development is occurring in Modern English: after becoming an analytic language, Modern English shows synthetic characteristics again.

In conclusion, ancient writings allow us to understand long-term linguistic change. Knowledge of earlier stages also gives rise to speculation about why language changes and what the original language is. In the remainder of this chapter, we will discuss in more detail what the discovery of languages such as Sanskrit did for linguistics: we will start with sounds in Section 3, grammar in Section 4, and move to broader implications in Section 6.

3. Indo-European to Germanic: Sound changes

Sir William Jones, a British judge in late-eighteenth-century India, made the larger scholarly community aware of correspondences between Latin, Greek, and Sanskrit. These correspondences had been written about by others, such as Comenius and Scalinger in the seventeenth century and after but the broader community seems to have been readier to accept them in Jones' day. They proceeded by comparing words from different languages and then coming up with 'laws'.

Words from different languages, such as *tres* and *treis,* in Table 3.1 may have a common ancestor and are then called *cognates*. Sometimes cognates are hard to recognize because their sounds or meanings have shifted in one language but not in another. To find linguistic relations, we usually take words such as pronouns, numerals, and kinship terms as comparison material since they are supposed to have changed the least. This kind of comparison work is known as the **Comparative Method**. If we look at Table 3.1 and try to group the languages into families, we can see how linguists establish connections between them.

Table 3.1 European and Middle Eastern languages (from Ruhlen 1994: 20)

Language	*Two*	*Three*	*Me*	*You*	*Who?*	*Not*	*Mother*	*Father*	*Tooth*	*Heart*	*Foot*	*Mouse*	*He Carries*
A	ʔiθn-	θalāθ-	-ni	-ka	man	lā	ʔumm-	abū	sinn	lubb	rijl-	fār	yaḥmil-
B	šn-	šaloš	-ni	-ka	mi	lo	ʔem	aβ	šen	leβ	regel	ʃakbɔr	nośeh
C	duvá	tráyas	mắm	tuvám	kás	ná	mātár-	pitár-	dant-	hṛd-	pád	muṣ-	bhárati
D	duva	θrāyō	mąm	tuvəm	čiš	naē-	mātar-	pitar-	dantan-	zərəd	paiδya		baraiti
E	duo	treîs	eme	sú	tís	ou(k)	máter	pater	odón	kardiā	pod-	mûs	phérei
F	duo	trēs	mē	tū	kwis	ne-	māter	pater	dent-	kord-	ped-	mūs	fert
G	twai	θreis	mik	θu	hwas	ni	aiθei	faðar	tunθus	haírtō	fōt		baíriθ
H	dó	trí	-m	tú	kía	ní-	máθir	aθir	dēt	kride	traig	lux	berid
I	iki	üč	ben-i	sen	kim	deyil	anne	baba	diš	kalp	ayak	sičan	tašiyor

You can probably see that languages C to H have a great deal in common; A and B also have much in common; I, however, is different. This turns out to be correct: A and B are Arabic and Hebrew, members of the Semitic family; C is Sanskrit, D Avestan, E Greek, F Latin, G Gothic, H Celtic, all members of the Indo-European family; I is Turkish, a member of the Altaic family.

Jones' work makes it possible for scholars such as Rask and Grimm to formulate sound laws and postulate what the predecessor of Latin and Greek might have been. Grimm's Law, for example, is one of the results of such work as is the grouping of certain languages into an Indo-European family (one of the sub-families of Eurasiatic in Figure 3.3). The branches of **Indo-European** are given in Figure 3.5. This representation is simplified since no relationship between the main branches is indicated. The usual assumption is that Germanic, Slavic, and Baltic are more closely connected and that Celtic and Italic are similarly closer to each other. The Tocharian and Anatolian branches split off the earliest (Ringe 2006: 5) but are now extinct.

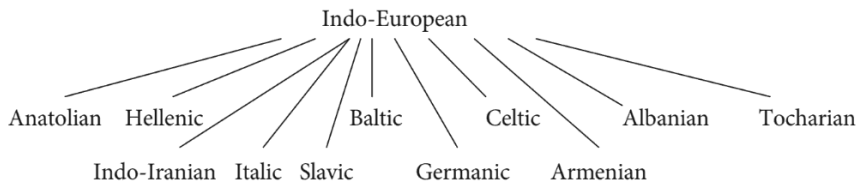

Figure 3.5 The branches of Indo-European

The oldest Indo-European may have been spoken 6,000 years ago, but it is unclear if it was in fact at one point one language (that is why we call it proto Indo-European) and whether it was spoken in one region, a 'homeland'. A great deal of debate surrounds the possible Indo-European homeland. Renfrew (1987) argues that it is Anatolia and Gimbutas (1985)

that it is North of the Caspian Sea. As Mallory (1989: 143) puts it, "[o]ne does not ask 'where is the Indo-European homeland?' but rather 'where do they put it *now*?'".

The way the languages in each branch develop has, to a large extent, to do with what non-Indo-European language(s) they come into contact with. After the last Ice Age and before the coming of Indo-European (and Uralic) speakers, Europe was repopulated during the Neolithic period (9000 BP-4000 BP) by people from areas where the ice had not reached. The mitochondrial DNA of the current European population confirms a pre Indo-European origin (see Sykes 2001). This population may have been what Vennemann (2003a; 2010) calls Vasconic, i.e. related to modern Basque. Vennemann ties several Germanic and Romance words, not found in other Indo-European languages, to Vasconic and also certain placenames, e.g. *bide* is 'road' in Basque and this turns up in placenames such as *Bitburg* in Germany and *Bedford* and *Bedhampton* in England, just like *Stratford* and *Strassburg* are compounds of roads (streets), fords, and boroughs. Languages possibly related to Basque are the extinct Etruscan in Italy, Aquitanian in France, and Iberian in Spain. It is now also believed that Indo-European and Uralic speakers didn't replace these earlier people but that they co-existed. In addition to Vasconic, Germanic came into contact with Finno-Ugric, i.e. Uralic (Prokosch 1939).

Turning now to the linguistic features of the Indo-European languages, some of the phonetic changes taking place in Indo-European languages are accounted for by **Grimm's Law**, a simplified version of which is provided in Figure 3.6 (and there are many other rules I don't go into, e.g. one called Verner's Law). The figure shows the correspondence between an early Indo-European sound and an English, Dutch, or other Germanic sound.

Early Indo-European:	p	t	k	b	d	g	bh	dh	gh
	|	|	|	|	|	|	|	|	|
Germanic:	f	θ	h	p	t	k	b	d	g

Figure 3.6 Grimm's Law, or the First Consonant Shift: correspondences between languages

Examples of this shift can be seen in Latin *ped,* which didn't shift, and English *foot,* which did undergo the shift. The same is true for Latin *tenuis*, which parallels English *thin*; and Latin *centum,* which corresponds to English *hundred.*

If you remember the phonetics of these sounds from Chapter 2, you will notice that [p, t, k] are voiceless stops and they become voiceless fricatives, [f, θ, h]; the change is frication. This accounts for the first set of three. The other sounds can be grouped similarly. The second set, [b, d, g], are voiced stops changing into voiceless stops. Examples of this devoicing can be seen in Latin *turba* 'crowd' corresponding to Old English *thorp* 'town', Latin *decem* [dekɛm] and English *ten,* and Latin *ager* and English *acre*. Some of these correspondences are trickier to spot because other changes have occurred as well. For instance, there is metathesis in the spelling of *acre* and deletion of the middle consonant in *decem*.

The third set of changes involves the aspirated voiced stops [bh, dh, gh], fairly common in Sanskrit, corresponding to voiced stops, i.e. without aspiration. For example, Sanskrit *bhrata* corresponds to English *brother*, *dhwer* to *door*, and *ghosti* to *guest*. These can all be found by looking up the etymology of the English word in the OED. In Latin and Greek, the aspirated stops from Sanskrit are voiceless fricatives: *ghosti* is *hostis* 'guest' and *bhrater* is *frater*. The exact correspondences are: Sanskrit *bh* with Latin *f* and Greek *ph*; Sanskrit *dh* with Latin *f* and Greek *th*; and Sanskrit *gh* with Latin *h* and Greek *ch*. These correspondences are provided in Figure 3.7.

Sanskrit	bh	dh	gh
Latin	f	f	h
Greek	ph	th	ch
Germanic	b	d	g

Figure 3.7 Some of Grimm's correspondences in more detail

Like the Great Vowel Shift discussed in Chapter 2, Grimm's Law can be considered a chain reaction: aspirated voiced stops become regular voiced stops, voiced stops in turn become voiceless stops, and voiceless stops become fricatives. This entire process happens in Germanic; Latin and Greek are interesting in that they participate in one stage but what is an aspirated stop in Sanskrit corresponds to a fricative in Latin. This course of events could be characterized as a push-chain or a drag-chain. Examples of this change taking place at the beginning of words are provided in (1) (except for *b* > *p* which is hard to find word-initially). Sanskrit is the first form given (except for *kanab* which is Old Persian), Latin the second, and English the third. It is important to remember that the change takes place only once in a word: *dhwer* corresponds to *door* but the latter does not change to *toor*.

(1)

Sanskrit	**Latin**	**English**
bhrater	frater	brother
dhwer	foris	door
ghordho	hortus	yard (< Old English geard)
pitr	pater	father
tu	tu	thou
krnga	cornu	horn
kana**b**	canna**b**is	hem**p** (< Old English henep)
danta	dentis	tooth
jna	gnoscere	know/ken

As mentioned, the various stages in Grimm's Law take place only one time: once a [b] has changed to [p] that [p] stays a [p]. Thus, the initial [b] in brother stays [b] and doesn't change further to [p]!

Grimm's Law distinguishes the Germanic languages from older Romance languages, such as Latin and Greek, and from modern Romance languages, such as French and Spanish. The Romance languages keep an initial [p] stop in *père* and *padre*, respectively, where English has a fricative [f] in *father*. Within Germanic, many changes have taken place that help differentiate languages such as English, German, and Swedish. The different branches of Germanic are provided in Figure 3.8. where not all stages or languages are indicated, e.g. Middle High German is not, and no dialects are listed.

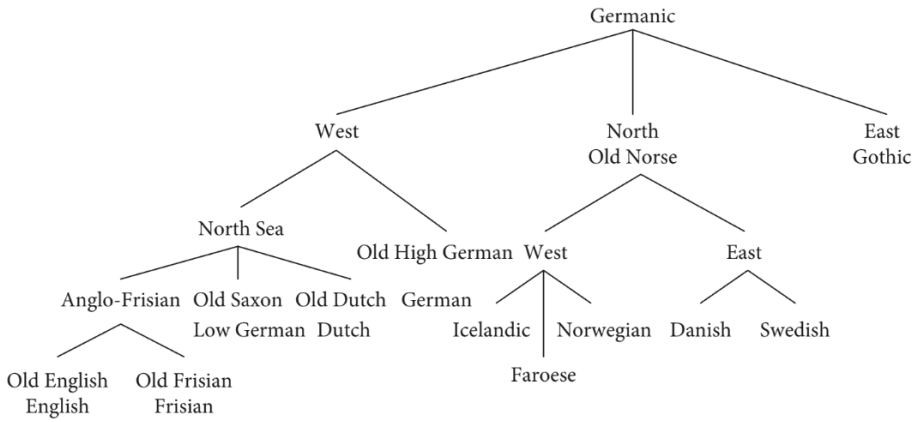

Figure 3.8 The branches of Germanic

After the Germanic languages split, there are many other changes. If a [p] were to change to an [f] in Modern English, we wouldn't call that process Grimm's Law.

4. Indo-European to Germanic: Changes in morphology and syntax

In Chapter 2, we discussed the importance of inflectional endings in Old English and we'll see more of this complexity in the next chapter. The complexity of the endings on nouns and verbs is something the older Germanic languages, Old English included, inherit from Indo-European; there are changes specific to Germanic, however, as we will see. In this brief section, we will examine how an older Indo-European language, namely Sanskrit, changes.

In addition to the four cases discussed in Chapter 2 (Section 5), Sanskrit nouns have endings for four more cases, totaling **eight different cases**: nominative, genitive, dative, accusative, instrumental, locative, ablative, and vocative. The instrumental designates the instrument with which the action takes place, the locative where it takes place, the ablative the source, and the vocative shows that a person is addressed. Take a look at the sentence in (2) where the word order is free.

(2) *Ramah-0 van-e vasa-ti*
Ramah-NOM forest-LOC lives-3SG
'Rama lives in the forest'.

The nominative in (2) is indicated by the lack of an ending, shown as zero. The nominative (NOM) tells you that Ramah is the subject of the sentence whereas the locative (LOC) tells you that the action is taking place inside the forest. To give you an idea of the cases, Table 3.2 provides the singular and plural endings of *deva* 'god', taken from the Sanskrit lessons at http://www.utexas.edu/cola/centers/lrc.

Table 3.2 Cases for Sanskrit *-a* stems for *deva* 'god'

	SG	PL
NOM	devas	devaas
ACC	devam	devaan
INST	devena	devais
DAT	devaaya	devebhyas
ABL	devaat	devebhyas
GEN	devasya	devaanaam
LOC	deve	deveshu
VOC	deva	devaas

Sanskrit verbs also have endings for the person and number of the subject, *-ti* in (2). In (2), we could leave out the subject since it is expressed through the *-ti* ending on *vasati*.

The Sanskrit in (3) corresponds to its grammatical descendant, Hindi/Urdu, in (4). An approximate pronunciation is provided rather than the Devanagari script that both Sanskrit and Hindi use or the adapted Arabic script that Urdu uses.

(3) *nagar-at vana-m gaccha-ti*
city-ABL forest-ACC goes-3SG
'He goes from the city to the forest'.

(4) *Wo šehr se jʌngl ko ja-ta hẽ*
he city from forest to go-M.SG be.3SG
'He goes from the city to the forest'.

In (3), there are case endings on the nouns and agreement markings on the verb, indicated by the hyphenated suffixes. The case endings are lost on 'city' and 'forest' in (4) but an **abundance of grammatical words** – *wo* 'he', *se* 'from', *ko* 'to', and *hẽ* 'is' – appears. (Hindi/Urdu keeps some case but not in (3)). Here we see the change from synthetic to analytic that was explained in Chapter 2. Note that Hindi/Urdu has replaced many of its lexical words as well (those for 'city' and 'forest' in (4)).

In comparison to Sanskrit, Old English has fewer cases, namely only nominative, genitive, dative, and accusative (and an almost non-existent instrumental). It uses prepositions

rather than the locative, ablative, and instrumental: *in* is used for locative and *from* and *through* for ablative and instrumental case. There are many other differences between older Indo-European and older Germanic. The latter developed weak verbs (i.e. those ending in *-ed* in the past) and weak and strong adjectives (see Chapter 4) that make Germanic quite different.

We used Sanskrit as a representative for Indo-European. In general, older Germanic languages are more analytic than Sanskrit. However, Hittite, an Indo-European language spoken over 3,500 years ago and older than Sanskrit, has a grammatical structure that is simpler in many respects (no dual number and no feminine gender). This may mean that the complex endings in Sanskrit are a later development, not present in the original (proto) Indo-European.

In conclusion, older Indo-European languages differ in their syntax and morphology from more modern Germanic ones, even though they all share a common ancestor. Latin and Greek have endings on nouns and verbs similar to Sanskrit (e.g. the accusative *-m*) and you may recognize some of them in Modern German and Old English. Thus, the inflectional endings of Old English are due to its Indo-European and synthetic origins.

5. Reconstruction methods

In this section, we will briefly discuss how to reconstruct the sound system of a language when we have spoken or written evidence and when we do not (and when we reconstruct a proto-language). Reconstructing the morphology and syntax is more controversial and will not be attempted (see Lightfoot 1980 and Lehmann 1993 for opposite views).

Grimm's Law could be formulated because there are written records for Sanskrit, Latin, Greek, (now Hittite), and Germanic. Looking at the extant languages helps us reconstruct languages for which we have no written records. One method is the Comparative Method that we observed at work in Section 3. Linguists often compare related languages, for instance, French, Italian, Portuguese, Catalan, and Spanish, as in (5).

(5)

French	Italian	Portuguese	Catalan	Spanish	meaning
cheval	*cavallo*	*cavalo*	*cavall*	*caballo*	'horse'

(*ch* in French is [ʃ]; the initial *c* in the other languages represents [k])

Supposing we did not know the parent language, how could we reconstruct it? We might first identify the form the majority of languages use. Applying the majority rule to (5) produces *cavallo, i.e. *kavallo if we correct for the c symbol that was used for a [k] sound. (We indicate a reconstruction by means of an *).

