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**Department of English Grammar and Practice of the  
language**

**LECTURE ON THE HISTORY OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE FOR THE  
SECOND YEAR STUDENTS**

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# LECTURE ON THE HISTORY OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE FOR THE SECOND YEAR STUDENTS

## LECTURE ONE. Theme: SUBJECT MATTER AND AIMS OF THE HISTORY OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

### Talking points:

- Evolution of Language and Scope of Language History;
- Concept of Linguistic Change;
- Causes of Language Evolution.

### Key words and expressions:

*Period, aim, purpose, Britain, Linguistic change, Language Evolution, era, classes.*

### GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE OE LANGUAGE

The history of the English language begins with the invasion of the British Isles by Germanic tribes in the 5<sup>th</sup> c. of our era. Prior to the Germanic invasion the British Isles must have been inhabited for at least fifty thousand years. The Celts came to Britain in three waves and immediately preceded the Teutons. Economically and socially the Celts were a tribal society made up of kins, kinship groups, clans and tribes; they practiced a primitive agriculture, and carried on trade with Celtic Gaul.

Celtic languages were spoken over extensive parts of Europe before our era; later they were absorbed by other IE languages and left very few vestiges behind. The Brittonic branch is represented by Kymric or Welsh in modern Wales and by Breton or Armorican spoken by over a million people in modern France. Another Brittonic dialect in Great Britain, Cornish, was spoken in Cornwall until the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> c.

In the first century B.C. Gaul was conquered by the Romans. Having occupied Gaul Julius Caesar made two raids on Britain, in 55 and 54 B.C. Caesar attacked Britain for economic reasons – to obtain tin, pearls and corn, – and also for strategic reasons, since rebels and refugees from Gaul found support among their British kinsmen.

A person when he is young acquires first knowledge in his mother tongue. He has no other language to compare. There is a difference between the mother tongue and a foreign language in acquiring knowledge. In spite of the fact whether a person is a young child or adult he always compares things with his mother tongue. He is often astonished to find differences in the ways the ideas or things are expressed in two languages.

The differences can be found in different levels of the language: in phonetics (i.d. pronouncing) in the vocabulary and grammatic structures. In vocabulary there is considerable likeness between English and German:

Summer - sommer

Winter - winter

Foot - fuß

Long - lang

Sit - sitzen

But in some cases we have common features of English with French:

Autumn - automne

River - riviere

Modest - modeste

Change - changer

Here we can say that these similarities are not a matter of chance that there must be some cause i.d. reason behind them. So to discover these facts we should go into the history of the English Language.

There is a difference in pronunciation and spelling of some words like “light, know, daughter”. This difference cannot be explained from the modern point of view.

In these examples we noticed that some letters exist in the words but they are not pronounced. Why? This is the question.

Another example “ea”, it is pronounced in different way in different words like:

Speak [spi:k]	Oo	Uu
Great [greit]	∨	
Bear [biə ]	[ʌ ]	
Heard [hed]	son	sun
Heart [hɑ :t]	love	cut
	brother	butter

The reason of such differences can be found only by going into the history of the language. We can notice such differences on the grammar level too.

1. sheep
2. deer > they have this form for both: singular and plural

Why do the words “foot”, “goose”, “mouse” form their plural forms by changing the root vowel?

Why are the verbs “can”, “may”, “will” used without “s” in the third person singular?

