The Germanic Languages. Proto-Germanic. Old English. Phonology.

Lecture 1.

1. Principal Features of Germanic Languages
2. The First consonant shift (Grimm's Law). Verner's Law
3. Periods in the History of English
4. OE Heptarchy. OE dialects
5. OE Vocalism
6. OE Consonant System

Principal Features of Germanic Languages

English belongs to:

- **The Indo-European family of languages;**
- **The Germanic branch.**
- **West Germanic group**

Proto-Indo-European (PIE)

- **Proto-Indo-European (PIE)** - some single language, which must have been spoken thousands of years ago by some comparatively small body of people in a relatively restricted geographical area

Proto-Germanic (PG)

- **Proto-Germanic (PG)** - a dialect of Indo-European all Germanic languages are descended from;
- We have no records of the PG language.
- We can reconstruct it (Gothic).

Proto-Germanic (PG)

- PG is a highly **inflected** language;
- the word stress was put on the **1st syllable** (fixed accent);
- *PIE verb "bheronom" – PG beranan – OE beran – ME beren, bere – ME bear*

2. The First consonant shift. Grimm's Law

- "the 1st sound-shifting";

- after the early 19th c. **philologist Jakob Grimm**, who analysed it.

2. The First consonant shift. Grimm's Law

- In **PIE** there was a rich array of stop consonants;

- This system underwent great changes in **PG**;

- It consists of **3 major consonant changes.**

PIE aspirated voiced stops > Gmc voiced stops

- **Bh > b**

*Sans. **bh**arami – ModE **b**ear*

- **Dh > d**

*Sans. ru**dh**iras – ModE re**d***

- **Gh > g**

*Gr. **ch**en – Ger **G**ans*

PIE voiceless stops > Gmc voiceless fricatives

- **P > f**

*L. **p**ater – ModE **f**ather*

- **T > th**

*L. den**t**is – ModE too**th***

- **K > h**

*L. **c**ornu – ModE **h**orn*
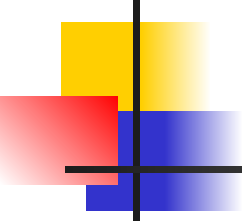
PIE voiced stops > Gmc voiceless stops

- **b > p**

*L. tur**b**a – ModE thor**p***

- **d > t**

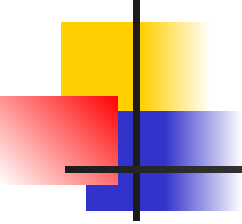*L. **d**ens – ModE **t**ooth*

- **g > k**

*L. a**g**er – ModE a**c**re*

Verner's Law.
The Second Consonant Shift (1875)

- Certain apparent exceptions to Grimm's Law were subsequently explained by **Karl Verner (a Danish scholar)** and others.

Verner's Law.

- **Karl Verner** showed that voiceless fricatives became voiced if the preceding syllable was unstressed, but otherwise remained unchanged.

- *Latin **c**en**t**um - English **h**un**d**red.*

Verner's Law.

- **PIE <u>f</u> > Gmc <u>v</u>**
- **PIE <u>th</u> > Gmc <u>d</u>**

Lat pa<u>t</u>er – Gth fa<u>d</u>ar

- PIE <u>k</u> > Gmc <u>g</u>
- PIE <u>s</u> > Gmc <u>z</u> > <u>r</u> in North and West Germanic) = <u>***rotacizm***</u>

Gth. raisjan – OE ræran

3. Periods in the History of English

- Traditionally, the history of the English language is divided into **3 major periods.**

- This division was first proposed by an English philologist, **Henry Sweet**, in 1873.
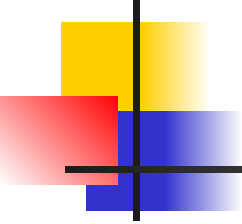
Periods in the History of English

