LECTURE 2
Old English Phonetic System and Phonetic Changes

1. Old English Vowels and Consonants.

The Old English sound system, consisting of vowels and consonants, developed from the PG (Proto-Germanic) system.

Old English vowels are divided into **monophthongs** and **diphthongs**. They could be long and short.

VOWELS

- *The monophthongs are:*   *a æ e i u y o*

       å ā ǣ ē ī ū ȳ ō

- *The diphthongs are:*   *ea eo ie io*

       ēā ēō īē īō

In OE there existed a parallelism between short and long vowels (except for **a**). In the diphthong the 2nd element was more open than the first.

CONSONANTS

The system of consonants in OE manifested the following peculiarities.
1. The consonants were divided into:

- <u>labial</u> (губные) sounds – p, b, m, w, f, v;

- <u>velar</u> (задненёбные) and <u>palatal</u> (нёбные) – k, h, g, ɣ, j;

- <u>dental</u> (зубные) – t, d, r, l, n, s, z, θ, ð.

CONSONANTS

2. The <u>absence of affricates (</u>аффрикаты) and <u>sibilants</u> (свистящие, шипящие).

3. <u>Dependence</u> of the quality of the consonants on the environment (окружение) in the word:

- a) phonemes, denoted by the letters **f, þ (ð), s** could be voiced or voiceless. They were voiced in the intervocal position. This position could be made up of a vowel and a voiced consonant.

CONSONANTS

hlāf, oft [f]   –   *hlaford, lifde* [v]

tōþ **[θ]**   **–**   *tōþes* **[ð]**

ʒōs **[s]**   **–**   *ʒōses* **[z]**

But doubled consonants were always voicelss: *offrian* [f:] (предлагать), *sceþþan* **[θ:]** (вредить), *cyssan* [s:] (целовать).

CONSONANTS

b) **the letter ʒ** was pronounced in 3 ways.

- as the voiced velar plosive variant **[g]** at the beginning of the word, before back vowels **(a, o, u)** and consonants, in the middle of the word after **n**:

[g] – *ʒōd, ʒrētan, ʒanʒan*

- as the voiced velar fricative variant **[ɣ]** in the middle of the word after back vowels and consonants [r, l]:

[ɣ] – *daʒas, sloʒ, sorʒ, folʒan*

- as the voiced palatal fricative variant **[j]** before and after front vowels:

[j] – *ʒēār, dæʒ*

CONSONANTS

4. **Double consonants** were read as long: *se**tti**an* [t:], *ste**pp**an* [p:].

5. Instead of **doubled ȝ, cȝ** was written: le**cȝ**an **[g':]** (положить)

6. The **prefix ȝe-** was read as **[je]** and did not influence the pronunciation of the following consonant: *ȝeseȝlian [je 'sejlian].*

2. Phonetic Changes in Old English Vowels.

The phonetic changes in the vowels system were **qualitative** (качественные) and **quantitative** (количественные).

The qualitative changes are

*fracture (breaking) (преломление)

*palatalization (палатализация)

*mutation/umlaut (умлаут)

FRACTURE

OE *fracture* is diphthongization of short vowels before certain consonant clusters (кластеры, группы).

- **æ >ea before 'r +consonant', 'l+consonant', 'h+consonant' and before final h:**

  ærm>**ea**rm 'arm', **æ**ld>**ea**ld 'old', **æ**hta>**ea**hta 'eight', s**æ**h>s**ea**h 'saw'.

FRACTURE

- **e>eo** before the clusters **'r, l, h+consonant',** and **h final:**

  h**e**rte>h**eo**rte 'heart', m**e**lcan>m**eo**can 'milk'(v), s**e**lh>seolh 'seal', f**e**h>f**eo**h 'cattle', 'property'.

The essence of fracture is that the front vowels are partially assimilated to the following hard consonant by forming a glide, which combines with the vowel to form a diphthong.

PALATALIZATION

Palatalization is diphthongization after palatal consonants **[j,k]** and the cluster **[sk].**

- **e>ie: ʒefan>ʒiefan 'give', ʒeldan>ʒieldan 'pay'**
- **æ>ea: ʒæf>ʒeaf 'gave', cæster>ceaster 'camp', scæl>sceal 'shall'**
- **æ>ea: ʒæfon>ʒeafon 'gave' (pl.)**
- **a>ea: scacan>sceacan 'shake'**
- **o>eo: scort>sceort 'short''**

MUTATION (UMLAUT)

Mutation is the change of one vowel to another through the influence of a vowel in the succeeding syllable (последующий слог).

It was of three types:

1) **i-mutation** (palatal mutation)

2) **back mutation**

3) **mutation before h**

I-MUTATION

The most important type of *mutation* is that *caused by an i* (j) of the following syllable. Let's study the mechanism of i-mutation, taking the change **fullian>fyllan** 'fill' as an example. The vowel **u** is articulated by raising the back of the tongue together with rounding the lips. The sound **i** requires raising the front of the tongue.