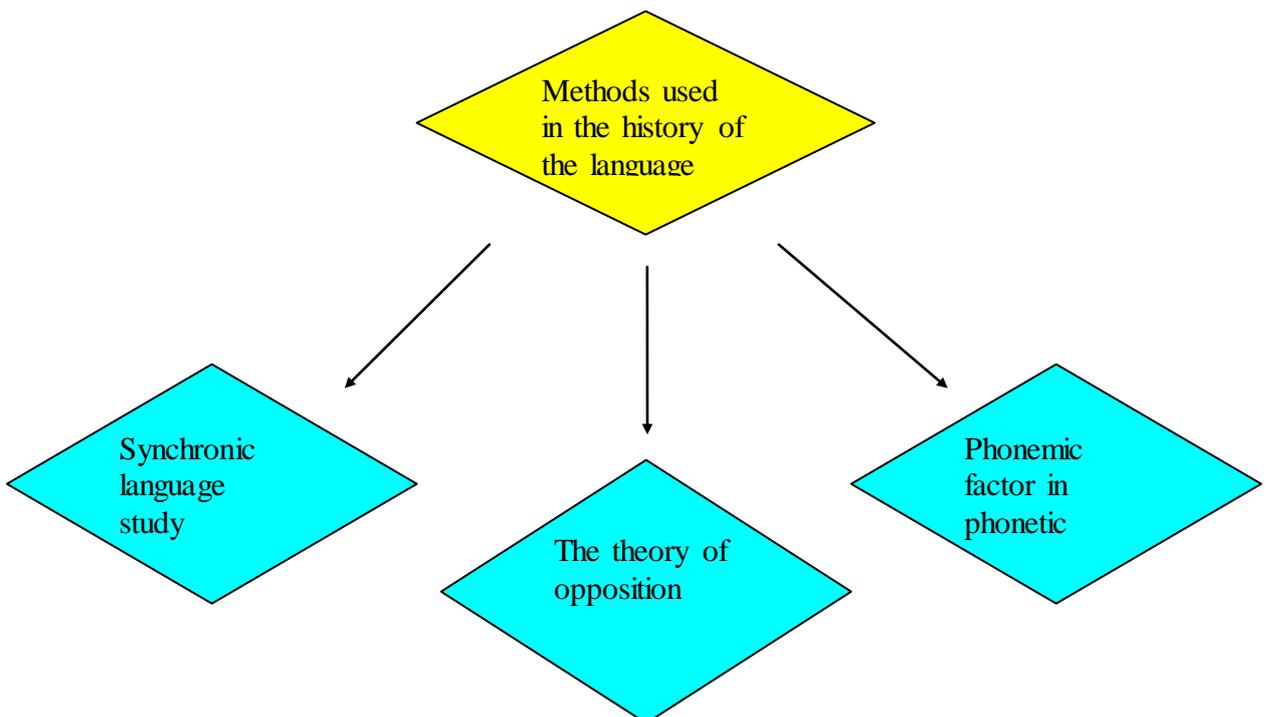
This is also the investigation of the subject the history of the language. That is why in training teachers of foreign language (English language) to know or acquire knowledge about the history of the language is important.

Besides this there are some other factors with makes it obligatory to study the history of a concrete language. They are general principles of linguistics. The history of the English language as an independent subject establishes a tie between general principles of linguistics and concrete facts of contemporary English.

So the aim of this subject is a systematic study the changes in the language development from the earliest times to the present day, and help the student to acquire a more profound knowledge on the English language of to-day.

While studying this discipline we must find some causal ties between the fact, i.e. changes.

Methods used in the history of the language: 1) synchronic language study; 2) phonemic factor in phonetic change; 3) the theory of oppositions.



If we look back to the historical development of the English language it should be stressed that there were great changes in the phonetic system in the 15<sup>th</sup> - 16<sup>th</sup> centuries.

History of the English Language is connected with other disciplines too: theoretical phonetics, theoretical grammar and lexicology. The relations helps us to clear up the changes and states the origins of the present day English.

In this aspect we study such question as the reasons of the changes, the development in vocabulary the views of different scholars.

During the lectures in this subject we clear out the problems concerning to all spheres of the language.

The causes of changes may be 2 kinds:

- 1) external
- 2) internal i.e. the language is influenced by different factor outside (i.d. extra linguistic factors).

Example: social changes, wars, conquests, migrations, cultural contacts (outside influence).

Many changes occur in the history of the language within the language itself: in phonetic, grammatic structures. These are treated as internal causes.

Different Approaches

Different schools of linguistics took quite different views about the language development.

The reduction in the number of cases in substantives, the rise of prepositional phrases replacing cases were seen as a mechanical result of phonetic development, in the first place of reduction and loss of unstressed vowels (this is the view of Young grammarian school).

Representatives: Herman Paul (1846 - 1921)

Karl Brugman, Bertbold Delbruck.

According to them phonetic changes were the reason of disarrange of the grammatical system of a language. Swiss scholar Ferdinand de Saussure (1857 - 1913). He first introduced the concept of a synchronic linguistics as opposed to diachronic did not bring any alteration into the view expressed by young grammarian Prague Ling. Circle created in 1926.

Alphabet.

Germans used three types of alphabet. Old Germanic manuscripts were written in runic.

F [a]; M [e] the reason of appearing of such signs hasn't been explained yet from Latin D the developed þ [θ].