- **Old English** (Anglo-Saxon) (5 c.-1066) = *the period of full inflexions;*

- **Middle English** (1066 – 1485) = *of levelled inflexions;*

- **Modern English** (1485 - ...) = *of lost inflexions.*
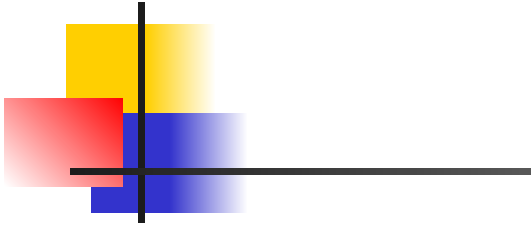
4. OE Heptarchy. OE dialects

- The earliest inhabitants of the British Isles, were **Celtic** speakers.

- The Celts had been living in England until being invaded by the **Romans** in 43 CE. and Latin never overtook the Celtic language.

4. OE Heptarchy. OE dialects

- About the year **449 AD** began the invasion of Britain by certain **Germanic tribes**, the founders of the English nation:
- *Angles, Saxons, Jutes, Frisians*

Scotland

Ireland

North
Sea

JUTES

BRITAIN

Wales

England

ANGLES

Germanic invasions
of the 5th
century

SAXONS

Germany

N

France

Modern countries are shown in green

4. OE Heptarchy. OE dialects

- **By 700**, the Anglo-Saxons had occupied most of England and a considerable part of southern Scotland (but for Cornwall and Wales).

- The language of Anglo-Saxons became the dominant one.

4. OE Heptarchy. OE dialects

- **In the 7th c.** Germanic tribes set up seven kingdoms called the Anglo-Saxon **Heptarchy**, *rule of the seven kingdoms* .

- Kent
- Northumbria
- Mercia (West Midlands)
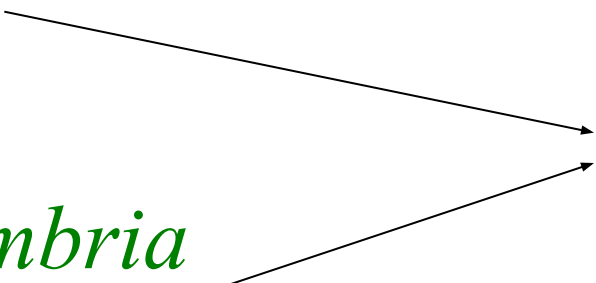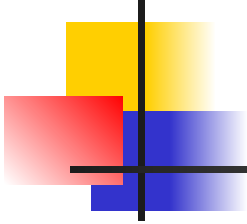- Wessex (central Southern England)
- East Anglia
- Essex
- Sussex

4. OE Heptarchy. OE dialects

The surviving texts form the OE period are in **4 main dialects**:

- ***West saxon! (the literary standard)***
- *Kentish*
- *Mercia*
- *Northumbria*

Anglian

SCALE OF MILES

NORTHUMBRIAN

Humber

MERCIAN

Thames

KENTISH

WEST SAXON

4. OE Heptarchy. OE dialects

- Although *West Saxon* became the *literary standard of unified England*, it is not the direct ancestor of **modern standard English**, which is mainly derived from **an Anglian dialect**

4. OE Heptarchy. OE dialects

- The conversion of the English to Christianity began in **597** with **St Augustine**, and took a century to complete;

- *With Christianity came writing.*

5. OE Vocalism

- *All living languages undergo changes.*

- *What causes such changes?*

Alterations:

- *Qualitative // quantitative;*

- *Dependent // independent*

Anglo-Frisian Brightening (or First Fronting).

- The **Anglo-Frisian languages** underwent a sound change in their development from Proto-Germanic by which the vowel ā was fronted to ǣ, unless followed by a nasal consonant (n, m).

Cf. OE mann and OE dæġ

Restoration of *a* or Retraction

- Later in Old English, short **/æ/** (and in some dialects long **/æː/** as well), was backed to **/ɑ/** when there was a **back vowel** in the following syllable.