We could also reconstruct by looking at the actual rules to see if they make phonetic sense. To get from *kavallo to the modern languages, we would need the following changes.

(6) a. [k] → [ʃ] (French)
b. [v] → [b], between two vowels (Spanish)
c. [ll] → [l] (French and Portuguese)
d. [o] ending disappears (French and Catalan)

Changes a, c, and d make phonetic sense since both palatalization, simplification, and loss of endings occur frequently. Change b, however, does not make sense since typically stops become fricatives between vowels and not the other way around. Therefore, instead of *kavallo, we reconstruct *kaballo. We keep changes a, c, and d, but change b into a frication rule (stops to fricatives). Even though the change has to apply in four languages, it is preferable linguistically.

(7) redone (6b) [b] → [v], between two vowels (French, Italian, Portuguese, and Catalan)

To make sure the reconstruction of *kaballo is correct, we need to examine other words with the same consonants. If a fair number of such words shows the same correspondences, the reconstruction is probably accurate. The initial [k] of Spanish and Italian shows up as [ʃ] in French in *cabo, capo, chef* 'head', in *campo, campo, champs* 'field(s)', and in *cantar, cantare, chanter* 'to sing' to name but a few. This is made clearer in Table 3.3.

Table 3.3 [k] and [ʃ] correspondences in Romance

Spanish	Italian	French	translation
cabo [kabo]	*capo* [kapo]	*chef* [ʃɛf]	'head'
campo [kampo]	*campo* [kampo]	*champs* [ʃã]	'field(s)'
cantar [kantar]	*cantare* [kantare]	*chanter* [ʃãte]	'to sing'

The voiced stop [b] in Spanish *laboro* 'work' shows up as a [v] in Italian *lavoro* (but in the other languages the word was lost so we can't tell). There are, however, some [b] sounds that do not change providing extra support for the redone (6b), e.g. Spanish *libertad* 'liberty' stays in *libertà* in Italian, *liberdade* in Portuguese, and *liberté* in French. The double *-ll-* appears in Italian in *metallo* 'metal' whereas French has the expected single *metal* and Catalan *de metall* (both Portuguese and Spanish have *(de) metal* so something else happened there).

So our reconstruction is linguistically sound although in classical Latin the word for 'horse' is *equus* and Greek has *hippos*. There is a 'street' Latin *caballus* that is possibly borrowed from another (Celtic?) source and this could be the source of the words in the daughter languages.

Let's look at the reconstruction of a word for a parent language that we do not know and cannot check. The words in a hypothetical family such as Nostratic (see Figure 3.3) have been reconstructed on the basis of families for which there is evidence, such as

Indo-European and Dravidian (see Dolgopolsky 1998). Some words that have been suggested as being part of **Nostratic** are listed in (8). Again, since these forms are reconstructed, they are marked with an *.

(8) *tik 'finger', *bar/ber 'seed, grain', *gadi 'young goat', and *wete 'water'

These words have been reconstructed on the basis of Afroasiatic, Indo-European, and Dravidian languages. Take the word for 'seed, grain'. Hebrew has *bar* 'grain' and Somali *bur* 'wheat' (both are Afroasiatic), Old English (Indo-European) *bere* 'barley', and Tamil (Dravidian) *paral* 'seed' (again see Dolgopolsky 1998 and others for this). We can see that all these words are clearly related: Old English and Tamil could have added endings and, since [b] and [p] are both bilabial stops, having a [b] lose its voicing to become [p] in Tamil is a regular change. The reason *bar/ber is reconstructed, rather than *paral, is probably due to the fact that more families have [b] than [p] and endings are often added (e.g. prepositions can become attached to nouns).

The latter kind of a methodology for reconstructions has been criticized extensively. With the spread of agriculture and other technical advances, words could have been borrowed and their similarities might not be proof of linguistic relationships; they could be coincidental.

6. Politics and reconstruction

In this section, we will briefly examine some political/ideological issues related to linguistic reconstruction. Each group of people constructs a certain identity, sometimes based on true events, sometimes not. Language plays a major role in this construction of identity/worldview.

The most notorious example is that of Europe during World War II: a myth of Germanic superiority was created that justified terrible atrocities. Some ideas were inspired by the Aryan Myth (as Poliakov 1974 calls it). Poliakov (1974) and Bernal (1987; 1991) argue that the reason Indo-European studies became popular in the early 19th century was a racist, anti-Semitic, and anti-African sentiment. Said (1978; 1993) links the Indo-European interest to colonialism and imperialism, a need to come to terms with the colonialized 'other'.

There are other examples of ideology influencing political identity. The Harappan (or Indus Valley) culture flourished in Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro from 2500 to 1600 BCE. It was an advanced culture, with irrigation, large cities, trade, and a writing system. A number of groups would therefore like to claim it as their ancestral group. One theory has it that this culture is early Dravidian and that, as Indo-Europeans (known as Aryan or Indian) migrated to what is now Pakistan and Northern India, the Dravidians were pushed to the

South and one small group to the Northwest (the Brahui speakers). Some authors, however, claim that the Harappan culture is Aryan, not Dravidian (e.g. Feuerstein et al. 1995) and that the myth about Harappa was started by the British in the 19th century to minimize growing Indian nationalism.

Another example involves East Asia. To many linguists, Japanese and Korean look related, especially in their grammars. This fact is not popular with either the Japanese or the Korean population, however. Up to 1946, according to e.g. Diamond (1998), it was taught in Japan that the Japanese originated in Japan. In 2000, an archeologist was caught placing stone artifacts that would have changed our view of the cognitive abilities of early humans living in Japan (see http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/1008051.stm). Another debated issue is the origin of the Ainu, now living in Northern Japan, who are presumably descendants of the indigenous population. There is currently a lot of DNA work trying to shed more light on this, e.g. by Michael Hammer et al. (2005).

7. Conclusion

This chapter provides a brief account of when we think language started (at least 80,000 years ago) and how it spread. Once people migrated, their language often changed; this resulted in the different language families present in the world. Of the earliest language, we know nothing. The earliest writing is from 5,000 years ago and helps us understand some of the changes. We also examined changes in the sounds, morphology, and syntax between Indo-European and Germanic. When there are no written records, linguists have methods for reconstructing words in a hypothetical, i.e. proto language. As a last point, we discussed some broader issues related to language, its origins and its changes.

Keywords

Eurasian, Nostratic, Indo-European (IE), Germanic, Comparative Method, Grimm's Law, frication, devoicing, losing aspiration, inflection, logographic, syllabic, phonetic writing systems, proto-language.

Exercises

1. Ruhlen (1994: 85) provides the following chart of words in certain Native American languages, using the Comparative Method. Try to find the languages that go together. How many families do you find?

Table 3.4 Words in native American languages

Language	*I/Me/My*	*You*	*(Give) Hand*	*Left (Hand)*	*Knee*	*Child*	*Brother/ Son*	*Sister/ Daughter*	*(Sister) Aunt*	*Water*	*(Bat) Bird*	*Throat/ Swallow*	*(Come) Go*
A	-ma	-t	ʔätˡɣä		siitquq	ʔaɣe	anŋaq	paniɣ	atsaɣ	ĭmiq	qavɣa	əɣə	piki-ð
B	šī	nan	lag	s'at'	guhd	git'a	onaɣ(e)	tsik	ʔati	tū	č'aš	ket	qa
C	ne	ke	maχwa	kes	ketekʷ-i	t'an'a	ʔtsin	tune	kaki	akwā	tʷēk	məlqʷ	wa
D	naʔ	ma	makan	kets	ikat	t'anat	t'in	tūne	pinūkin	okaʔ	č'ik'	mülk'	wanŋ
E	na	ma	mane	kasark	pʰuruč'i	t'anpam	t'inīsi	at'on	pane	aqa	šīk	milqe	wan
F	neʔ	ma	maka	kuč'ĕ		tana	ʔdiino	t'ut'ina	pan	gʷa	tsikie	kutu	ma
G	na	ma	man	kuts	ikuet	tuktan	sin	tuntu	puna	aka	eš'ɛka	murki	wan
H	na	ma	maki	mwenik	tula	tayna	den	thaun	epan	yaku	tˡikˡi	malq'a	wen
I	hi	ma	muka	kompe	kat'	maki	ten	ton	āebn	okōa	šaga	uamea	w'ān
J	no	ma	meʔeŋ	kuču	ikketi	taʔin	tingwa	atunesas	penawa	ako	čiki	mirkoi	awani
K	awe	ama	emekun	poe	kudo	tane	dēnu	tona	ebuño	tuna	sikii	eʔmōkī	ito
L	no	mi	moken		katˡege	tawin	ina	tona	nene	uaka	jikidi		wo
M	nu	ma	mako	keč	gete	kra	čina	atonkā	parĩ	ŋo	tˡïpe	kot	va

2. Using Grimm's Law, which of the Sanskrit words can be matched to Old English (use connecting lines). Note that the þ represents [θ]:

Sanskrit:	Old English:
bhar	þu
pitar	þrie
pada	beran
trayas	fæder
tvam	fot

3. Match the Latin words below to the Modern English ones and explain the changes that take place to get to Modern English:

Latin:	Modern English:
noctis	tooth
gelu	night
cannabis	kin
dentis	glacial
gens	hemp

4. Use the comparative method to reconstruct the proto-form of 'hundred'. Be careful to consider the pronunciation, not the spelling.

   French *cent* [sã]; Italian *cento* [tʃɛnto]; Spanish *ciento* [siɛnto]; Latin *centum* [kɛntum]

5. The *American Heritage Dictionary* has a list of Indo-European roots (you could use www.bartleby.com/61/IEroots.html). Try looking up some of the Indo-European words discussed in this chapter and see if you can identify some of the changes.

6. Dolgopolsky (1998: 48) reconstructs Nostratic *gadi 'kid, young goat' on the basis of a number of languages, and the OED reconstructs Indo-European *ghaid. Latin has *haedus* with the same meaning. Explain how the Latin corresponds to Old Norse *geit* and eventually Modern English *goat*.

7. Identify the functions (subjects, objects, locations, sources, or instruments) of the underlined words in the Sanskrit sentences. Don't worry about the endings; just go by the meaning.

   a. *jalena* *asvan* *sinca-ti*
      water horses sprinkle-3SG
      'S/he sprinkles the horses with water.'

   b. *nagarat* *ksetrani* *gaccha-ti*
      city fields go-3SG
      'S/he goes from the city to the fields.'

   c. *aham* *na* *tam* *pasya-mi*
      I not him see-1SG
      'I don't see him.'

(from Coulson 1976)

Chapter 4

Old English

450–1150

As discussed in Chapter 1, the English language had its start around 449, when Germanic tribes came to England and settled there. Initially, the native Celtic inhabitants and newcomers presumably lived side-by-side and the Germanic speakers adopted some linguistic features from the original inhabitants. During this period, there is Latin influence as well, mainly through missionaries from Rome and Ireland. The existing evidence about the nature of Old English comes from a collection of texts from a variety of regions: some are preserved on stone and wood monuments, others in manuscript form.

The current chapter focusses on the characteristics of Old English. In Section 1, we examine some of the written sources in Old English, look at some special spelling symbols, and try to read the runic alphabet that was sometimes used. In Section 2, we consider (and listen to) the sounds of Old English. In Sections 3, 4, and 5, we discuss some Old English grammar. Its most salient feature is the system of endings on nouns and verbs, i.e. its synthetic nature. Old English vocabulary is very interesting and creative, as Section 6 shows. Dialects are discussed briefly in Section 7 and the chapter will conclude with several well-known Old English texts to be read and analyzed.

1. Sources and spelling

We can learn a great deal about Old English culture by reading Old English recipes, charms, riddles, descriptions of saints' lives, and epics such as *Beowulf*. Most remaining texts in Old English are religious, legal, medical, or literary in nature.

Old English texts are divided along geographic lines into Northumbrian, Mercian, West-Saxon, and Kentish, as we will discuss in Section 7; they can also be categorized in terms of whether they were written in early or late Old English and whether they are poetry or prose. Most evidence of older Old English comes from northern poetic texts such as the Northumbrian version of *Caedmon's Hymn* (Appendix B). Most evidence of later Old English comes from southern prose texts such as Alfred's *Orosius* (Appendix C) or the works of Ælfric. For some manuscripts – *Beowulf*, for example – a dialect and date of composition cannot be firmly established. These factors make it hard to compare dialect, genre, and age. A partial list of works in Old English is provided in Table 4.1.

The scribes who copied and illustrated the manuscripts worked mainly in monasteries. The manuscripts are often exquisite works of art.

Table 4.1 Some works in Old English

Beowulf. Mixed dialect Northumbrian/West Saxon; manuscript from c.1000 but based on earlier version.
Lindisfarne Gospels. Northumbrian interlinear gloss; c.950.
Rushworth Glosses. Interlinear gloss; c.970. Matthew is Mercian; Mark, Luke and John are Northumbrian.
The Junius Manuscript. Written between the 7th and 10th centuries (some argue partly by the Caedmon poet); compiled towards the late 10th; contains *Genesis, Exodus, Christ and Satan*.
The Exeter Book. Early poetry; contains *Riddles*, *Wulf and Eadwacer*, *The Wanderer*, and the *Seafarer*.
Gregory's Pastoral Care. Early West Saxon, late 9th century, ascribed to King Alfred.
Boethius and *Orosius*. Early West-Saxon, ascribed to King Alfred.
Homilies, by Aelfric. West Saxon, circa 1000.
Anglo-Saxon Chronicle. Many versions, one composed in Peterborough that continues to 1154.

These works were written on *vellum*, very expensive thin leather. Books were therefore owned by a monastery, a church, or a wealthy person and were typically versions of the Bible, prayer books, school books, manuals of various kinds, and music scores. **Facsimile editions**, such as the one in Figure 4.1, enable us to see what the text looked like (if we

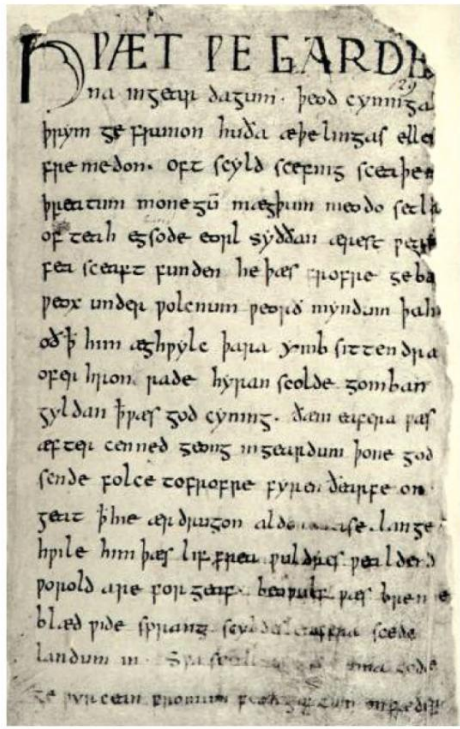

Figure 4.1 *Beowulf* facsimile, from Zupitza (1959)

can't get to museums or libraries where the originals are kept). There is a word-by-word gloss of Figure 4.1 at the end of Section 4. Try to read a little! Looking at facsimile editions or originals is important because these works are often modernized by editors when they appear in anthologies and scholarly editions.

Other Old English texts are available in transliterated form (i.e. not as facsimiles) at www.georgetown.edu/labyrinth/library/oe/oe.html. There are also corpora (with selections of texts) such as the Helsinki Corpus (or HC). The Dictionary of Old English project from the University of Toronto makes available (for a fee; www.doe.utoronto.ca) the 2,000 or so Old English texts we have left and contains three million Old English words. It is also available electronically at libraries that subscribe to the Dictionary of Old English Corpus.

