Linguistic features of Germanic languages

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WORD STRESS

- **Early Proto-Germanic – free and movable**
- **Late Proto-Germanic – fixed on the first syllable – root or prefix.**
- **In simple forms the root-syllable was normally stressed.**
- **In compound forms (especially in nouns and adjectives) the stress fell on the prefix.**
- **In verbs the prefix was still a separate particle at that time and did not take the stress.**

PG fiskaz, Gt fisks, O Icel fiskr, OE fisk

VOWELS

- IE short /ŏ/ and /ă/ correspond to GLs short /ă/: Gr *octō* – Goth *ahtau*, Rus *ночь* – Germ *nacht*

- IE long /ō/ and long /ā/ correspond to GLs long /ō/: Lat *frāter* – Goth *brōþar* (брат), Lat *flōs* – OE *blōma* (цветок).

- In the root syllable IE /e/ = GL /i/, **if** it was followed by 1) /i/ 2) /j/ 3) nasal+consonant, **else** IE /e/ = G /e/.

Examples: Lat *medius* – OE *middle* (середина), Lat *ventus* – OE *wind* (ветер) **but** Lat *edere* – OE *etan* (есть).

- IE /u/ = GL /u/ **if** followed by 1) /u/ 2) nasal+consonant, **else** IE /u/ = G /o/.

Example: Lat *sunus* – OE *sunu* (сын)

CONSONANTS

- **The 1st Consonant Shift, or Grimm's Law**

- **IE   G   Examples**
/ p / / f / Lat *plěnus* – Eng *full*
/ t / / þ / Gr *tres* – Eng *three*
/ k / / h / Lat *noctem* – Goth *nahts*
/ b / / p / Rus *болото* – Eng *pool*
/ d / / t / Lat *duo* – Goth *twan*
/ g / / k / Lat *ego* – OE *ic*
/ bh / / b / Sans *bhratar* – Eng *brother*
/ dh / / d / Sans *madhu* – OE *medu*
/ gh / / g / Lat *hostis* - Rus *гость* – Germ *gast*

CONSONANTS

- **Verner's Law: unstressed vowel + voiceless stop → voiceless fricative → voiced fricative → voiced stop: /t/ → /þ/ → /ð/ → /d/** Gr *patĕr*=> OE *fæder.*

- **The consonant pairs involved in grammatical alternation were f/b, þ/d, h/g, hw/w, s/r.**

- **Some words retained traces of Verner's Law:**
  death – dead   was – were

Morphology

- **Inflections were the principal means of form-building .**

Verb Forms	Gt.	OE	Mod. E
Past. sing.	bar	bær	bore
Infinitive	bairan	beran	bear
Past. pl	berum	bæron	
Part. II	baúrans	boren	born

- **Sound interchanges became very productive.**

The principal gradation in IE languages was *e – o* which is qualitative. (умереть – мор, беру - брал).

- **Suppletion- the forms of one and the same word are built from different roots or stems: *иду –шел, хороший – лучше, я – меня; I-my,mine- me; ego-tei***

NOUN

- **Classes of nouns: 1. vocalic stems a, o, i, u formed strong declension;**

2. n-stem formed the paradigm of weak declension;

3. s/r–stems;

4. root-stem nouns which had never had any stem suffix, the root and the stem in these words always coinsice.

- **Categories: 1. declension;**

2. gender (masculine, feminine, neuter);

3. case (Nominative, Genitive, Dative, Accusative).

4. number (singular and plural).

ADJECTIVE

- **Adjective declension in all GLs has no parallel with other IE languages.**

1. strong declension which is a combination of substantival and pronominal endings;

2. weak declenstion which reflected the declension of n-stem substantives.

- **Categories: 1. gender;**

2. number;

3. case;

4. degrees of comparison (positive, comparative, superlative). Comparative degree was built by means of the suffixes –iza, -oza; superlative degree was built with the suffixes –ist, -ost.

PRONOUNS

- **The oldest classes are personal, demonstrative and interrogative.**

- **Personal pronoun had only two persons, the 3rd person developed later from the demonstrative pronouns.**

- **Another ancient feature was the dual number of personal pronouns (ic – wit – wē; þu – ӡit – ӡē).**

VERBS

- 1. Strong verbs (had four principal forms - Infinitive, Past singular, Past plural and Participle II);

faran - fōr - fōrum – farans (ехать)

letan – lailot – lailotum – letans (оставлять)

- 2. weak verbs (Past tense, Participle I);

class	infinitive	past sing.	past plural	Participle II	translation
I	hausjan	hausida	hausidēdum	hausiþs	слышать
II	salbōn	salbōda	salbōdēdum	salbōþs	мазать
III	haban	habaida	habaidēdum	habaiþs	иметь
IV	fullnan	fulnōda	fullnōdēdum	-	наполнять

VERBS

- **3. united preterit-present verbs (used vowel gradation to derive the forms of the present tense while their form of the preterit was build with the help of the dental suffix..**

Examples: OE *wītan* (inf) - *wāt* (pres sg) – *wĭton* (pres pl) – *wiste* (pret sg) – *wiston* (pret pl) - *ʒewiten* (P2) (знать).

Here belong modal verbs , verbs denoting possession and verbs denoting estimation.

- **Categories: 1. number;**

2. tense (Present and Past);

3. mood (indicative, imperative and subjunctive);

VOCABULARY

- IE words

Mod. E	OE	O Sc	Lat	Greek	Russian	Sans
man	mann	maðr	mās			manu
father	fæder	faðir	pater	patér		pitá(r)
mother	mōdor	moðir	mater	mētér	мать	mātá(r)
heart	heorte		cor	kardia	сердце	
nose	nosu		nasus		нос	nāsa

- Pure Germanic words

Mod. English	OE	German	Swedish	Gothic
head	hēāfod	Haupt	huvud	haubiþ
hand	hand	Hand	hand	handus
bear	bera	Bär	björn	
fir	furh	Föhre	furu	
sea	sæ:	See	sjö	saiws
land	land	Land	land	land

VOCABULARY

- Borrowed words

Mod. English	OE	Other Germanic languages	Latin
pound	pund	Gt. pund, O. Ic. pund	pondō
street	stræt, strēt	OHG atrâza OSc strâta	strata
plum,	plūme	O Icl plóma	prunus
wine	win	OHG, O Sc win G wein	vinum
shield	scyld	O Sc skjoldr	scutum
write	scrifan	O Sc scrifa	scribere
canon	canonic	O Sc kanunkr	canonicus