Restoration of _a_ or Retraction

- **Nominative**   dæġ   dag**a**s
- **Accusative**   dæġ   dæġ
- **Genitive**   dæġes daga
- **Dative**   dæġe   dag**u**m

For further references see pg. 76 // Rastorguyeva T. A. A History of English. - M.: Vysšaja Škola, 2003. - 347 p.)

OE Breaking or fracture

- it is **diphthongization** of short vowels before certain consonant clusters (*before r, l, h + consonant and before h final*).

- It is vowels **a** and **e** that underwent fracture.

OE Breaking or fracture

- *Gth. k**a**lds – WS c**ea**ld*

- Breaking produced a new set of vowels in OE = /**ea**/ and /**eo**/.

OE Breaking or fracture

- *For further references see **pg. 78-80** // Rastorguyeva T. A. A History of English. - M.: Vysšaja Škola, 2003. - 347 p.*

Palatal diphthongization

- OE vowels also change under the influence of the initial **palatal consonants ʒ [j], c [k']** and cluster **sc [sc'].**

- As a result of palatalization the vowel [e] and [æ] are diphthongized. E.g.:

*OE sc**Æ**mu > OE sc**ea**mu 'shame'*

Palatal diphthongization

- *For further references see **pg. 78-80** // Rastorguyeva T. A. A History of English. - M.: Vysšaja Škola, 2003. - 347 p.)*

Front mutation or i-umlaut

- It was a series of changes to vowels which took place when there was an ***i***, ***ī*** or ***j*** in the following syllable.

- Subsequently, the ***i***, ***ī*** or ***j*** disappeared, or changed to ***e***.

in the process termed "mutation". Mutation is the change of one vowel to another through the influence of a vowel in the succeeding syllable.

Table 4

Palatal Mutation

Change illustrated		Examples		
Vowels prior to palatal mutation	Mutated vowels	Gt or OE (without palatal mutation)	OE (palatal mutation)	NE
æ a ɔ }	e	Gt mats OE sala, Gt saljan	mete sellan	*meat* *sale, sell*
a:	æ:	Gt sandjan OE lār, Gt laisjan	sendan lǣran	*send* 'teaching', 'teach'
o	e	OE ān OE dohtor	ǣniʒ dehter	*one, any* *daughter* (Nom. and Dat. sg)
o:	e:	OE bōc OE dōm Gt gadōmjan	bēc dēman	*book, books* *doom* *deem*
u	y	OE full Gt fulljan	 fyllan	*full* *fill*
u:	y:	OE mūs	mȳs	*mouse, mice*
ea eo }	ie	OE eald OE feor	ieldra fierra	*old, elder* *far, farther*
ea: eo: }	ie:	OE ʒelēafa Gt galaubjan OE þēod	 ʒelīefan elþīediʒ *adj*	*belief,* *believe* 'tribe', 'of a tribe'

Front mutation or i-umlaut

- Front mutation made considerable changes in the **pronunciation** of English.

- Examples of i-umlaut in Mod English: *food* and *feed*, *goose* and *geese*, *tooth* and *teeth*, *blood* and *bleed*, *man* and *men*.

Front mutation or i-umlaut

i-umlaut led to the appearance of new vowels:

- [y] and [y:] arose from palatal mutation;
- Diphthongs [ie] and [ie:]

Front mutation or i-umlaut

- For further references see **pg. 80-82** // Rastorguyeva T. A. A History of English. - M.: Vysšaja Škola, 2003. - 347 p.)

Velar umlaut

- For further references see **pg. 82** // Rastorguyeva T. A. A History of English. - M.: Vyssaja Škola, 2003. - 347 p.

6. OE Consonant System

- For further references see **<u>pg. 85-90</u>** // Rastorguyeva T. A. A History of English. - M.: Vysšaja Škola, 2003. - 347 p.