Most Old English texts, especially manuscripts such as *Beowulf*, use a **modified Roman alphabet**. This alphabet was introduced by Irish missionaries and the letter shapes are not identical to those of Modern English. For instance, there is an *æ* (called *ash*), a runic letter *þ* (called *thorn*), and a *ð* (called *eth*). The last two are used interchangeably. Originally, a *w* was written as one *u* or two *u* symbols (hence the term *double u*), but it is also written using a runic *p* (and called *wynn* or *wen*). Capital letters are often absent as are most punctuation marks. Abbreviations are frequently used, e.g. *7* stands for *and* (see Appendix A) as does *&*, to save space and effort. As you can see in Figure 4.1, not much space is wasted. Try to find some of the special symbols in Figure 4.1 by using the summary in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2 Special symbols in Old English (– indicates no special name/sound)

spelling	name	sound	word
æ	ash	[æ]	*hwæt* 'what'
þ	thorn	[θ or ð]	*þat* 'that'
ð	eth	[θ or ð]	*ðat* 'that'
ȝ	yogh	mostly [j]	*maniȝ* 'many'
p	wynn or wen	[w]	*pe* 'we'
u(u)	–	[w]	*uuerc* 'work'
y	–	[y]	*syððan* 'since'
7 or &	–/ampersand	–	'and'

Both *hwæt* and *we* in the first line of Figure 4.1 contain wynns. An ash occurs in *hwæt* (line 1), a thorn in *þeod* (line 2), and an eth in *ða* (line 3). The *c* symbol in *cyninga* (line 2) represents the [k] sound, as it still does in certain Modern English words. The *ȝ* in *daȝum* (line 2) is more complex. It originates from an Irish letter called the *yogh* and normally represents a [j] but, before back vowels, it represents a voiced velar fricative ([ɣ]), a sound that Modern English lacks. This symbol can also be seen in lines 2 and 3. The *y* in *cyninga* (line 2) is a vowel represented in the phonetic alphabet as [y]; it probably sounded like the *u* in French or the *ü* in German, an [i] pronounced with rounded lips. Some texts put length markers on the vowels, but we will not do that.

In addition to manuscripts, Old English is preserved in carvings on wood and stone from the 7th century, as shown in Figure 4.2. These inscriptions use the **runic alphabet**. We will look at an example but will not actually use this alphabet in reading Old English texts. The runic alphabet, or futhorc, was in use through large areas of Europe and is probably an adaptation of the Etruscan or Phoenician alphabet (for an argument in favor of Phoenician, read Vennemann 2011). A key to the runes can be found in Figure 4.3 (see also www.omniglot.com/writing/runic.htm); you can see that the first six letters give you the word *futhorc*. Try to decipher the letters in Figure 4.2.

Figure 4.2 The Overchurch runes

Figure 4.3 Runic alphabet

Using the alphabet, we can see that the inscription in Figure 4.2 reads as in (1).

(1) *folcæarærdonbecbiddaþfoteæþelmun*

The words are not spelled separately, which makes them harder to read. Are there any modern English words you recognize in (1)? We will come back to this sentence in Section 3. For now, a word-for-word gloss and free translation are provided in (2).

(2) People reared beacon pray for Aethelmund
'People put up a sign and pray for Aethelmund'.

Next we turn to some linguistic characteristics of Old English – first sounds, then morphology and syntax. From this point on, we will use the modified alphabet, not the runes.

2. Old English sounds

In this section, we'll discuss four sound changes that take place in Old English: voicing and palatalization affect consonants; breaking and fronting (or umlaut) affect vowels. Many more processes affect vowels, but it is impossible to examine them all. We will also mention that the effects of the GVS have to be reversed in order to pronounce Old English more accurately. Alliteration, a poetic device that links sentences through the use of words starting with the same sound (probably to remember them better), will also be brought up.

When discussing the first line of *Caedmon's Hymn* in Chapter 1, repeated here as (3), we noticed that the *v* of *heaven* is written as an *f* in *hefaen*. How does it sound in the version you have available (at http://www.wwnorton.com/college/english/nael/noa/audio.htm)?

(3) Nu scylun hergan hefaenricaes uard

It sounds as a [v]. Remnants of this voicing phenomenon ([f] > [v]) can be seen in the spelling and pronunciation of *wife* [waif], *half, knife* [najf], *wulf,* and *leaf* with an *f* and [f] in word-final position but with a *v* and [v] in the plural – *wives, halves, knives, wulves,* and *leaves* – when it is in between two vowels. Be careful not to be deceived by the silent-e in the spelling! Final voiced fricatives, as in *(to) love* [lɔv], *to house* [hawz], and *to bath* [bejð], are the result of keeping the voiced sound even after the final vowel was deleted.

Old English only has *v, z* and *ð* in certain positions, mostly in between two vowels, but not at the beginning or end of a word. We won't go into the precise environments where voicing appeared but it is important to see the interplay between internal and external change. Old English had a more limited use of [v], [z], and [ð] but because of an influx of French words, the [v] sounds was introduced in more positions in the word. See Minkova (2011) for an account of what may have really happened.

If we look up the origin of words with an initial [z] or [v] in the OED, we see that most are loans. The loans from French or Latin are listed in (4), and the loans from Greek or other languages that start with a [z] in (5).

(4) very, veal, vase, virtue, voice, vote, vehement, village, vacant, vaccine, veil, vacuum, vain, value, vanish, variety, varnish, veer, venture, verb, vex, view, vile, villain, visible, vital, vocal, vulture, vulnerable

(5) zoo, zodiac, zebra, zephyr, zed, zeal, zenith, zinc, zombi, zone, zigzag, zinc

The influx of new words, which begins in the Old English period – with Latin used in the church and before that during the Roman occupation – is given a real boost after 1066, when many new words appear either from French or from Latin via French. Some of these only appear later, e.g. *zigzag* and *zinc* are introduced in 1651 and 1712 respectively.

The influx of new words is due to an external cause – contact with other languages. The loans have a profound influence on the sound system of English: several sounds are added to what we call the phoneme inventory, thus causing an internal change. Internal factors helped

stabilize the voiced fricative, e.g. the loss of a word-final vowel. Millward (1996: 147–8) discusses other factors contributing to this, such as the voicing of fricatives in some dialects.

A second sound change in Old English is **palatalization**, which occurs in many other languages as well. We have seen a few examples in Chapter 2, Table 2.4. Starting in early Old English, the velars spelled *sc, c*, and *g* and pronounced [sk], [k], and [g] are fronted to [ʃ], [ʧ], and [j] respectively, as shown in Table 4.3, in particular before a front vowel (The velar sounds are not fronted before back vowels, as in *cool*).

Table 4.3 Palatalization

OE			ModE					
spelling	**pronunciation**		**spelling**	**pronunciation**		**OE**		**ModE**
sc	[sk]	>	*sh*	[ʃ],	as in:	***sc**ip*	>	***sh**ip*
c	[k]	>	*tch*	[ʧ],	as in:	*di**c***	>	*di**tch***
g	[g]	>	*y*	[j],	as in:	***g**eolwe*	>	***y**ellow*

A few more examples involve Old English *skirt* becoming *shirt*, *disc* → *dish, shirt*, *skatter* → *shatter, kirk* → *church*, and *egg* → *eye*. *Skirt* and *egg* still exist in Modern English because other Germanic languages did not undergo palatalization and, when Scandinavian came into contact with English, English borrowed the non-palatalized versions. Some of these words come to co-exist (*disk* and *dish* and *skirt* and *shirt*) with different meanings, while in other cases one of the two forms 'wins', as we'll see in Chapter 5.

There are two other rules that will be pointed out whenever relevant – breaking and vowel fronting. They are complex and interact with numerous other rules. **Breaking** occurs when the front vowels *æ, e* and *i* become diphthongs, i.e. are broken into two sounds, before certain consonants, as in shown in Table 4.4, where the changes in spelling are indicated.

Table 4.4 Breaking

i	>	io/eo	before *l* or *r* and a C, as in *seolf* 'self'
e	>	eo	or
æ	>	ea	before *h*, as in *seah* 'he saw'

Examples of breaking are *æld* and *hælf* becoming *eald* and *healf*, *werc* becoming *weorc*, and *Picts* becoming *Peohtas*. This rule applies when the vowel is followed by an *l* or *r* and another consonant or when the vowel is followed by an *h* (Campbell 1959: 56). It is an assimilatory change in that the second half of the diphthong is a back vowel and the change occurs before consonants that are further back. Breaking is supposed to have taken place in Old English around the 7th century, especially in the South (in West Saxon), as you will see in version II of *Caedmon's Hymn* in Appendix B. Some other words that undergo breaking are *bearn* 'child', *heard* 'hard', *pealm* 'palm', *eahta* 'eight', and *meaht* 'might'. As you can see from the Modern English spelling, some of these words are now spelled the way they were before breaking occurred.

The **fronting** rule, also called *i-umlaut*, describes what happens when a back or low vowel such as *o* or *u* or *a* precedes an *i*. In Germanic, before English separates from the other Germanic languages, the form for singular *mouse* is *mus and plural *mice* is *musi. The fronting of *u* to *y* occurs in the plural, before the plural *-i*, resulting in *mysi (where y represents a rounded [i]).

Table 4.5 Fronting

u	>	y, later i	before [i]
o	>	e	before [i]
a	>	æ	before [i]

The *i*-ending (having caused the fronting) subsequently disappears and the cause of the fronting becomes hidden. The non-fronted and fronted forms thus now form singular and plural pairs in (6a) and intransitive and transitive pairs in (6b).

(6) a. mouse – mice, louse – lice, goose – geese, foot – feet, tooth – teeth
b. fall – fell, sit – set

A similar fronting and raising occurs in the pairs *man – men, stank – stench, long – length, doom – deem, whole – heal, food – feed*. Note that the current pronunciations of the words in (10a) are not established until after the Great Vowel Shift.

When pronouncing Old English, we need to remember that the **Great Vowel Shift has not taken place yet**. This means that vowels are not pronounced the way they are in Modern English but in a lower position. Thus, *name, meet, mine, book, now* are pronounced [namə], [met], [min], [bok], and [nu], respectively. As mentioned, the *g* or *ȝ* needs attention as well. In Old English, it is usually pronounced as [j], e.g. at the end of a word (*dæg*) and before a front vowel, but as a voiced fricative [ɣ] before back vowels. It is a sound English no longer has. The *h* in words such as *niht, leoht, cniht*, 'night, light and knight' respectively, is represented phonetically as [χ], a voiceless velar fricative. The sound is still present in Modern English in the final sound of *loch*.

Listen now to all of *Caedmon's Hymn* at http://www.wwnorton.com/college/english/nael/noa/audio.htm. There are a number of versions of this text (see Appendix B); notice if the one in (7) corresponds to the one read.

(7) ***Caedmon's Hymn*** **– Northumbrian**
Nu scylun hergan hefaenricaes uard
metudæs maecti end his modgidanc
uerc uuldurfadur sue he uundra gehuaes 3
eci dryctin or astelidæ
he aerist scop aelda barnum
heben til hrofe haleg scepen 6
tha middungeard moncynnes uard
eci dryctin æfter tiadæ
firum foldu frea allmectig 9

Think about some of the issues we have discussed: how are the vowels in *hrofe, he, frea,* and *firum foldu* pronounced? Are there words you know: *fadur, hrofe, haleg, moncynnes* and *allmectig*? Could *barnum* be *bearnum*? What can you say about the spelling of *uerc* and *uundra*? Don't worry about the meaning of the entire Hymn yet; it is provided in Appendix B, and we will go over it at the end of the chapter a little. For more on the pronunciation of Old English, see www.ucalgary.ca/UofC/eduweb/engl401/lessons/pronunc1.htm.

A final point about sounds is **alliteration**, involving word-initial consonants that are similar. This is mainly relevant to poetic texts. The Old English rules are relatively simple, unlike those of Middle English. In (7), a line such as *metudæs maecti end his modgidanc* is representative. It consists of two halves; the first half can have two alliterating consonants, but the second half line typically only has its first stressed syllable alliterating with the consonants in the first (the [m] is the alliterating sound). A very similar pattern occurs in another line of (7) *uerc uuldurfadur sue he uundra gehuaes*. What sound alliterates?

The Old English consonants and vowels are provided in Table 4.6 and Figure 4.4 (the four diphthongs are not listed). Note that sounds such as [v, z, ð] only occur in restricted positions. The velar nasal [ŋ] is also the result of assimilation and occurs only before a [k] and [g] in words like *singan* [siŋgan] 'to sing'. The [χ] and [ɣ] represent voiceless and voiced velar fricatices that Modern English has lost and are spelled in Old English with an *h*, e.g. *seah* 'saw' and later as *gh*, e.g. *taught* (and there is even a palatal variant of this fricative in words with front vowels, such as *miht* 'might'). Compare these sounds with those of Modern English using Table 2.3 and Figure 2.3.

i	y	u
e		o
æ		ɑ

Figure 4.4 Old English vowels (all can be long or short, adapted from Minkova 2005a)

This section discussed four sound changes in Old English: voicing, palatalization, breaking, and fronting. It also provided some information on the pronunciation of Old English and the inventory of sounds.

Table 4.6 Old English consonants

Manner: / Place:	stop	fricative	affricate	nasal	liquid	glide
labial	p/b	f/v		m		w
dental		θ/ð				
alveolar	t/d	s/z		n	l, r	
alveo-palatal		ʃ	ʧ/ʤ			j
velar		k/g	χ /ɣ		ŋ	
glottal		h				

3. Old English grammar

Excellent resources on Old English grammar are Campbell (1959), Quirk & Wrenn (1958), and Traugott (1992), and also http://www.wmich.edu/medieval/resources/IOE/index.html. The emphasis in this chapter will be on showing that Old English is a synthetic language, using a lot of word endings or inflections to indicate grammatical functions. Section 4 discusses the endings on Old English words – the morphology – and Section 5 touches upon a few points on how to build Old English sentences – the syntax. Chapter 2 provided the basic information about the nominative, genitive, dative, and accusative cases and we'll now use that knowledge.

Section 4 provides lists of pronouns, demonstratives, some verbs, some nouns, and adjectives. It is not necessary to memorize these; being able to recognize a few will suffice. For example, the *-as* ending is a plural on some masculine nouns (nominative and accusative) and becomes the Modern English plural *-s*. The *-e* ending is a dative singular, *-um* the dative plural. Present tense verbs have a second person singular *-st* ending, and a third person *-th* ending, the infinitive ends in *-an*, and the past plural is often *-(d)on*.

With this knowledge, let's look at a simple sentence, adapted from the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* (PC) from 874. Which words do you recognize?

(8) *he ælfrede cyninge aðas swor & gislas sealde*
'He swore oaths to King Alfred and gave hostages'.

First, notice the *-e* and *-as* endings. The *-e* ending is used for dative case (for which we now use the preposition *to*) on both *ælfrede* 'Alfred' and *cyninge* 'king'. It means something was given **to** King Alfred. The *-as* ending shows that *aðas* 'oaths' and *gislas* 'hostages' are plural (accusative actually). *Sealde* 'give' is broader in Old English than in Modern English where *sell* means 'give in exchange for money'.

Modern English has lost the endings but gained words such as *to*. *To* exists in Old English with a very specific locational meaning, but later becomes an indirect object marker, as in *I gave it* ***to*** *Marta*. This process is called **grammaticalization** since the lexical meaning gradually disappears and the grammatical meaning prevails. In Old English, the verb is often at the end of the sentence, as in (8), whereas in Modern English it is in the middle, separating the subject and the object.

Equipped with this information, let's examine the runic transcription we discussed earlier, repeated here as (9).

(9) folcæarærdonbecbiddaþfoteæþelmun

A couple of endings that stand out: *-don* and *-aþ*, the former being the plural past tense and the latter the plural present tense. If we separate the words, you might find some words you recognize:

(10) folcæ arærdon bec biddaþ fote æþelmun

Folc corresponds to *people*, as mentioned earlier. Some other words can be guessed: *arærdon* matches Modern English *reared*; *bec* is similar to *beacon*, and *biddaþ* is similar to *bid*. The remaining words, *fote* and *æþelmun,* are trickier. *Æþelmun* is a name and there is probably a 'typo' in *fote* and it may be *fore* 'for' instead.

Comparing the endings and number of words between Old and Modern English, we see that the main change between the two stages is that of a language with free word order and many endings but no 'small' words such as *the* or *to* becoming a language with strict word order, few endings and many 'small' words. This change, involving the **grammaticalization of prepositions,** i.e. the loss of lexical meaning and the increase of grammatical significance, to replace case endings, is formulated in (11).

(11) **Synthetic** > **Analytic**
Case/Inflections > Word Order/Prepositions/Auxiliaries/Articles

We will discuss the actual syntax of Old English in Section 5; first, we examine endings in more detail.

4. Old English morphology

This section will provide some paradigms for Old English. A **paradigm** is a list of forms, e.g. a list of all the cases of a pronoun. Use these paradigms as a reference; focus only on the most obvious parts!