In studying the English language at first probably you've been wondering with the number of uncertainties in writing, reading. You try to find answers why one and the same letter reads differently in different position or, some letters are letters pronounced likely or, some letters are not pronounced but are reflected in written form. Let's compare: "sit" - [sit], three letters three sounds "site" - [sait], four letters three sounds "sight" - [sai], four letters two sounds "sight" - [sait], five letters three sounds "neighbour" [neibo:] nine letters four sounds. The History of English sound and spelling accounts for these and other similar peculiarities. Not going into details it's worth to say that when Latin letters were introduced in Britain, the letters stood, roughly, for the same sound as in Latin. In the course of time the written form became fixed while the pronunciation continued to change, mostly after the introduction of printing in the 15<sup>th</sup> century. Many modern spellings show how the words were pronounced *f.e.* in Middle English "knight" sounded as [knix't] "site" as [site], "root" as [ro:t] etc. The question arises why *f.e.* is the sound [ʌ] spelt u in "sun, but, cut" but [o] in "love, son,"? The similar questions can be found in the sphere of vocabulary and grammar. The existence of likeness in the vocabulary between English and other Germanic languages goes back to Proto-Germanic. Thus, *f.e.* the German for "summer" is "Sommer", for "winter" is "Winter", for "foot" is "Tup". The other likeness or similarities can be met in other Germanic languages: Swedish, Danish etc. On the other hand English had in certain cases something in common with Romanic languages. For example. English. French

autumn     automne  
river     riviere  
modest     modeste  
change     changer  
condemn     condemner.

In present day English the proportion of French roots is higher than that of native ones. The History of English will say when and how these borrowings were made and will thus account for the composition of the modern vocabulary. As far as grammar is concerned, it can only be noted at this stage that the history of the language will give explanation for the general, regular features of grammatical structure and for the specific peculiarities and exceptions. It will explain why do the nouns "man, foot, goose, mouse" form their plural by change of root vowel? Why the nouns "sheep, deer" have no? They are unchanged. Thus knowledge of the history of English should be an integral part in the forming of a teacher of the language. Another important aim of the course is of a more theoretical nature. While training the evolution of the English language through time, we'll be confronted with a number of questions such as the relationship between statistics and dynamics, the role of internal and external factors in language change and etc. These problems can be considered on a theoretical plane within the scope of general linguistics. The History of the English is connected with other disciplines studying present-day English...

Thus, the main aim of the course is "*a systematic study of language development from the earliest times to the present day*" (**B.Ilyish**) and, "*to provide the students of English with a wider philological outlook*" (*T. Rastorgueva*)

In studying the history of the language the question naturally rises about the general trend of its development. Different scholars have expressed different views concerning these questions. Historical development of language is made up of diverse facts and processes. In the first place it includes the internal or structural development of the language system. The description of internal linguistic history is usually presented in accordance with the division of language into linguistic levels. Commonly accepted levels are phonological, morphological, syntactic and the lexical level. Accordingly the history of the language can be subdivided into historical phonetics (phonology), historical morphology. The evolution of the language includes also many functional aspects which constitute what is known as the "external" history of the language. Before embarking on a study of the historical development of the English language we will briefly consider the two aspects of such study now commonly called the synchronic and the diachronic. It is evident that the structure of the language of any period whether it be the XX<sup>th</sup> or XIV<sup>th</sup> or IX<sup>th</sup> century, can be studied as such. Thus a study of the language of Chaucer.

The history is known from the writings of Greek and Roman authors. The earliest paper is written by Pytheas. He lived in the second half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century B.C. Pytheas sailed much. The description of his journeys is not preserved. But something was quoted in the papers of old historians as in Titus Livy and Polybius in the second century B.C. They provided extracts from a paper of Pytheas. It was also mentioned that Old Germanic tribes raided the Hellenic countries of south-eastern Europe, Italy and Gall. In the beginning of our era the Greek historian Strabo wrote about Germans nomads. They moved from forest to forest, built houses and were engaged in cattle bringing. The great writer Plutarch described Germans as wild nomadic tribes who had constantly been in war. They were not interested in agriculture or in cattle bringing, but only in war. The Roman general Julius Caesar devoted several chapters to the militant Germanic tribes in his "Commentaries on the war in Gall" (1044 B.C.). Caesar fought with them on the Rhine. He took two expeditions against the Germanic tribes who wanted to get hauled on some territories. The Romans defeated the Germans in both expeditions. Caesar wrote about their military tactics, described how they prepared their attacks and so on. Caesar wrote that Germans lived in tribal unions. He also gave a detailed descriptions of the structure of their society and peculiarities of their life.