I-MUTATION

When the speaker begins to articulate the **u**, he at the same time anticipates (предвидеть)the articulation needed for **i** and raises the front of the tongue instead of its back. The lip-rounding is preserved. The result is the vowel **y**.

BACK MUTATION

- Another type of mutation was caused by a back vowel (**a, o, u**) of the following syllable. **The essence** of it is the following. The articulation of the back vowel is anticipated in the preceding front vowel, which accordingly develops into a diphthong.

BACK MUTATION

These are the examples of *back-mutation:*

- *i>io   hira>hiora (heora)'their', sifon>siofon 'seven'*

- *e>eo herot>heorot 'heart'*

- *a>ea   saru>searu 'armour'*

MUTATION BEFORE h

There's no satisfactory explanation for the essence of this type of mutation. This is an example of such a change.

naht>neaht, nieht, niht, nyht 'night'

It may be due to a palatal quality of the **h** or due to an **i** which was probably a case ending (падежное окончание) in the original type of declension (склонение) to which the word belonged.

Quantitative Changes in OE Vowels

Quantitative changes in OE vowels are represented by *lengthening*.

Lengthening took place in certain positions in the 9th century.

1. Vowels are lengthened before the clusters **ld, nd, mb**:

- cild>cīld 'child'

- bindan>bīndan 'bind'

- climban>clīmban 'climb'

But if the cluster was followed by another consonant, lengthening did not take place, as in cildru 'children'.

LENGTHENING

2. It took place if some consonants <u>were lost.</u>

a) The vowels were lengthened when **ʒ** was lost before **d,n.**

sæʒde>s**ǣ**de 'said'

mæʒden>m**ǣ**den 'maiden'

b) The vowels were lengthened when **m,n** were lost before **f, s, Þ, h.**

bronhte>br**ō**hte 'brought', finf>f**ī**f 'five', uns>**ū**s 'us', onÞer>**ō**Þer 'other'.

LENGTHENING

3. Lengthening took place in case of **contraction** (стяжение). If, after a consonant had dropped, two vowels met inside a word, they usually contracted into one long vowel.

- ah+vowel>eah+vowel>ea

slahan>sleahan>slēāh 'slay' (бить, избивать)

- eh, ih+vowel>eoh+vowel>eo
  sehan>seohan>sēōn 'see'

- oh+vowel>o   fohan>fōn 'catch'

3. Phonetic Changes in OE Consonants

Qualitative changes:

voicing and devoicing of fricatives

palatalization

assimilation.

Voicing and Devoicing of Fricatives

In OE the fricatives **f, s, Þ** were subjected (подверглись) to a process of voicing and devoicing. They became voiced intervocally – between vowels, sonorants and voiced consonants. In other positions they remained voiceless.

weorÞan – (становиться) **[ð]**,

wearÞ (стал) - **[θ]**

Palatalization

The velar consonants [k, **g**, **g**:, x] were palatalized before a front vowel and approached (приближаться) affricates in Late OE.

k>k'>ʧ   cild 'child'

sk>sk'>ʃ   scip 'ship'

g(g:)>g'(g:')>dʒ   senʒean 'singe'

                                  brycʒ 'bridge'

Assimilation

Assimilation is a process when two adjacent consonants within a word influence each other in such a way that the articulation of one sound becomes similar to or identical with the articulation of the other one.

For example,

fm>mm	**wifman>wimman 'woman';**
fn>mn	**efn>emn 'even'**

Quantitative Changes of OE Consonants

These include

* loss of consonants:

a) syncopation (синкопа)

b) simplification (упрощение)

*metathesis (метатеза)

*gemination (геминация, удвоение)

Syncopation

Syncopation is shortening of a word through the loss of a sound in the middle of the word e.g.:

friʒnan>frinan 'ask'
sehan>seahan>seon 'see'

Simplification

Simplification is shortening at the beginning of a word. **H** is lost in **hl**, **hr**:

hlaford >loverd 'lord'
hring>ring 'ring'

Metathesis

Metathesis is a phonetic change which consists in two sounds exchanging their places. It mainly affected the consonant **r** and the succeeding vowel e.g.

Þridda> Þirda 'третий',

rinnan>irnan, iernan 'бежать'.

Occasionally metathesis affected other sounds:

sk>ks   wascan>waxan 'wash'

ps> sp   aps>asp 1. осина 2. гадюка, змея (разг.)

Gemination

Gemination is doubling of consonants. This process accompanied i-mutation. It takes place only if the preceding sound is short (before **j, i**), e.g.

> *sætjan>settan* 'put, place'

But   *dōmian>dēman* 'judge'

This change didn't affect the sonorant **r:**

werian=werian