The paradigm for **pronouns** is given in Table 4.7. Individual texts vary a great deal in orthography. For instance, *hiene*, *hine*, *hyne* are masculine singular accusatives, and *hie*, *hi*, and *heo* are third person plural nominative and accusative pronouns. The OED lists at least 13 forms of the third person singular masculine pronoun. There is also a rare dual number (used for two people), of which we will only see an example in Appendix E. Since the instrumental case is almost extinct in Old English, that form is left out. Note that *þ* and *ð* can be used interchangeably as the first consonant of second person pronouns (even though only *þ* is used in Table 4.7) as well as of demonstratives (Table 4.8) and verbal endings (Tables 4.13 and 4.14).

Instances of some pronouns in *Beowulf* are given in (12) through (15). In (12), *ðec* is an accusative because it is the object of *oferswyðan* 'overpower'. Incidentally, notice that the object precedes the verb. Tables 4.13 and 4.14 show that the third person ending on verbs is *-(e)ð* or *-(e)þ*; this ending in (12) shows that third person *deaþ* 'death' is the subject, not second person *ðec* 'you' (*ðec* would also be unlikely since it has accusative case).

(12) *þæt* ***ðec*** *dryhtguma deaþ oferswiþ-**eþ***
that 2SG.ACC mighty.ruler death overpower-3SG
'that death overpowers you, mighty ruler' (*Beowulf* 1768)

Table 4.7 Old English pronouns

		Singular	Dual	Plural
First	NOM	ic	wit	we
	GEN	min	uncer	ure
	DAT	me	unc	us
	ACC	me/mec	unc(et)	us/usic
Second	NOM	þu	git	ge
	GEN	þin	incer	eower
	DAT	þe	inc	eow
	ACC	þe/þec	inc(it)	eow/eowic
Third	NOM	he/heo/hit	–	hi/hie
(M/F/N)	GEN	his/hire/his	–	hira/hiera
	DAT	him/hire/him	–	him
	ACC	hine/hi(e)/hit	–	hi/hie

In (13), there are three instances of the first person singular nominative *ic*. There is also a plural second person nominative *ge*, which stays around at least until 1600 as *yee* or *ye*.

(13) ***Ic*** *eom Hroðgar-es ar ond ombiht*
I am Hrothgar-GEN messenger and officer
Ne seah ***ic*** *elþeodige þus manige men midiglicran*
Never saw I foreign.warriors so many men more.courageous
Wen ***ic*** *þæt* ***ge*** *… Hroðgar soht-on*
hope I that you … Hrothgar seek-PST (*Beowulf* 335–8)

Also observe the verbs in (13): *eom* is similar to Modern English *am,* and *seah* to *saw; sohton* has the plural past ending *-on*, and you can see how it becomes Modern English *sought* by losing this ending and by the *h* becoming silent. Note that Modern English spelling keeps the *h* even though it is no longer pronounced.

The word *ombiht* in the first line of (13) is possibly a loan into Early Germanic from Latin or Celtic, and is later (in the 15th century) reborrowed as *ambassador*. The word *ombudsman* may be a cognate in Swedish, borrowed into Modern English from Swedish in the 20th century. Other words and endings you might recognize are the genitive *-es* on *Hrothgar* and the words for *thus, many, and, that* and *men*. These words stayed in the language and were never replaced by loans. Modern translations of (13) are provided in (14a), (14b), and (14c).

(14) a. 'I am Hrothgar's herald and officer. I have never seen so impressive or large an assembly of strangers. […] must have brought you to Hrothgar'.
(Heaney 2000)

(14) b. 'I am Hrothgar's counselor and friend. How far have you traveled crossed the wave-rolls to come to this door? My wits tell me you are welcome callers'.
(Rebsamen 1991)

c. 'I am Hrothgar's herald and officer. I have not seen strangers – so many men – more bold. I think that it is for […] that you have sought Hrothgar'.
(Donaldson 1966)

You can see a great deal of variation between the different translations. Not only are *herald and officer* in (14a) and (14c) rendered as *counselor and friend* in (14b), (13) as a whole is almost unrecognizable in (14b). However, (14b) has poetic terms such as *waverolls* and alliterating sounds such as *wits* and *welcome* that the other two versions lack.

The nominative feminine pronoun *hio* 'she' is present in (15). *Hio* is an (early) variant of *heo* (but again the OED lists many spelling variants). This sentence also shows that *Beowulf* has an *-e* ending, i.e. dative case, indicating that Beowulf is the one **to** whom the meadcup was brought.

(15) *þæt* ***hio*** *Beowulf-**e** …| … medoful ætbær*
that she Beowulf-DAT … meadcup at.bore
'that she brought Beowulf the meadcup.' (*Beowulf* 623–4)

Like Modern English, Old English third person pronouns show masculine, feminine, and neuter gender. Unlike Modern English, Old English also marks grammatical gender on demonstratives, adjectives, and nouns. The grammatical gender of the noun determines the gender of the demonstrative and the adjective. Thus, the masculine forms of the demonstrative and adjective are used before masculine nouns such as *cyning* 'king'; the feminine forms are used before feminine nouns such as *lufu* 'love'; and the neuter forms are used before neuter nouns such as *godspel* 'gospel'. The grammatical gender need not correspond to the natural gender of a noun: *wif* 'woman' and *cild* 'child' are neuter.

Reflexive pronouns, such as *myself* and *himself*, do not occur in Old English, except in later texts. Instead, the regular pronoun is used, such as *me* in (16).

(16) *Ic on earde bad |… ne **me** swor fela*
I on earth bided … not me swore wrong
'I was around on earth … I never perjured myself' (*Beowulf* 2736–8)

In Old English, the adjective *self* is typically used as an emphatic, as in (17), not as a reflexive.

(17) *æþele cempa **self** mid gesið-um*
noble fighter self with follower-DAT.PL
'The noble fighter himself with his followers' (*Beowulf* 1312–3)

Table 4.9 Some Old English strong noun endings

	stan (M) 'stone'	word (N) 'word'	lufu (F) 'love'	sunu (M) 'son'
Singular				
NOM	stan	word	lufu	sunu
GEN	stanes	wordes	lufe	suna
DAT	stane	worde	lufe	suna
ACC	stan	word	lufe	sunu
Plural				
NOM	stanas	word	lufa	suna
GEN	stana	worda	luf(en)a	suna
DAT	stanum	wordum	lufum	sunum
ACC	stanas	word	lufa	suna

The endings of this class of nouns, called the vowel stems or strong nouns, differ from another class that also comes to English from Indo-European, namely the consonantal stems or weak nouns. Weak nouns can be masculine, feminine, and (less often) neuter. I have provided the masculine and feminine forms in Table 4.10; their characteristic *-an* ending is shared, but note the *-um* for the dative plural.

Table 4.10 Some Old English weak noun endings

	guma (M) 'man'	folde (F) 'earth'
Singular		
NOM	guma	folde
GEN	guman	foldan
DAT	guman	foldan
ACC	guman	foldan
Plural		
NOM	guman	foldan
GEN	gumena	foldena
DAT	gumum	foldum
ACC	guman	foldan

Try to create a few paradigms, using the words in Table 4.11. For instance, take *folc* and notice that its endings will be like those of *word*. The singular will therefore be *folc, folces, folce, folc* and the plural *folc, folca, folcum, folc*. You could even add the demonstrative taken from Table 4.8. They are not sensitive to word classes, just to gender, case, and number.

The plural ending of *stanas* later becomes the general English plural *-(e)s*, and the Old English genitive *-es* becomes the possessive in *the dog's bone*. *Word* has the same endings as *stan*, except in the nominative and accusative plural. We can still see the result of this lack of an ending in the plural of *deer* and *sheep* – *deer* and *sheep*. Note that even though

Table 4.11 Old English noun classes

Like *stan*:	*aþ* 'oath', *coss* 'kiss', *cyning* 'king', *dom* 'judgement', *hlaf* 'loaf', *hund* 'dog', *þeof* 'thief', *weall* 'wall', *weg* 'way', and *wer* 'man'
Like *word*:	*bearn* 'child', *deor* 'animal', *folc* 'people', *gear* 'year', *land* 'land', *sceap* 'sheep', *sweord* 'sword', *weorc* 'work', and *wif* 'woman'
Like *lufu*:	*faru* 'journey', *giefu* 'gift', *racu* 'narrative', *sceadu* 'shade', and *scolu* 'troop'
Like *sunu*:	*lagu* 'lake', *medu* 'mead', and *wudu* 'wood'
Like *guma*:	*eafora* 'son', *mona* 'moon', *naca* 'boat', *nama* 'name', and *wita* 'prophet'
Like *folde*:	*hruse* 'earth', *sunne* 'sun', and *hacele* 'cloak'

lufu 'love' is feminine and *sunu* 'son' is masculine (and of a different class), they are very similar in endings.

Remember that the natural gender need not correspond to the grammatical gender or noun class. Thus, *wif* 'woman' is neuter in grammatical but not natural gender. To see other noun classes, consult an Old English Grammar (e.g. by Quirk & Wrenn 1958); look up the gender of the noun in a dictionary, such as the one by Clark-Hall 1894 [1960] or the more extensive Bosworth & Toller (on the web at: beowulf.engl.uky.edu/~kiernan/BT/Bosworth-Toller.htm).

The ending of the **adjective** is very intricate in Old English. As in other Germanic languages, such as German, Dutch, and Swedish, its form depends on whether a demonstrative is present. This is different in the other Indo-European languages. If no demonstrative precedes the adjective in Germanic, the adjective gets a more distinctive (strong) ending to 'make up' for this lack; if the adjective is preceded by a demonstrative, it gets a less varied (weak) ending. The strong and weak endings are also referred to as indefinite and definite in some Old English grammars. Both strong and weak endings are listed in Table 4.12. Notice the similarities in the plural endings, even in the strong ones.

Table 4.12 The forms of the adjective 'good' in Old English

	Strong			Weak		
Singular	**M**	**F**	**N**	**M**	**F**	**N**
NOM	god	god	god	goda	gode	gode
GEN	godes	godre	godes	godan	godan	godan
DAT	godum	godre	godum	godan	godan	godan
ACC	godne	gode	god	godan	godan	gode
Plural	**M**	**F**	**M**	**All**		
NOM	gode	goda	god	godan		
GEN	godra	godra	godra	godra/godena		
DAT	godum	godum	godum	godum		
ACC	gode	goda	god	godan		

Thus, *þæm godan cyninge* and *godum cyninge*, meaning 'to the good king', can both be used as datives. (*Cyning* gets the same endings as *stan*).

Adjectives are used in comparative and superlative constructions. In Old English, the pattern for *hard* and *narrow* is *heard, heardra, heardost* and *nearu, nearora, nearwost* respectively. These are inflected forms, typical of a synthetic language. The analytic forms with *more* and *most* are rare in Old English. Some adjectives use suppletive forms, like in Modern English: *good* and *yfel* 'evil' have *god, betra, betst* and *yfel, wyrsa, wyrst* (*bad* appears only in Middle English).

Adverbs tell us about the place, time, reason, and manner of an action; they modify the verb. They can also be used to modify the sentence. Adverbs in Modern English are mostly formed by adding an *-ly* ending to an adjective. This is not the case in Old English where they are formed by several different endings: *-e* as in (22) and *-lice* (which later becomes *-ly*).

(22) *heofodwoþe* ***hlud-e*** *cirme*
voice loud-ADV cry.out
'I cry out loudly with my voice.' (from Riddle 8, line 3, see Appendix D)

The **endings on verbs** depend on the tense (past and present), the person and number (of the subject), and the mood (imperative and subjunctive). They are divided into **strong and weak**, but these terms are used differently than when describing adjectives. Strong verbs change their stem vowels in the past tense and the past participle. There are still quite a number of strong verbs in Modern English: *sing, sang, sung*; *drive, drove, driven;* etc. Weak verbs get a regular *-ed* inflection: *talk, talked, talked* and *plant, planted, planted*. The strong verbs are listed in Table 4.13. Focus on the present and past tense, not on the subjunctive and imperative moods, used for wishes and commands, respectively.

Table 4.13 An Old English strong verb

	Indicative		**Subjunctive**		**Imperative**
Present	ic	drife	Present	ic drife	
	þu	drifest		þu drife	drif
	he/o	drif(e)ð		he/o drife	
	we/ge/hi	drifað		we/ge/hi drifen	drifað
Past	ic	draf	Past	ic drife	
	þu	drife		þu drife	
	he/o	draf		he/o drife	
	we/ge/hi	drifon		we/ge/hi drifen	
Past Participle	(ge)drifen				

The stem vowels in the present are long, but short in most of the past forms. This is not indicated in the paradigms. However, we can see the evidence for this in the contemporary pronunciation of *drive* [draiv] and *driven* [drɪvən] since the long [ij] shifted to [aj] in *drive* during the Great Vowel Shift but the short [ɪ] remained [ɪ] in *driven*.

The present and past paradigms for two weak verbs are provided in Table 4.14 (for the indicative mood). The future was typically expressed by the present. The subjunctive and imperative moods are only provided for *fremman* 'do'; those of *herian* 'praise' are very similar. Notice the *-d-* in the past tense, a precursor to Modern English *-ed*.

Table 4.14 Old English weak verbs

	Indicative		Subjunctive	Imperative
Present	Ic fremme 'do'	ic herie 'praise'	ic fremme	
	Þu frem(e)st	þu herest	þu fremme	freme
	he/heo/hit frem(e)þ	he/heo/hit hereþ	he/heo/hit fremme	
	we/ge/hi fremmaþ	we/ge/hi heriaþ	we/ge/hi fremmen	fremmaþ
Past	ic fremede		ic fremede	
	Þu fremedest		þu fremede	
	he/heo/hit fremede		he/heo/hit fremede	
	we/ge/hi fremedon		we/ge/hi fremeden	
Past Participle	(ge)fremed and (ge)hered			

Examples of verbal endings were given in (10), (12), and (19), repeated here as (23), (24), and (25), respectively. Notice that the third person present tense endings can have either *(e)ð* or *(e)þ*.

(23) *folcæ arær**don** bec bidd**aþ** fote æþelmun*

(24) *þæt ðec dryhtguma deaþ oferswiþ**eþ***

(25) *hu ða æþelingas ellen freme**don***

The *-don* endings in (23) and (25) represent past plural, *-aþ* in (23) present plural, and *-eþ* in (24) present singular third person. As you can see, the weak and strong verbs only differ in the past and subjunctive.

Since the **subjunctive** ending is no longer common in Modern English, it might be good to look at an example in Old English.

(26) *Ic wille … þæt þu forgyt-**e** þæt ic þe nu secge*
I want that 2SG forget-SUBJ that I 2SG now say
'I want you to forget what I am telling you now.'
(*Byrhtferth's Manual* 154.14, from Visser 1966: 841)

Verbs such as *willan* 'to want' in (26) express a wish, an unreal situation, and therefore need to be followed by a verb in the subjunctive. The verb *forgitan* 'forget' in (26) would have had an *-st* ending in the indicative since its subject is second person singular *þu*. Because it is subjunctive, however, it has a simpler ending. In Middle English, the subjunctive is generally replaced by modal auxiliaries, such as *should*, or by an infinitival form (e.g. *I want you **to go***). Like modal auxiliaries, infinitives express unrealized action and are analytic ways of expressing what the subjunctive does in a synthetic manner.

There are also some **irregular verbs** that survive into Modern English such as *to be*, for which the Old English paradigm is given in Table 4.15 (see also Quirk & Wrenn 1958: 54–5; Campbell 1959: 350 for the distinction between *eom* and *beo* in the present tense).

Table 4.15 The forms of the verb *beon* 'to be'

	Indicative		**Subjunctive**			**Imperative**
Present	ic	eom/beo	Present	ic	sie/beo	
	þu	eart/bist		þu	sie/beo	wes/beo
	he/o	is/biþ		he/o	sie/beo	
	we/ge/hi	sind(on)/beoþ	Plural		sien/beon	wesaþ/beoþ
Past	ic	wæs	Past SG		wære	
	þu	wære				
	he/o	wæs				
	we/ge/hi	wæron	Past PL		wæren	
Future	ic	beo				
	þu	bist				
	he/o	biþ				
	we/ge/hi	beoþ				
Participles	wesende/beonde/gebeon					

Verbs like *to be* show **suppletion**; their forms are unrelated to each other in sound and are hence irregular. Even in Modern English, there are completely different forms in the paradigm: *be, is, am,* and *was*. Gamkrelidze & Ivanov (1994), among other Indo-Europeanists, relate this to paradigm mixing at an early stage in Indo-European. There are many other cases. For instance, you might wonder how *go* and *went* are related. They are not, but somehow *went,* meaning 'go and return', crept into the *go*-paradigm and is now the past (suppletive) form.