The next great historian Pliny spent many years in the Roman provinces of Low and High Germany. He was a prominent encyclopedias. He wrote a book called "Natural History". He was the first who enumerated and classified the military tribes. It was proved by many scientists. According to Pliny there were several Germanic tribes: The Vindili. They lived in the eastern part of the territory inhabited by the Germanic tribes. They consisted of the Goths, the Burgundians and the Vandals first inhabited territory between the Oder and the Vistula. Later they moved to Northern Africa through Spain. The word vandalism originated from Vandal (means Barbary).

The Burgundians came to the continent from the Island of Bornholm. It was in the Baltic Sea. Later they moved to the west and settled in south-eastern part of France in the area called Burgundia.

The Goths first inhabited the lower coast of the river Vistula. Later they moved to the south and formed powerful tribal unions of Ostrogoths and Visigoths.

The Ingvaones. They lived in the north-western part of the Germanic territory. They inhabited the Jutland peninsula and the coast of the North Sea. The tribes of Angles, Saxons, Jutes and Frisians were formed later of this group.

The Istaevones. They lived on the Rhine. Later they formed a very powerful tribal union of Franconians. In the early Middle Ages they were powerful group of West Germans.

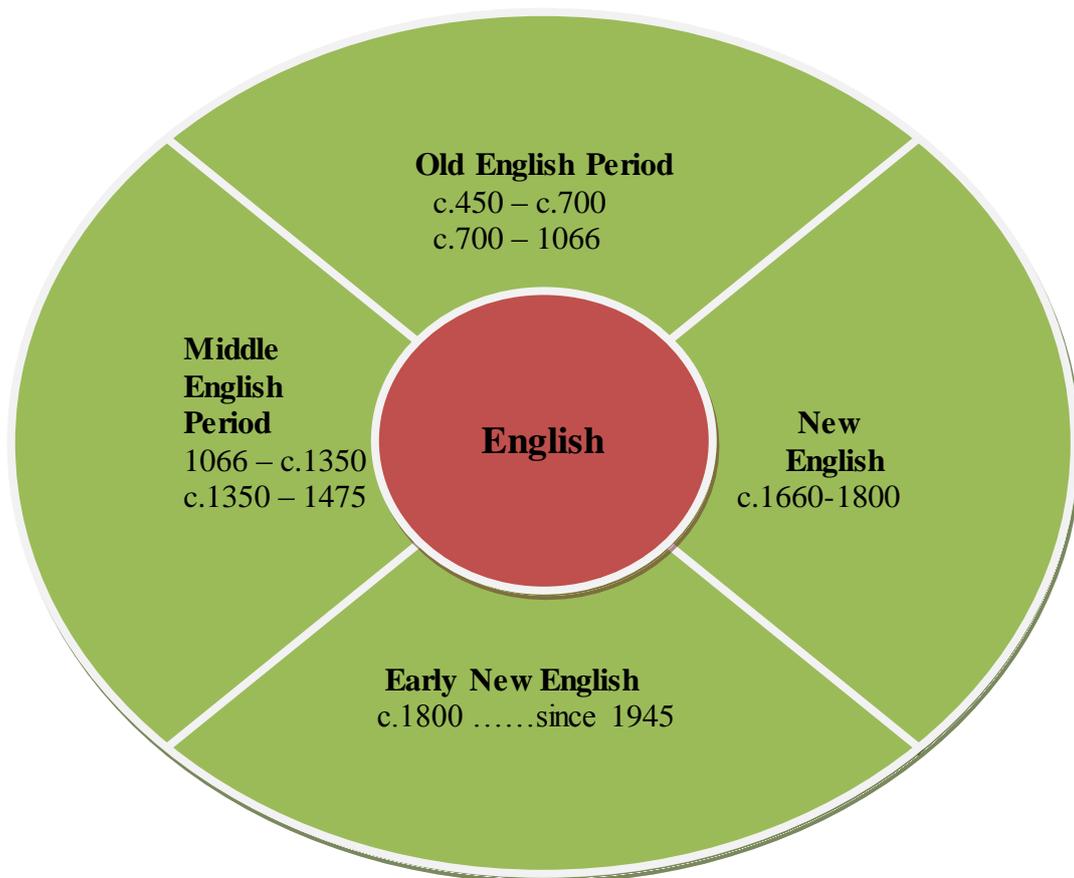
The Herminones lived in the centre of Germany and later the German nation was formed of these tribes.