Auxiliaries are not frequent in Old English. Modern English modal auxiliaries such as *can, could, will*, and *would* are regular verbs in Old English; see *wille* 'want' in (26). The same is true of *have* and *be*; they mostly function as main verbs in Old English. Between Old and Modern English, these verbs grammaticalize, i.e. they lose their meaning but gain grammatical function. Infinitives in Old English have an ending and an optional *to*, very closely connected to the infinitival verb. Hence, split infinitives never occur. They start occurring when the infinitival *to* becomes an analytic marker of non-finiteness, in the late 14th century.

We have already examined many sentences from *Beowulf*. Let's now look at the first page more carefully (see also Figure 4.1). In (27), a word-for-word and a somewhat literal translation are provided. Line breaks – indicated by | – are placed where they are usually assumed to have been in Old English. Try to identify as many endings (a few are given in the gloss) and as many words as you can. A few endings are indicated in bold.

(28) *Him þæs liffrea wuldres wealdend woroldare forgeaf*
Him that lord world lord world.honor gave
'The lord of life, the ruler of the world, gave him worldly honor for that.'

The word order is never totally free and adheres to some rules. Usually pronouns occur near the beginning of the sentence, as in (28) and (12), repeated as (29), for instance.

(29) *þæt* ***ðec*** *dryhtguma deaþ oferswiþeþ.*

The verb often occurs at the end, as in (28) and (29), especially in subordinate or embedded sentences. The verb can also occur in second position, as in (30). This occurs mostly in main clauses.

(30) *7 þy ilcan geare* ***for*** *se here ofer sæ*
and that same year went that army over sea
'And in the same year the army went over the sea' (Chronicle A, for the year 880)

The way to calculate what is called **verb-second** is to ignore the initial 'and', and not to count actual words but the constituents or phrases. In (30), *þy ilcan geare* 'in the same year' forms a unit and is therefore counted as one position. Once one takes that into account, the verb *for* is in second position. Old English is, in this respect very similar to German and Dutch.

There are two kinds of questions: *yes/no* and *wh*-questions. Respective examples are given in (31) with the verb first and in (32) with the verb following the question-word *hwæt*.

(31) ***gehyrest*** *þu eadwacer*
hear you Eadwacer
'Do you hear, Eadwacer?' (from *Wulf and Eadwacer*)

(32) *hwæt* ***gehyrest*** *þu*
what hear you
'What do you hear?' (made up example)

Subject pronouns are somewhat more optional in Old than in Modern English. Examples of subject-less sentence are provided in (33) and (34), and in the first line of Caedmon's Hymn in (7) above.

(33) *þeah ðe hord welan heolde lange*
though that treasure held long
'though **he** held the treasure long.' (*Beowulf* 2344)

(34) *þæt syðþan na ymb brotne ford brimliðende lade ne letton*
so.that since.then never near broad water seafarers passage not let
'that **they** afterwards never kept people from passing that water.' (*Beowulf* 567–9)

Pleonastic (or dummy or grammatical) subjects, such as *there* and *it,* are frequent in Modern English but do not occur in Old English. There is also a construction that is called impersonal since there need not be a nominative subject. This is shown in (35).

(35) *Hu lomp eow on lade, leofa Biowulf*
how happened you.DAT.PL on trip, dear Beowulf
'How was your trip, dear Beowulf'? (*Beowulf* 1987)

As you can see from (31) and (32), the auxiliary verb *do* is not used in questions (or with negation). The auxiliaries *be* and *have* occur but are infrequent. (36) provides an example where Modern English would have and auxiliary *have* (note also the lack of the preposition *of*).

(36) *we … þrym gefrunon*
we … glory heard
'We have heard of the glory.' (*Beowulf* 1–3)

Past action is indicated through affixes, such as the *-on* suffix for the past plural, and also through the (aspectual) prefix *ge-*, as in (36). This *ge-* prefix still occurs in languages such as Dutch and German, but disappears gradually throughout the Middle English period (going from *ge-* to *i/y* to nothing).

So far, we have looked at characteristics of Old English that are typical of synthetic languages, namely the relatively free word order and the absence of certain pronouns and auxiliaries. Now, we'll examine a few other features.

Sentences can be connected in a number of ways. Old English often uses no connection or coordination with *and*, indicated in the manuscript by the symbol *7*, as in (37). Modern English might use subordination in such sentences instead: 'when he was killed, B took the throne'.

(37) ***Anglo Saxon Chronicle (A-version), anno 755***
7 þy ilcan geare mon ofslog Æþelbald Miercna cyning
and that same year man killed Æþelbald Mercian king
on Seccandune 7 his lic liþ on Hreapadune
at Seckington and his body lies in Repton
7 Beornræd feng to rice 7 …
and Beornræd ascended to throne and …
'And the same year when Æþelbald, the Mercian king, was killed at Seckington, with his body buried in Repton, Beornræd took the throne; and …'
(from Thorpe's 1861 edition)

If you read the entry of the *Chronicle* provided in Appendix A, you will notice the frequent use of *and*. Another way to connect sentences is through relative clauses, as in (20), or as in the rather complex (38).

(38) **Alfred *Pastoral Care* – West Saxon**
Hwa is nu ðære ðe gesceadwis sie
Who is now there that wise is
& to ðæm gleaw sie ðæt he swelces hwæt tocnawan cunne
and to that wise is that he such what distinguish can
ðætte nyte ðætte on gimma gecynde
that not.know that in gems family
carbunculus bið dio[r]ra ðonne iacinctus?
carbuncular is more-costly than iacinctus?
'For who is there, who is wise and experienced enough to distinguish such things, who does not know that in the class of gems the carbuncle is more precious than the jacinth.' (*Pastoral Care* 411.25–8, from Sweet's 1871 edition)

Adverbs in Old English, as in present-day English, can be used to express the mood of the speaker and are then considered discourse markers. Examples of such discourse markers, also known as mood particles, are provided in (39).

(39) ***Swa eac nu*** *mæg ealc mon deofel ofercumen*
so also now may every man devil overcome
'This way everyone can overcome the devil.' (*Bodley Homilies*, p. 98)

These are often hard to translate into Modern English since some are replaced by forms such as *well, however*, and *fortunately* placed at the beginning or the end of the sentence (and receive 'comma intonation').

A last point about Old English grammar is that the **negative adverb** often immediately precedes the verb, as in (40), and is sometimes weakened to a prefix. As a result of the weakening, multiple negatives start to occur, as in (41), from King Alfred's *Pastoral Care*. Note that the renewing words *nan wuht* mean 'no creature/thing' and grammaticalize to *not* in later periods.

(40) *hleoþre* ***ne*** *miþe*
sound not conceal
'I don't conceal sound.' (Riddle 8, line 4, see Appendix D)

(41) *forþæmþe hie hiora* ***nan wuht*** *ongietan* ***ne*** *meahton*
because they their no thing understand not could
'because they couldn't understand anything of them.'
(Pastoral Care, 4/12 Cotton)

Modern varieties abound with such multiple negatives, as we'll see in a later chapter.

Let's look at another text keeping the morphology and syntax in mind. In the exercises to Chapter 2, we looked at the beginning of this text, Alfred's version of *Orosius*. This beginning is repeated as (42) where only the word-by-word gloss is provided but no information on the endings.

(42) **Alfred *Orosius* – West Saxon**

Ohtere sæde his hlaforde Ælfrede cyninge þæt he
Ohtere said his lord Alfred king that he
ealra Norðmonna norþmest bude. He cwæð þæt he bude 2
all northmen northmost lived he said that he lived
on þæm lande norþweardum wiþ þa Westsæ He sæde
in that land northward along that Westsea he said
þeah þæt land sie swiþe lang norþ þonan ac hit is 4
though that land is so long north thence but it is
eal weste buton on feawum stowum styccemælum wiciað
all waste except on few places here-and-there live
Finnas on huntoðe on wintra and on sumera 6
Finns (Sami) on hunting in winter and in summer
on fiscaþe be þare sæ.
on fishing by that sea (from Bately's 1980 edition)

As for the morphology, you may remember the *-e* ending on *hlaforde* (and on *Ælfrede cyninge*) as a dative. In Modern English, we would use the preposition *to* instead. There are a few other recognizable datives, e.g. *þæm lande* and *feawum stowum styccemælum*. The *-as* on *Finnas* in line 4 is a nominative plural. As to verbal endings, there are a few past tense verbs such as *sæde* and a present tense plural *wiciað*. There are also some subjunctive forms, e.g. *sie* in line 3 (see Table 4.15).

As to the syntax, in the first sentence, the verb *sæde* is in second position, and *bude* is in final position. This fits with *sæde* being the verb of the main clause and *bude* the verb in the embedded clause. Look where the verbs are in the other sentences! It is interesting that so many pronouns are present and demonstratives such as *þæt*.

We will continue with the next part of the same text.

(43) **Alfred continued**

He sæde þæt he æt sumum cirre wolde fandian
he said that he at some turn wanted explore
hu longe þæt land norþryhte læge oþþe hwæðer ænig 2
how long that land north lay or whether any
mon be norðan þæm westenne bude. þa for he
man to north that waste lived then went he
norþryhte be þæm lande let him ealne weg þæt 4
north by that land [he] kept himself all way that
weste land on ðæt steorbord ond þæ widsæ on ðæt
waste land on that starboard and that wide-sea on that
bæcbord þrie dagas.
port three days.

In (43), there is a possible subject left out in the third line: *let him ealne…* 'he kept himself all…'. The word order has most main clause verbs in second position, *sæde* 'said' and *for* 'went', but *wolde, læge,* and *bude* appear at the end of the clause since these clauses are subordinate.

The third part of the excerpt is given in (44).

(44) **Alfred continued**

Þa	*was*	*he*	*swa*	*feor*	*norþ*	*swa*	*þa*	*hwælhuntan*	*firrest*	
Then	was	he	as	far	north	as	those	whale-hunters	most-far	
faraþ.	*Þa*	*for*		*he*	*þagiet*	*norþryhte*	*swa*	*feor*	*swa*	2
go.	Then	travelled		he	then-yet	north	as	far	as	
he	*meahte*	*on*	*þæm*	*oþrum*	*þrim*	*dagas*	*gesiglan.*			
he	could	in	those	next	three	days	sail.			
Þa	*beag*	*þæt*	*land*	*þær*	*eastryhte*	*oþþe*	*seo*	*sæ*	*in*	4
then	bent	that	land	there	eastwards	or	that	sea	in	
on	*þæt*	*lond*	*he*	*nysse*	*hwæðer*	*buton*	*he*	*wisse*	*ðæt*	
on	that	land	he	not.knew	which	but	he	knew	that	
he	*ðær*	*bad*	*westan*	*windes.*						6
he	there	waited	west	wind.						

In (44), there is some interesting and by now familiar morphology, e.g. *firrest*, the superlative form of the adjective, and *faraþ*, the third person present ending, and *nysse*, a contraction of *ne* and *wisse*. As to the syntax, the lines show a lot of demonstratives and pronouns. The last line has an indefinite article missing, compared to Modern English. The sentences are not very embedded, *þa* is used frequently, and the finite verb mostly appears in second position, e.g. *was*, *for*, *meahte*, *nysse*, and *wisse*.

Table 4.16 provides a summary of the morphological and syntactic features of Old English. Except for (k) and (l), all the features characterize a synthetic language.

Table 4.16 Characteristics of Old English

Morphology:	
a.	An elaborate pronominal system as a result of case, see Table 4.8
b.	No real articles, only demonstratives, see Table 4.9
c.	Nouns have endings depending on whether they are subjects or objects, see Table 4.10, and they can be masculine, feminine, or neuter in gender
d.	Adjectives agree with the nouns they modify in case, number, and gender, and are either weak or strong, see Table 4.12
e.	Verbs are marked for person and number of the subject
f.	Verbs are weak or strong, see Tables 4.13 and 4.14
g.	Adverbs with *-e* or *-lic* endings
Syntax:	
h.	Relatively free word order but often OV and V2
i.	Omission of subject pronoun, prepositions, and articles
j.	Limited use of auxiliaries: *He ær com* 'He had come before'
k.	Frequent use of coordination
l.	Negation before the verb: *Ic ne dyde* 'I did not'; or multiple words, as in (42)

'blessed' to 'silly'. However, a word does not really change for the better or worse. Instead, we might say a word has **shifted** in meaning. Other examples are *toilet* (older meaning is 'cloth'), *clown* 'rural person', *to botch* (older meaning is 'to repair'), *knight* (older meaning is 'servant'), *lewd* (older meaning is 'non religious order'), and *default* (older meaning is 'failure to pay'). Williams (1975) and Stockwell & Minkova (2001: 149–162) provide many more examples. The speakers' need to create euphemisms for matters they do not enjoy discussing often results in a shift of meaning. The four semantic changes are summarized in Table 4.18.

Table 4.18 Semantic change involving lexical items

	OE		ModE
narrowing	deer 'animal'	>	deer
widening	aunt 'father's sister'	>	aunt
metaphorical extension	grasp 'motion'	>	grasp 'to understand'
shift	to botch 'to repair'	>	to botch (up)

Sometimes, the way words look changes for reasons of meaning. When a word's spelling is adapted to fit its meaning, we speak of **folk etymology**. Instances are *female* (from French *femelle* 'little women', not related to *male*), *coldslaw* (from Dutch *koolsla* 'cabbage salad', not related to *cold*), *hangnail* (from *angnail* 'painful nail', not related to *hanging*), and *wormwood* (from *wermod* 'man-courage'). If you have access to the *OED*, try *lewd* and *haggard*!

The meaning change discussed so far involves words. We have seen that one of the changes connected to grammaticalization is a loss of lexical meaning (and an increase of grammatical function). Some examples of that are the verb *willan* that means 'want' or 'wish' in Old English and loses the volitional sense as it is reanalyzed as the future auxiliary. Other changes involve afiixes that lose their meaning, e.g. the *-er* in *(n)either, after,* and *rather* is no longer a comparative but it once was.

7. Old English dialects

There is no agreement on how many Old English dialects can be distinguished. Often, four dialects are distinguished: Northumbrian, Mercian, West-Saxon, and Kentish, as shown in Figure 4.5.

Some scholars distinguish three main dialect regions: Northumbria (roughly above the Humber River), Mercia (below the Humber and above the Thames), and Wessex (below the Thames). Some argue that there are seven varieties of Old English since there were seven kingdoms at one point: Northumberland, Mercia, East Anglia, Essex (above London), Sussex (below London), Wessex (further west than Sussex), and Kent. However, relatively temporary political divisions need not equal linguistic boundaries.

Figure 4.5 Old English dialects

When we get to Middle English, we will see clear differences between dialects, but in Old English there is not much evidence of dialect distinctions. Breaking of front vowels into diphthongs occurs more often in West Saxon than in Mercian, so *healf* 'half' and *bearn* 'child' would be the southern forms, *half* and *barn* the northern. In the two versions of *Caedmon's Hymn* in Appendix B, this difference is very obvious. Another difference is that the short *a* in *man, land,* and *hand*, i.e. before a nasal, corresponds to a short *o* in the north: *mon, lond* and *hond*. This is not borne out in the versions of *Caedmon's Hymn* since *mon* occurs in both.

Scribal differences include the use of *u(u)* and *d* in the North for *w* and *þ/ð* in the South. This is obvious in *Caedmon's Hymn*: compare *uerc* with *weorc* and *modgidanc* with *modeþonc* in Appendix B. It can also be observed in (18). The Northumbrian sentence in (18a) has *eghuelc* 'every', whereas the Mercian version of the same sentence in (18b) has *æghwilc*. There are other dialect differences in (18) that will become obvious after Chapter 6, e.g. *stondas* versus *stondeþ* 'stands'.

One issue related to the discussion of Old English dialects is that there are only a few texts from the different areas that can be compared. Even the different versions of *Caedmon's Hymn* are from different time periods. The texts are also different in style: we have a lot of interlinear translations from the North and much prose from the South. There are also texts that are not clearly from one area, such as *Beowulf*. Some of the divisions are marked in Table 4.1.

8. Conclusion

This chapter has provided an overview of the grammar of Old English. Old English is a synthetic language, with elaborate case and agreement paradigms. Its vocabulary is Germanic. As we will see in the next chapter, this vocabulary changes considerably during and after the Old English period.

Keywords

synthetic and analytic; paradigm; case and agreement (see also Chapter 2); runes; facsimiles; sound changes (voicing, palatalization, fronting, and breaking); alliteration; compounds; widening, narrowing, and shift.

The texts (or parts of texts) appended to this chapter include well-known pieces of Old English prose and poetry. They have been chosen because there are audio versions available on the web or facsimiles on the internet and in paper copies. Various glosses and glossing styles are included depending on the difficulty of the text, a gloss for the entire text (Appendix A and B), no gloss (Appendix C), a word-for-word gloss (Appendix D and E) and an interlinear gloss (Appendix F). Different readers prefer different styles.

Exercises

1. Which of the following Old English words do you think are related to Modern English words. Use lines to show the relationship (*sawol* corresponds to *soul*).

OE	heafod	sawolhus	segl	seoce	halgode	gecuron	tiȝul
ModE	body	blessed	sick	chosen	head	tile	sail

2. a. What type of phonological change happens when:
   OE *forst* becomes ModE *frost*?
   OE *handwyrst* becomes ModE *wrist?*
   b. How might *make/match, bake/batch, wake/watch,* and *speak/speech* be related through sound change?
3. How would you translate (a) to (f)? *Sinc* means 'treasure' in (e):
   a. Þa æþelingas ferdon ofer sæ into Normandig. (made up)
   b. wæs Romaburh abrocen fram Gotum. (from Bede I, 42)
   c. se cyning gehyrde þæt se ealdorbisceop wolde mid his freondum & mid his wytum gesprec & geþeaht habben. (adapted from Bede I, 134)

d. Eadwine wæs on þam gefeohte ofslegen. (adapted from Bede I, 152)
e. Nu se wyrm ligeð since bereafod. (Beowulf 2745)
f. [He] hiene selfne ofslog. (Alfred's *Orosius* 166.23)

Try to add word-by-word glosses for (3a) as has been done for most sentences in the text. Indicate as many of the endings you recognize.

4. Consider Tables 4.9 to 4.11:
   a. If *fisc* and *hund* 'dog' are in the same class as *stan*, i.e. get the same endings, how would you say 'of the (one) fish', 'to the (one) fish', 'the dogs' (subject), and 'for the dogs' in Old English?
   b. How would you say 'the sheep' (plural subject)?
   c. Are there any weak nouns in the passage from *Beowulf* in (27)?
5. Look at the changes in meaning in the list below and describe these changes using widening, narrowing, and shift. The older meanings are taken from the OED and you might look there to see how some of these drastic changes come about:

word:	**older meaning:**	**change:**
accident	occurrence, incident	…….
doom	judge	…….
scent	faculty of smell (e.g. in dogs)	…….
divest	remove one's clothes	…….
starve	die	…….
admonish	to give warning advice	…….
aunt	father's sister	…….

Not all of these words occur in Old English, can you make a gues as to which ones are later borrowings?

6. Read the first two sentences of the Old English text in Appendix A aloud. What words do you recognize in this text? List or circle them. See if you can find them in the facsimile.
7. Appendix B provides the two versions of *Caedmon's Hymn* mentioned a number of times. Identify some of the differences in orthography, sound, morphology, choice of vocabulary, and syntax in a systematic way (even if they have been noted in the chapter).
8. Try to get a sense of the story in Appendix C by skimming it. Underline some of the words you do not know and look up some in an Old English dictionary (e.g. on www.ling.upenn.edu/~kurisuto/germanic/oe_bright_glossary.html).
9. In Appendix D, can you guess what words *hlude, mongum,* and *æfen* in Riddle 8 correspond to in Modern English? What processes of sound change do they undergo?

   Look up what German *schweigen* or Dutch *zwijgen* mean and relate them to *swigað* in line 1 of Riddle 7. Do you recognize *mec* in line 5? Why is *ofer* in line 6 spelled the way it is?
10. Comment on the word order of the texts in Appendices E and F.

11. *Garlic, marshal, nostril* and *Mildred* are originally compounds. Try to find the original meanings, preferably in the OED. Hints: *garlic* is related to *leek*, *marshall* to *horse*, *nostril* to *nose*, and *Mildred* to *mild*.
12. Download an Old English text from http://www.georgetown.edu/labyrinth/library/oe/oe.html and save it as a .txt file. Then, open it in your word processing program and try to find some of the endings from Tables 4.9 and 4.12. Since your program will find e.g. *-as* in any word, you will need to weed it out.

Appendix A

Anglo Saxon Chronicle – Peterborough version

The Old English text, a translation, and facsimile of part of the *Peterborough Chronicle* (abbreviated PC) are given for the year 1066, the year of the Battle of Hastings. This version is written at Peterborough, an area influenced by Old Norse, and its last part extends into Middle English. (There is a translation of the entire chronicle at: http:// http://omacl.org/Anglo/). Notice that the medieval year was organized differently from the present day one. The entry starts quietly enough:

Old English:

An. M.LXVI. On þyssum geare man halgode þet mynster æt Westmynstre on Cyldamæsse dæg 7 se cyng Eadward forðferde on Twelfts mæsse æfen 7 hine mann bebyrgede on Twelftan mæssedæg innan þære niwa halgodre circean on Westmyntre 7 Harold eorl feng to Englalandes cynerice swa swa se cyng hit him geuðe 7 eac men hine þærto gecuron 7 wæs gebletsod to cynge on Twelftan mæssedæg 7 þa ylcan geare þe he cyng wæs he for ut mid sciphere togeanes Willelme … 7 þa hwile com Willelm eorl upp æt Hestingan on Sce Michaeles mæssedæg 7 Harold com norðan 7 him wið gefeaht ear þan þe his here com eall 7 þær he feoll 7 his twægen gebroðra Gyrð 7 Leofwine and Willelm þis land geeode 7 com to Westmynstre 7 Ealdred arceb hine to cynge gehalgode 7 menn guldon him gyld 7 gislas sealdon 7 syððan heora land bohtan.

Modern English:

1066 In this year the monastery at Westminster was hallowed on Childermas day (28 December). And king Eadward died on Twelfth-mass eve (5 January) and he was buried on Twelfth-mass day, in the newly hallowed church at Westminster. And earl Harold succeeded to the Kingdom of England, as the king had granted it to him and men had also chosen him thereto and he was blessed as king on Twelfth-mass day. And in the same year that he was king he went out with a naval force against William … And the while count William landed at Hastings, on St. Michael's mass-day and Harold came from the north and fought against him before his army had all come and there he fell and his two brothers Gyrth and Leofwine and William subdued this land, and came to Westminster and archbishop Ealdred hallowed him king and men paid him tribute and gave him hostages and afterwards bought their land (from Thorpe 1861).

There is a faint copy in the Moore manuscript at Cambridge University, reproduced as in Figure 4.7.

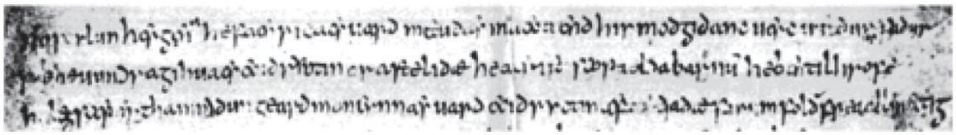

Figure 4.7 *Caedmon's Hymn*

(http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/8/8f/Caedmon%27s_Hymn_Moore_mine01.gif/450px-Caedmon%27s_Hymn_Moore_mine01.gif)

Appendix C

Orosius

Orosius wrote a history of 'world' events in Latin in the 5th century and this was translated and 'improved' upon possibly by King Alfred. The version of the part on the Amazons given below is based on Bately (1980: 28–31).

Ær þæm þe Romeburg getimbred wære iiii hunde wintrum 7 hundeahtatigum, Uesoges, Egypta cyning, wæs winnende of suðdæle Asiam, oð him se mæsta dæl wearð underþieded. 7 he Uesoges, Egypta cyning, wæs siþþan mid firde farende on Sciþþie on ða norðdælas, 7 his ærendracan beforan asende to þære ðeode, 7 him untweogendlice secgan het þæt hie [oðer] sceolden, oþþe ðæt lond æt him alesan, oþþe he hie wolde mid gefeohte fordon 7 forherigan. Hie him þa gesceadwislice ondwyrdon, 7 cwædon þæt hit gemalic wære 7 unryhtlic þæt swa oferwlenced cyning sceolde winnan on swa earm folc swa hie wæron. Heton him þeh þæt ondwyrde secgan, þæt him leofre wære wið hiene to feohtanne þonne gafol to gieldanne. Hie þæt gelæstan swa, 7 sona þone cyning gefliemdon mid his folce, 7 him æfterfolgiende wæron, 7 ealle ægypte awestan buton þæm fenlondum anum. 7 þa hie hamweard wendon be westan þære ie Eufrate, ealle Asiam hie genieddon þæt hie him gafol guldon, 7 þær wæron fiftene gear þæt lond herigende 7 westende, oð heora wif him sendon ærendracan æfter, 7 him sædon þæt hie oðer dyden, oðþe ham comen oððe hie him woldon oðerra wera ceosan. Hi þa þæt lond forleton, 7 him hamweard ferdon.

On þære ilcan tide wurdon twegen æþelingas afliemde of Sciþþian, Plenius 7 Scolopetius wæron hatene, 7 geforan þæt lond, 7 gebudon betuh Capadotiam 7 Pontum neah þære læssan Asian, 7 þær winnende wæron, oð hie him þær eard genamon. 7 hie ðær æfter hrædlice tide from þæm londleodum þurh seara ofslægene wurdon. þa wurdon hiora wif swa sarige on hiora mode, 7 swa swiðlice gedrefed, ægþær ge þara æþelinga wif ge þara oþerra monna þe mid him ofslægene wæron, þætte hie wæpna naman, to þon ðæt hie heora weras wrecan þohton. 7 hi þa hrædlice æfter þæm ofslogan ealle þa wæpnedmen þe him on neaweste wæron. For þon hie dydon swa þe hie woldon þætte þa oþere wif wæren emsarige him, þæt hie siþþan on him fultum hæfden, ðæt hie ma mehten heora weras wrecan. Hi þa þa wif ealle togædere gecirdon,

7 on ðæt folc winnende wæron, 7 þa wæpnedmen sleande, oð hie þæs londes hæfdon micel on hiora onwalde. þa under þæm gewinne hie genamon friþ wið þa wæpnedmen. Siþþan wæs hiera þeaw þæt hie ælce geare ymbe twelf monað tosomne ferdon, 7 þær þonne bearna striendon. Eft þonne þa wif heora bearn cendon, þonne feddon hie þa mædencild, 7 slogon þa hysecild. 7 þæm mædencildum hie fortendun þæt swiðre breost foran þæt hit weaxan ne sceolde, þæt hie hæfden þy strengran scyte. For þon hi mon hæt on Crecisc [Amazanas], þæt is on Englisc fortende.

Heora twa wæron heora cwena, Marsepia 7 Lampida wæron hatene. Hie heora here on tu todældon; oþer æt ham beon heora lond to healdanne, oðer ut faran to winnanne. Hie siþþan geeodon Europe 7 Asiam þone mæstan dæl, 7 getimbredon Effesum þa burg, 7 monege oðere on ðære læssan Asiam: 7 siþþan hiera heres þone mæstan dæl ham sendon mid hiora herehyþe, 7 þone oþerne dæl þær leton þæt lond to healdonne. þær wearð Marsepia sio cwen ofslagen, 7 micel þæs heres þe mid hiere beæftan wæs. ðær wearð hire dohtor cwen Sinope. Seo ilce cwen Sinope toeacan hiere hwætscipe 7 hiere monigfealdum duguþum hiere lif geendade on mægðhade.

On þæm dagum wæs swa micel ege from ðæm wifmonnum, þætte Europe ne Asiam ne ealle þa neahþeoda ne mehton aþencean ne acræftan hu hi him wiðstondan mehten, ær þon hie gecuron Ercol þone ent þæt he hie sceolde mid eallum Creca cræftum beswican. 7 þeah ne dorste he geneðan þæt he hie mid firde gefore, ær he ongan mid Creca scipun þe mon dulmunus hætt, þe mon sægð þæt on an scip mæge an þusend manna; 7 þa nihtes on ungearwe hi on bestæl, 7 hie swiþe forslog 7 fordyde; 7 hwæðere ne mehte hie þæs londes benæman. On ðæm dagum þær wæron twa cwena, þæt wæron gesweostor, Anthiopa 7 Orithia; 7 þær wearð Orithia gefangen. æfter hiere feng to ðæm rice Pentesilia, sio on þæm Troianiscan gefeohte swiþe mære gewearð.

Hit is scondlic, cwæð Orosius, ymb swelc to sprecanne hwelc hit þa wæs, þa swa earme wif 7 swa elðeodge hæfdon gegan þone cræftgestan dæl 7 þa hwatestan men ealles þises middangeardes, þæt wæs Asiam 7 Europe, þa hie forneah mid ealle aweston, 7 ealda ceastra 7 ealde byrig towearpon. 7 æfter ðæm hie dydon ægþer ge cyninga ricu settan ge niwu ceastra timbredon, 7 ealle þa worold on hiora agen gewill onwendende wæron folneah c wintra. 7 swa gemune men wæron ælces broces þætte hie hit folneah to nanum facne ne to nanum laðe næfdon þætte þa earman wifmen hie swa tintredon. 7 nu, þa ða Gotan coman of þæm hwatestan monnum Germania, þe ægðer ge Pirrus se reða Creca cyning, ge Alexander, ge Iulius se cræftega casere, hie alle from him ondredon þæt hi hie mid [gefeohte] [sohte]. Hu ungemetlice ge Romware bemurciað 7 besprecað þæt eow nu wyrs [sie] on þiosan cristendome þonne þæm þeodum þa wære, for þon þa Gotan eow hwon oferhergedon, 7 iowre burg abræcon, 7 iower feawe ofslogon; 7 for hiora cræftum 7 for hiora hwætscipe iowra selfra anwaldes eoweres upþonces habban mehton, þe nu lustlice sibbsumes friðes 7 sumne dæl [landes] æt eow biddende sindon, to þon þæt hie eow on fultume beon moten, 7 hit ær þiosan genog æmettig læg 7 genog weste, 7 ge his nane note ne hæfdon. Hu blindlice monege þeoda sprecað ymb þone cristendom, þæt hit nu wyrse sie þonne hit ær wære, þæt hie nellað geþencean oþþe ne cunnon, hwær hit gewurde ær þæm cristendome, þæt ænegu þeod oþre hiere willum friþes bæde, buton hiere þearf wære, oþþe hwær ænegu þeod æt oþerre mehte frið begietan, oððe mid golde, oððe mid seolfre, oþþe

mid ænige feo, buton he him underþiedd wære. Ac siþþan Crist geboren wæs, þe ealles middangeardes is sibb 7 frið, nales þæt an þæt men hie mehten aliesan mid feo of þeowdome, ac eac þeoda him betweonum buton þeowdome gesibbsume wæron. Hu wene ge hwelce sibbe þa weras hæfden ær þæm cristendome, þonne heora wif swa monigfeald yfel donde wæron on þiosan middangearde?