The Hilleviones were isolated from other Germanic tribes. They inhabited Scandinavia. Modern Scandinavian nations are the descendants of these tribes.

The Vindilispoke eastern Germanic; the Hilleviones spoke northern Germanic, the Ingvaones, Istaevones and Herminones - West Germanic.

The Roman historian Tacitus made a detailed description of the life and customs of ancient Germans. Tacitus was a prominent Roman historian. He himself had never been to Germany. Being a Roman senator he got information from military travelers, actions, etc. he also used papers written about the Germans before him. In the time of Tacitus there were constant arm conflicts between the Germans and Romans. Numerous attempts of the Roman generals to conquer the Germanic tribes failed. In the second half of the second century after a short period without wars they began their attacks again. The ancient Germans had a tribal society. In the head of each tribe there was a chief who was called "kuning". Some modern place-names testify to this social structure of the Germans. The whole tribe had the name of the Chief.

## Periods in the History of English



### Answer the following questions

- 1) What is the aim and purpose of the course?
- 2) What periods do you know in the History of the English Language?
- 3) What do we call the first period?
- 4) What do we call the second period?
- 5) What do we call the third period?
- 6) What Causes of Language Evolution do you know?

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### Task One.

1. Comment on the writings. Define the scripts dialectal origin. Why?

a)

Hwæðere him Ʒeīode, swā ful oft Ʒedēð  
þætte Ʒodferhte Ʒylt Ʒefræmmað  
þurh lichaman lēne Ʒedðhtas.

b)

893. Hēr on þysum ʒēare fōr sē micla here, <sup>1</sup> þe wē ʒefyrn ymbe spræcon, eft of þæm ēastrice westweard tō Bunnan, <sup>2</sup> ond þær wurdon ʒescipode swā þæt hie āsettan him on āne siþ ofer mid horsum mid ealle; ond þā cōmon ūp on Limene <sup>3</sup> mūþan mid CCL hunde scipa. Sē mūþa is on ēastewardre Cent, <sup>4</sup> æt þæs miclan wuda ēastende þe wē Andred <sup>5</sup> hātað. Sē wudu is ēastlanʒ ond westlanʒ <sup>6</sup> hundtwelftizes mila lanʒ, <sup>7</sup> opþe lenʒra, ond þritizes mila brād. Sēo ea þe wē ær ymbe spræcon, lið <sup>8</sup> ūt of þæm wealda. On þā ea hī tugon ūp hiora scipu of þone weald IV mila fram þæm mūþan ūtewardum, ond þær ābræcon ān ʒeweorc: inne on þæm fæstene sæton fēawa cirlice menn on, <sup>9</sup> ond wæs sāmworht. <sup>10</sup>

Ðā sōna æfter þæm cōm Hæsten <sup>11</sup> mid LXXX scipa ūp on Temese mūðan, ond worhte him ʒeweorc æt Middeltūne, <sup>12</sup> ond sē oþer here æt Apuldre. <sup>13</sup>

c)

17. And miððy færende wæs on wæʒ fore an sum oðer cneuo bēʒed fore hine bædd hine lā lārua ʒōd vel ʒōða huæd sceal ic dōa þætte lif ēce ic onfæ? 18. se hælend uutedlice cuæð tō him huæt mec ðu cuoðas ʒōd næniʒmonn ʒōd būta āne ʒod. 19. ðā bebodo wāst ðū þæt ðū ne dernelece þæt ðū ne of-slāæ þæt ðū ne forstele vel ne forðiofe þæt ðū lēas ʒecyðnise vel witnise ne cœða þæt ðū fācen ne ʒedœ ar-wordiʒ fæder ðīn and mōder. 20. And hē onduearde cuæð lā lārua ðās all ic ʒehēald from ʒiʒode mi-num. 21. se hælend uutedlice miððy behaldend hine lufade hine and cuæð him an ðē is forʒeten ʒeony suā huæt ðū hæbbe bebyʒ and sel ðorfendum and hæfis vel ðū scealt habba ʒe-strion in heofne and cym sōec vel fylʒ mec. 22. sēde miððy ʒeunrōdsad wæs on word ēade seofende wæs forðon hæfde vel hæbbend aehto meniʒ.