Appendix D

Riddles

The *Exeter Book* contains several riddles, poems such as *The Seafarer, Wulf and Eadwacer* (see Appendix E), *Deor, The Wanderer* (see Appendix F), and religious poems. The language of Riddle 8 is not difficult and some of the endings are provided in the gloss. Review Section 6 above before tackling it. Riddle 7 is more difficult Old English, but fun. Try to guess the answers (given in Appendix I, question 10). First, a facsimile of the manuscript is given and then the transcription, and translations:

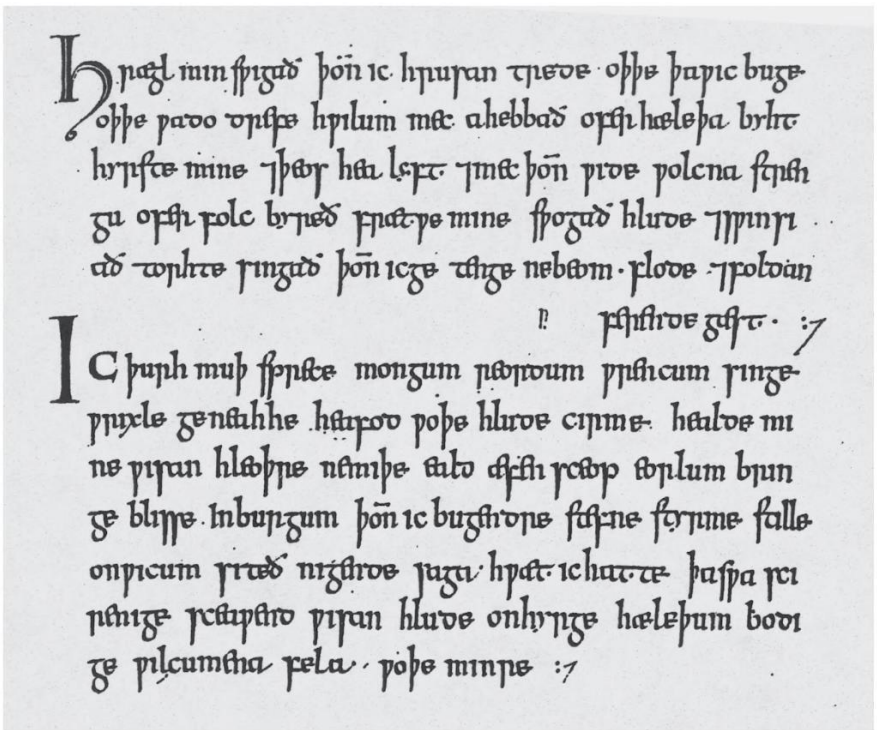

Figure 4.8 A facsimile of Riddles 7 and 8, reprinted with kind permission of the Dean and Chapter of Exeter

Riddle eight	Word-for-word translation:	Mackie's (1934) translation:
Ic þurh muþ sprece mongum reordum	I through mouth speak many-DAT-PL voice-DAT-PL	I speak from my mouth with many voices
wrencum singe wrixle geneahhe	melody-DAT-PL sing-1SG changing often	sing with modulated notes, often change
heofodwoþe hlude cirme	head-sound loud cry-out-1SG	my speech, call out loudly
healde mine wisan hleoþre ne miþe	hold my way sound not conceal	keep to my custom, do not refrain from
eald æfensceop eorlum bringe	old evening-poet men-DAT bring-1SG	sound.
blisse in burgum þonne ic bugendre	bliss in city-DAT-PL then I cry-out-1SG	An old evening poet, I bring to men
stefne styrme stille on wicum	voice stormy still in dwelling-DAT-PL	bliss in the cities. When I cry out
sittað hnigende saga hwæt ic hatte	sit-3PL bending-down say what I am-called	in a voice of varying pitch, they sit quiet in their dwellings listening. Say what
þe swa scirenige sceawendwisan	who like bright jesting-song	I am called, who, like a woman jester,
hlude onhyrge hæleþum bodige	loud imitate-1SG men-DAT announce-1SG	loudly mimic the habits of a buffoon,
wilcumena fela woþe minre	welcome many voice-DAT my	and announce with my voice many welcome things to men.

Riddle seven	Word-for-word translation	Mackie's (1934) translation
Hrægl min swigað þonne ic hrusan trede	clothes my are-silent then I earth tread	My clothing is silent, when I tread on the ground, or live in the dwellings, or
oþþe þa wic buge oþþe wado drefe	or then dwelling occupy or sea float	swim on the waters.
hwilum mec ahebbað ofer hæleþa byht	sometimes me raises over men's dwellings	Sometimes my trappings and this high air raise me above the abodes of men,
hyrste mine ond þeos hea lyft	ornament mine and this high air	and the strong wind then bears me far
and mec þonne wide wolcna strengu	and me then wide cloud strong	over the people. My garments
ofer folc byreð frætwe mine	over people bears treasures my	loudly sound and make melody,
swogað hlude ond swinsiað	sound loud and sing	sing clearly, when, a wandering living
torhte singað þonne ic getenge ne beom	clear sing then I resting not am	creature I do not touch water or land.
flode ond foldan ferende gæst	water and earth going creature	

Appendix E

Wulf and Eadwacer

This poem is also from the *Exeter Book*, is very difficult. This has resulted in many very different translations, one of which will be given together with the beginning of another. The Old English version is followed by a word-for-word one (where some indicate endings). An audio is available at www.public.asu.edu/~gelderen/AUDIO.htm, and a glossary and background to the poem is available at www.wmich.edu/medieval/research/rawl/wulf. Figure 4.9 is a facsimile.

Leodum is minum swylce him mon lac gife
willað hy hine aþecgan gif he on þreat cymeð
ungelic is us
wulf is on iege ic on oþerre
fæst is þæt eglond fenne biworpen 5
sindon wælreowe weras þær on ige

willað hy hine aþecgan gif he on þreat cymeð
ungelice is us
wulfes ic mines widlastum wenum dogode
þonne hit wæs renig weder ond ic reotugu sæt
þonne mec se beaducafa bogum bilegde
wæs me wyn to þon wæs me hwæþre eac lað
wulf min wulf wena me þine
seoce gedydon þine seldcymas
murnende mod nalles meteliste
gehyrest þu eadwacer uncerne ear[g]ne hwelp
bireð wulf to wuda
þæt mon eaþe tosliteþ þætte næfre gesomnad wæs
uncer giedd geador (from Mackie 1934)

people-DAT is my-DAT such him man warning/gift give-SUBJ
will-3PL they him receive if he in danger come-3SG
different is us-DAT
wulf is on island I on other
closely is that island fen(=swamp) surrounded
are fierce men there on island
will-3PL they receive him if he in danger come-3SG
different is us
wulf-GEN I my-GEN far-wandering hopes suffered
then it was rainy weather and I red-eyed sat
then me the warrior-bold arms-DAT laid-on
was my joy to that was me however also loath
wulf my wulf hopes me your
sick made your seldom-appearing
mourning heart not food-wanting
hear-2SG you Eadwacer our.DUAL-ACC wretched-ACC whelp
bear-3SG wulf to wood
that man easily tear-apart-3SG that never together was
our song together

Mackie (1934) has the following rendition:

It is to my people as if one were to make them gifts
They will destroy him if he comes to their troop.
Our lots are different.
Wulf is on an island, I on another
That island is a fastness surrounded by a fen.
Savage men are there on the island.
They will destroy him if he comes to their troop.

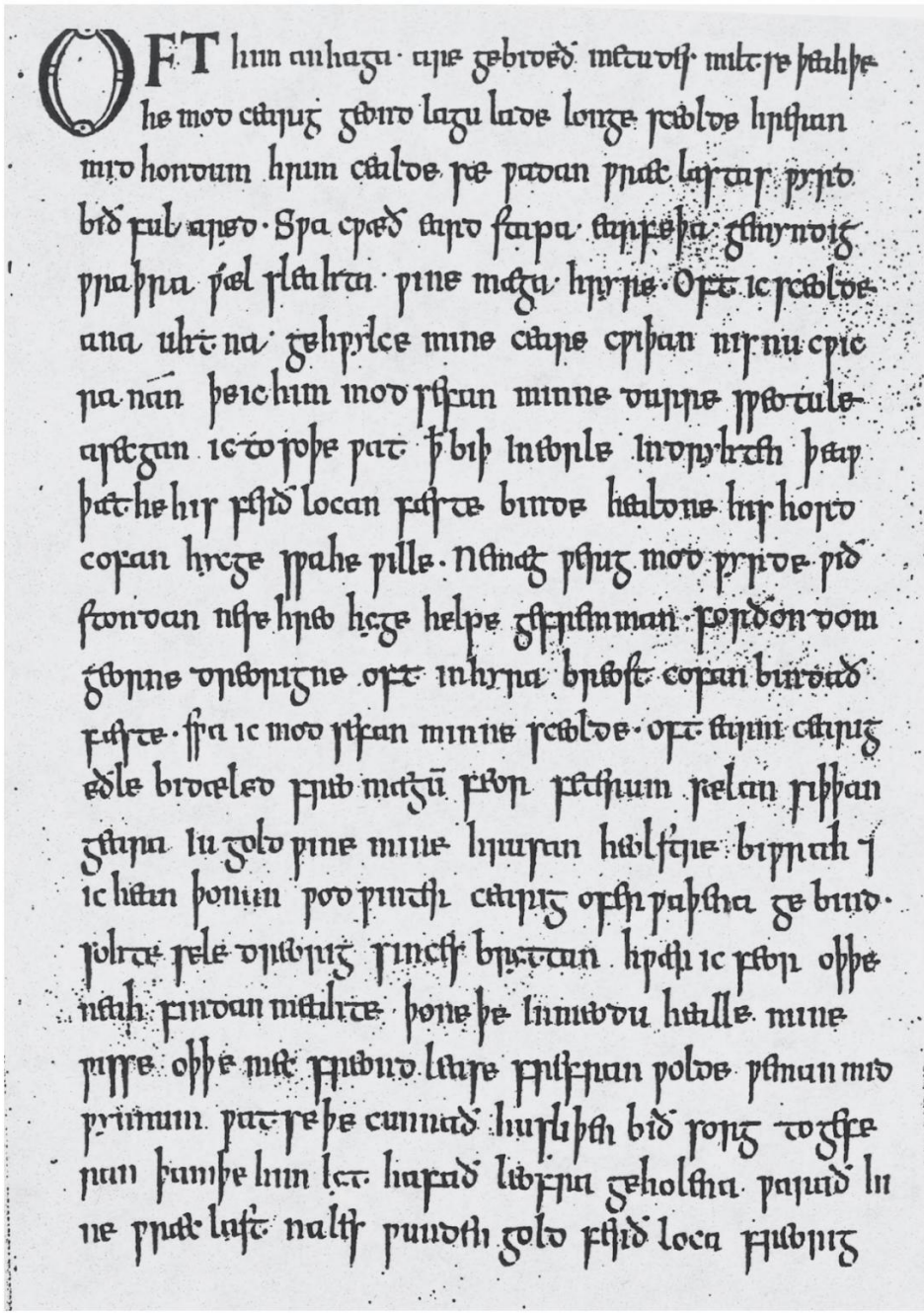

Figure 4.10 Facsimile of the *Wanderer*, reprinted with kind permission of the Dean and Chapter of Exeter

Chapter 5

From Old to Middle English

In this chapter, we explore the most dramatic change in the English language – the transition from Old to Middle English. This transition involves external and internal changes: a substantial portion of the (Germanic) Old English vocabulary is replaced by French and Latin words and the endings on nouns, verbs, and adjectives disappear. The latter is possibly the result of contact with Scandinavian and Celtic languages during the Old English period. This chapter investigates the changes between Old and Middle English caused by direct external influence; Chapter 6 discusses how the language internal changes come about.

In Chapter 1, we briefly discussed the influence of different languages on English; here we consider this topic in more detail. Each of the languages discussed influenced English during a specific time (French at the end of the Old English and the beginning of the Middle English period) and in a unique way (influence on the vocabulary vs. influence on the grammar, for example). In Section 1, we'll discuss the Celtic influence on (Old) Germanic, Old English, and later English. Section 2 explores the Latin influence up to the end of the Middle English period (we will discuss subsequent periods in later chapters). Section 3 presents evidence for extensive Scandinavian influence during the Old English period. In Section 4, the influx of French words after 1066 is discussed. Section 5 considers Dutch and Flemish influences and compares the influence of the different languages. In Section 6, we examine the results of all the borrowing. Section 7 briefly assesses the scholarly views on the impact of loans on English. Most of the data on the origin of words comes from the *OED*.

1. Celtic loans

Celtic is the name of a group of Indo-European languages spoken by people who lived throughout Europe, including the British Isles. Even though the Roman Empire had control of many Celtic and some Germanic areas, Latin was not the only language spoken in the Roman Empire. After Julius Caesar invaded the British Isles in 55 BCE, Celtic continued to be spoken there next to some Latin. After 450 CE, although Germanic speakers settled in Britain, Celtic remained spoken mainly in the West and North. For a long time it was thought that the Germanic invaders replaced the Celtic inhabitants but there is now archeological and genetic evidence that the Celtic and Germanic populations co-existed (see Härke 2003 for a review) and that Germanic genes account for less than 20 percent in that population (Sykes 2007). Interestingly, it is now also thought that the people that

spoke Celtic didn't have many Celtic genes but were genetically Neolithic, i.e. belonging to a similar group as today's Basque population.

The Celtic languages influence English in **three phases**. The first phase involves loans into Germanic (and other languages) on the continent. The second one covers words adopted into Old English, both before and after the introduction of Christianity. The third phase involves the influence of the Celtic languages after the Old English period. We will discuss the first two phases in more detail; the third phase is mentioned here for general information only, since it does not relate to Old English.

Regarding the first phase, there is a great deal of archeological evidence of Celtic presence in Europe. There is Celtic influence on Latin and Germanic on the continent: Latin may have borrowed *carrus* 'wagon', *lancia* 'lance', and names such as *Rhine, Danube, Armagnac*, and *Cognac*. These words end up in Germanic as well, but we do not know if they come via Latin or directly from Celtic. Words such as *dun* 'hill' are present in both Celtic and Germanic and may have been borrowed from Celtic into Germanic (see Miller 2012: 17 for some more background on *dun*). This makes the situation very complex. For instance, a word such as *beak*, first attested in English in the 13th century, has its origin in Old Celtic *bacc (* indicates it is a reconstructed word); it comes into English via French which borrowed it from Celtic in what is now France. Look up the origin of *gown* in the *OED*; it is similarly complex.

As mentioned, it has often been claimed that the Celtic population was replaced by a Germanic speaking one and that therefore the loan words in the second phase are limited. However, there is now evidence against such a theory of population replacement and in favor of the continuity of a Celtic speaking population, at least in many parts of Britain. Evidence for contacts between Old English and Celtic during the second phase can be found in archeological findings, e.g. burial practices (Härke 2003), and genetic mixing (Capelli et al. 2003). Evidence is also provided by the presence of certain words: *walh* means 'foreigner' in Old English (or 'serf') and there are many places named *Waldon, Walden, Walton* and, of course, *Wales*. These would have been places where the Celts lived (see Gelling 1978: 93–5).

During this second phase, the borrowings from Celtic by Latin and Germanic speakers in Britain are mostly place names (although see Coates et al 2000 for some criticism of this view). In Celtic, many of these are common nouns: *afon* is 'river' and *dwr* is 'water'; when adopted, however, they become proper nouns – the rivers named *Avon* and the place names *Dover* and *Dorchester*. Similarly, *Cardiff, Belfast, Kent, Thames, Wight,* and *London* all derive from Celtic. These borrowings show occasional awareness of the syntax of Celtic. For instance, the name for *Dover* is originally *Dofras* in Old English since the original Celtic *Dubris* had also been plural. Landscape terms are borrowed frequently as well: *cairn* 'heap of stones', *glen* 'valley', *loch* 'lake', *torr* 'rock' or 'peak', *dolmen* 'rock', *bar* 'top', *bre* 'hill', *llyn* 'lake', and *cumb* 'deep valley'. There must have been non-geographical terms as well, since *puck* 'an evil spirit' appears in Old English. It comes from Celtic *puca*, from which the game *poker* and the name *Puck* in Shakespeare's *Mid Summer Night's Dream* may derive.

Some of these borrowings, such as *luh* 'lake', are only found in Northumbrian; others, such as *cumb* 'valley', are more common in West Saxon. During the 7th century, the northern part of England is christianized (see http://www.isle-of-iona.com) by Irish missionaries, who introduce some Celtic into Old English. Words such as *dry* 'magician' come from *druid* (Old English *drycræft* is magic); *anchor* 'hermit', *story, cross*, and *curse* probably enter through Irish during this period as well.

There is a third, more recent, period of Celtic influence, covering the loans after the Germanic and Old English periods. By using the *OED's* advanced search in searching for Celtic etymologies, we find more loans, even though the phrase 'Celtic origin is out of the question' appears frequently, as in the case of *basket, bachelor,* and *baron*. Some clear borrowings are *clan,* first appearing in 1425 according to the OED; *bard* in 1450; *flannel* in 1505; *plaid* in 1512; *slogan* in 1513; *bog* in 1552; *shamrock* in 1571; *leprechaun* in 1604; *galore* in 1675; and *whisky* in 1715. *Vassal* first appears in Middle English through French but is of Celtic origin. *Banshee* comes from Irish more recently (first listed in the *OED* in 1771). Table 5.1 lists the Modern English forms of a few words borrowed from Celtic into English.

Table 5.1 Some loans from Celtic

before 450	**450–1400**		**1400 >**	
dun	cairn	story	clan	bog
beak	glen	cross	bard	shamrock
car	loch	curse	flannel	leprechaun
lance	dolmen	anchor	plaid	galore
	druid	bannock	slogan	whiskey

Most of these loans are nouns, but Celtic adjectives have been incorporated as well, some as parts of place names, e.g. *mor/maur* 'great' in *Glenmore* 'the great glen' and *Kilmore* 'the great church', but some are more general ones, e.g. *wan* 'pallid' and Old English *deor* 'brave' (see Breeze 2002). The use of prepositions to express an ongoing action (e.g. *I am on-hunting*) may be due to contact with Celtic as may be the appearance of *do* as auxiliary in Middle English. As we will see in Chapter 9, Celtic languages such as Irish have influenced the grammar of some varieties of Modern English.

There is currently a lively debate about how much **invisible influence** Celtic may have had during this second period. An early paper on Celtic influence is by Keller (1925) who stresses that it will be in the grammar not the vocabulary that Celtic influence on English will be found. Poussa (1990) revived this line of thinking and, more recently, *The Celtic Roots of English* (2002) and *English and Celtic in Contact* (2008) have appeared, edited by Markku Filppula and others, e.g. Lutz (2009). The characteristics of the English of the North, some of which we ascribe to Scandinavian contact, have also been ascribed to contact with Celtic, e.g. the loss of verbal inflection. Western English is considered to have been influenced by Celtic as well in syntax and morphology, e.g. the use of dummy *do*, as in (1), the progressive ending in *-ing*, as in (2), and the use of the cleft, as in (3).

Most of these **early loans** are inflected as if they were Old or Middle English words. Their sound is also adapted and no longer recognizable as Latin. They are incorporated as English words. For instance, all borrowed verbs become weak verbs and the gender of the Latin nouns is sometimes kept but sometimes changed to masculine (Campbell 1959: 208). In Chapter 7, we will discuss the post-Middle English loans from Latin, which are quite different in nature.

3. Scandinavian influence

In the 8th century, people in present-day Sweden, Norway, and Denmark began to leave their homes to trade and to settle in other parts of Europe. Swedes spread eastward to Russia, the Ukraine, and Turkey; Norwegians went to Iceland and the western parts of the British Isles; and Danes went to France (Normandy), Eastern England, the Mediterranean, and Africa. The Danish, Norwegian, Swedish, and Icelandic languages of that period are referred to here as Scandinavian or Old Norse (ON). These languages were closely related but there were some differences; their speakers also settled in different parts of the British Isles thus influencing different dialects of English. Wakelin (1972: 20) provides the map in Figure 5.1.

It is important to note that Old English and the Scandinavian languages have many (very basic) words in common: *man, wife, folk, winter,* and *summer*. This might have made communication between the two groups easy. When examining the influence of the invasions and settlements by the Scandinavians, we notice that both the vocabulary and the grammar of Old English are affected. Old English and Scandinavian are similar but a number of changes that had taken place in Old English had not happened in Old Norse and vice versa. This makes it possible for Old English to borrow words from Old Norse that it had before it changed their sounds.

One change that sets Old English apart from Old Norse is palatalization, discussed in Chapter 4 (Section 2).

Table 5.3 Palatalization differences

Palatalization:	ON: No	OE: Yes
	kirkja	***ch**urch*
	***sk**ip*	***sh**ip*
	heilagr	*holy*

The Scandinavian words did not undergo palatalization, which made it possible to 'recycle' them, i.e. have the palatalized Old English word and then borrow the non-palatalized one. As a result, Modern English has both *shirt* and *skirt*; *ship* and *skipper*; and *shatter* and *scatter*. We now return to the question posed in Chapter 4 as to why non-palatalized *skirt* and *egg* are still around in Modern English. In most cases, one word 'wins': in the case of *egg,*

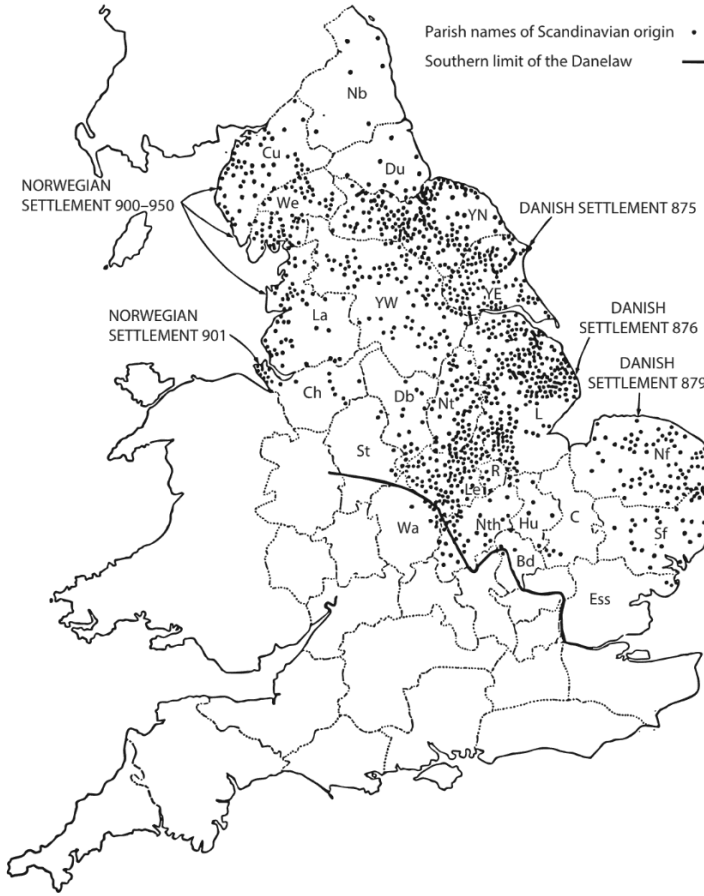

Figure 5.1 Map of Scandinavian settlements

sky, skin, and *skill*, the Scandinavian form ends up being used, and in the case of *shall* and *fish*, the Old English one. In the case of *shirt/skirt*, however, both forms are used, but with more specialized, narrower meanings.

There are Scandinavian loans that cause a **meaning shift** in the original (see Jespersen 1938: 64–5). For instance, *dream* means 'joy' in Old English, but becomes 'vision in sleep' in Middle English; *plow* means 'measure of land' in Old English but becomes *plow 'agricultural instrument'* in Modern English. Other shifts in meaning due to new Scandinavian words can be seen in the following pairs which originally had similar meanings (the English word is the second one in the pair): *die* and *starve*; *skill* and *craft*; *skin* and *hide*; and *ill* and *sick*. In Modern English, some of these have a narrower meaning. Words are also lost: Old English *weorpan, irre*, and *niman* are lost and replaced by Scandinavian *cast, anger,* and *take,* respectively.

The influence of Scandinavian on the vocabulary of English is substantial, and a selection is provided in Table 5.4 in Modern English form (partly taken from an OED etymology search using [*a. ON*] meaning 'adopted from Old Norse').

Table 5.4 Some loans from Scandinavian

anger, bait, brink, both, call, carp, clamber, egg, get, give, guess, ill, kilt, meek, mistake, nag, odd, ransack, rift, rot, ripple, rugged, same, scold (via skald 'poet'), scrape, seem, scrub, sister, skill, sky, snub, take, till, want, wand, weak, window, wrong.

Note that a number of these are verbs and adjectives, unlike the typical Celtic loan. Some estimate the number of Scandinavian loans to be 1,000 (Minkova 2005ab). For information on the division of the Scandinavian influence into several periods, see Serjeantson (1935).

It is possible to see the Scandinavian influence by looking at a map and counting **Scandinavian place names**. Some estimate the number of loans to be higher than 1400. As mentioned above, the northwest is mainly influenced by Norwegians and the northeast by Danes. During the time of King Alfred, the Danes wanted to spread to the South as well, which led to clashes and the division of England into a 'Danelaw' (in 878 after the Battle of Ethandun) and an Anglo-Saxon part. The map in Figure 5.1 shows the political dividing line between the Danes and the Anglo-Saxons. Place names ending in *-by* 'abode, village', such as *Rugby, Derby* and *Whitby*, are common for Scandinavian settlements; *-toft* 'homestead' and *-thorpe* 'village' are Danish; *-thwaite* 'field' is Norwegian. Place names are also sometimes Scandinavianized: the palatalized *Ashford* becomes *Askeford* with a non-palatalized [k] (see Townend 2002).

In contrast, common Old English place names end in *-borough* 'fortified place' and *-ham, -ing, -stow, -sted, -(h)all, wic,* and *-ton*, all meaning 'place' or 'village'. Table 5.5 lists these endings, as well as a few Latin endings. Place names ending using *da(le)*, such as *Dalton, Birkdale,* and *Clydesdale*, are typically found in Scandinavian areas although Old English had this as a word for 'valley'.

Table 5.5 Place names

Norwegian	-by, -thwaite
Danish	-by, -toft, -thorpe
Old English	-borough, -ham, -ing, -stow, -sted, -hall, -wic, -ton
Latin	-chester, -port/port-, -street

Some place names are provided in (4). Explore what they mean and think of other place names. If you can, look on the map of England to see where these places are located:

(4) Applethwaite, Althorpe, Eastoft, Nottingham, Buckingham, Hamstead, Stanstead, Brighton, and Reading.

Unlike Celtic and Latin, Scandinavian affected Old English grammar, not just its vocabulary. For instance, the appearance of the third person plural *they, them*, and *their* is due to Scandinavian contact. In Old English, the third person pronouns are *hi, hie, hiera, hem*, etc. (see Table 4.8 of Chapter 4); they are replaced in Middle English by *they, their,* and *them* with an initial *th-*. This shift starts in the north (as we can see from northern texts) and slowly spreads to the south. Grammatical words such as pronouns and prepositions are typically very stable in language history and this development is therefore unexpected. It shows that the influence of Scandinavian was quite strong. See Miller (2012) for an excellent argument for extensive influence on the grammar.

Endings on verbs, nouns, and adjectives also start to simplify in the north, as shown in Table 5.6 for present tense verbs. This is most likely due to contact with Scandinavian.

Table 5.6 Leveling of present tense verbal inflections

OE		ME Northern	ME Midlands	ME Southern
ic nerie	'I save'	ic nerie	ic nerie	ic nerie
þu neriest		þu neries	þu neries(t)	þu neriest
he/o nereð		s/he neries	he nerieþ/es	s/he nereð
we neriað		we neries	we nerien/es	we nerieþ
ge neriað		ge neries	ge nerien/es	ge nerieþ
hie neriað		thei neries	hie nerien/es	hie nerieþ

In London, third person singular *-s* is not used until the 15th century, but in Northumbria, it starts being used in the 10th century. Chaucer has *-þ*, except where he portrays northerners, as in (5), where *fares* has an *-s*.

(5) Alain spake first: "All hail Simond in faith.
How **fares** thy faire doughter and thy wif?"
(Chaucer, *The Reeve's Tale* 102–112)

As we will see in Chapter 6, the form *spake* is northern as well.

Nouns in Old English, as we can see e.g. in Table 4.9, have various plural endings where Modern English has *-s*. As early as Classen (1919: 144–145), it has been argued that Middle English nouns have either plural *-s* or *-en* but that the North and Midlands favor the former and the South the latter. Since the Old Norse of that period also has an *-s* ending, Classen argues for Scandinavian influence on the development of the plural.

Other influences on the grammar consist of the introduction of *till*, as in (6), the infinitival marker *at*, as in (7), and the present participle ending in *-and*, as in (8): Old English has *-end* or *-ind*, and Modern English has *-ing*.

(6) ***til*** *hi iafen up here castles*
'till they gave up their castles' (*PC*, anno 1137)

(7) *þis ilk bok is es translate …*
For the commun ***at*** *understand*
'This book has been translated for the common people to understand'
(*Cursor Mundi*, 232; 236)

(8) *Contemplatyfe lyfe es mykel inwarde, and forþi it es last****and****ar and sykerar*
'The contemplative life is much inward and therefore it is more-lasting and more-secure' (Richard Rolle)

Note the lack of palatalization in *mykel* 'much' in (8), showing that the text is northern.

Miller (2012) adds numerous other innovations that he argues are due to Scandinavian, e.g. having *-self* added to pronouns to serve as reflexive pronouns and preposition-stranding, as in (9).

(9) *me lihtede candles to æten bi*
men lit candles to eat by
'People lit candles by which (light) to eat.'
(*Peterborough Chronicle* 1140, Miller 2012: 140)

In short, Scandinavian influence is strong on all levels.

4. French influence

In Chapter 1, we briefly mentioned the Battle of Hastings and in Appendix A of Chapter 4, the year 1066 is described from a contemporary point of view. Here we focus on the linguistic im pact of French on English. Borrowing from French into Old and Middle English occurs in two phases: 1066–1250 and 1250–1500. In the first phase, fewer than 1,000 words are borrowed (Jespersen 1938: 87; Baugh & Cable 2002: 168). Words such as *baron, servant, messenger,* and *story* are borrowed at this time.

In the second phase, French speakers adopt English. As we know from contemporary situations (e.g. Spanish-speaking, German, and Dutch immigrants in the US), it is difficult for immigrants to keep their native language alive beyond the third generation. During this second period, the influence of French on Middle English is strongest because the French speakers are adding French words to the English they are acquiring. Some estimate the total number of loans in this period to be 10,000. The words borrowed are nouns, verbs, adjectives, and a few adverbs.

Some words borrowed from French between 1066 and 1500 are listed in Table 5.7; they are terms used in (a) government, (b) law, (c) learning, (d) art and fashion, (e) food, (f) religion, and (g) some quite general ones (see Baugh & Cable 2002: 169–173; Nielsen 2005: 101–5 for many more).

Less specialized words are also borrowed at this time: nouns such as *action, adventure, age, coward, damage, scandal, tavern,* and *vision*; adjectives such as *able, abundant, active, certain, common, firm, frank, proper, safe*, and *sudden;* and verbs such as *advise, aim, allow,*

notice other differences: English *judge, change, chair,* and *gentle* are pronounced with initial affricates whereas the related words have fricatives in Modern French.

The earlier a word is borrowed into English, the less recognizable it is as a loan. Later French loans, after 1800, are fairly recognizable as 'foreign' and some uses sound pedantic because of this. Instances of unincorporated loans are *chaise longue, tête à tête, savoir faire, joie de vivre,* and *façon de parler*. There are, however, some later loans that are fully adapted: *tourism, restaurant, resume*, and *ambulance*; if we did not have the OED, we might think they were borrowed in the late Middle English period.

5. Other languages

There are, even in this early period, other languages that influence English. There is trade (and wars) with the rest of Europe, resulting in contact with **Dutch, German, Italian, and Spanish**. Early on, Jewish settlers from France and Germany came to England but were expelled in 1290. In the later Middle Ages, Spain rules large parts of Europe and persecutes certain religious groups (during the reigns of Henry V and Philip II); this results in moves to England, which was not part of the Spanish Empire.

In cities such as Norwich in East Anglia, a third of the population was foreign, mainly Dutch and Flemish, attracted by the wool trade. Fifteenth century borrowings from Dutch are given in (14a), while sixteenth through eighteenth century ones are listed in (14b), all according to the *OED*.

(14) a. hop(s) (1440), pickle (1440), deck (1466), buoy (1466), freight (1463), dock (1486 in its nautical use)

b. wag(g)on (1523), splice (1524), dollar (1553), yacht (1557), plug (1618), furlough (1625), easel (1634), slim (1657), sketch (1668), smuggle (1687), gin (1714), booze (1732), waffle (1744)

There may have been some influence on the grammar as well, as Trudgill (1974; 1999) points out. The overall influence is minimal, however.

Table 5.8 summarizes the impact of the different languages on Old and Middle English.

Table 5.8 Influence of different languages on OE and ME

	vocabulary	morphology	syntax
Celtic	some	no	yes
Latin	yes	no	no
Scandinavian	a lot	yes	yes
French	very much	yes	not much
Dutch/Flemish	minimal	no	no

Having provided examples of outside influences on Old and Middle English, we will turn to examining the results of the borrowings in Section 6.