

# МОБОЗНАБСТВО

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## THE LINGUISTIC HERITAGE OF MODERN ENGLISH

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In historical linguistics, the why's and how's of *change* have always been dominant in the scholarly discussion. However, for the complex history of the English language it is equally legitimate to look at *continuity*, and I have accordingly here put together my ideas about retentions and concentrated on features that have remained stable over the centuries.

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### 1. Linguistic change

It is obvious that in spite of all the changes that have happened to English (in partial contrast to my native German, which is in many ways more conservative), there is no doubt that English should be classified as a Germanic language – its basic structures have never been replaced, and although in lexis the proportion of foreign elements to the total is now – and has been since the times of Chaucer – some 60–70 percent, this figure relates to the *type* frequency, but not to the actual occurrence in texts (the *token* frequency), where the Germanic element predominates, as a consequence of the 'little words' such as articles, prepositions and the like.

I will here discuss what remains of the OE, ME and Renaissance stages of English, arranging my arguments in chapters devoted to orthography, pronunciation, inflexional and word-formation morphology, syntax, lexis and text types, concentrating on conspicuous elements and not providing any statistics – which I have not available. Much of what I have to say is at least inherently found in my *Einführung in die englische Sprachgeschichte* of 1974, a book which may well be more easily accessible in its English version, *The Linguistic History of English* (Görlach, 2002b), or in my chapter on "The structural development in English" (Görlach, 2003).

In discussing what earlier stages have contributed to the structure of a modern language, we have to consider what material we base our conclusions (Görlach, 2002c). The transmission of English vernacular texts is very patchy, especially in the Middle Ages, and there is no real homogeneous standard of it for the period here discussed – Early Modern English (EModE) can indeed be defined as the period leading from a stage of extensive variation to the formation of a near-standard in written educated usage (Görlach, 1991). My discussion is therefore characterized by a great deal of selectiveness, and the present short form can of course not do justice to the complicated history of English, in fact one of the most complex histories of any major European language.

Moreover, we need to take into account that the sociohistorical history of English was not straightforward, so that arguments like mine are in danger of being slightly skewed. Samuels (Samuels, 1972) in particular has pointed out that we have to distinguish before 1600 at least five stages in the emerging standard formation: The West Saxon monastery-based written semi-standard which was markedly southwestern and is therefore not in a straight line of development with the later London-based norms, the pre-pestilence London forms (as found in the Auchinleck MS of around 1320, a dialect which arguably developed into the later local Cockney, superseded by Chaucer's English, which had many Midland elements in it, owing to post-pestilence immigration from the Home Counties, the Chancery norms from 1430 onwards which exhibited even more Midland and northern features and substantially form the written standard of the 15<sup>th</sup>/16<sup>th</sup> century, and finally the koineization that went on in the 16<sup>th</sup> century when further input from the provinces created an emerging national standard.

## 2. Orthography

It was Britain's great achievement to develop for OE (specifically for the West Saxon dialect) for a largely illiterate society a very competent spelling system based on phonological contrasts, so that one grapheme stood for one phoneme and *vice versa* (Scragg, 1974). The only exception was the failure to render vowel length – which was of course phonemic – and this was obviously due to the fact that Latin, the source of the new orthography, had no means of expressing the length contrast. For phonemes lacking letters in the Latin model, new forms were invented (*eth*, the crossed d) or borrowed from the runic alphabet (*thorn*, *wynn*).

The new orthography was so efficient that many words are, in ModE, still spelt the way they were in OE. Consider the following selection: *blind*, *bliss*, *corn*, *finger*, *flint*, *fox*, *great*, *hand*, *lust* - the identity in spelling does of course not mean that all of these are today also pronounced the way they were in OE.

The OE system of spelling did not take account of Anglo-Saxon sound changes, a failure most remarkable in the case of /k/ and /g/, and shortenings and lengthenings of vowels, so that repair work had to wait until ME times. This involved various changes, almost all of which are part of the present heritage – such as the indication of vowel length where considered necessary, as in *meet*, *mood*, *loud* (the latter creating new conflicts because of the native interpretation of /o+u/ as in *soul*.) Length was not marked in open syllables (as in bisyllabic *name*, *time*, *nose*) and in vowels preceding (*-nd*, *-mb*, *-ld*) – but this principle was applied in very irregular distribution, with the resulting homograph pair *wind*). Moreover, the fusion of the native and the French/Latin system led to superfluous distinctions and inconsistencies, as in the spellings for /k/ in *corn* (retained), *king* and *queen*, and the use of <c> for /k/ and /s/. When the special letters *wynn* and *eth* were given up in the 12<sup>th</sup> century, and *yogh* and *thorn* in the 15<sup>th</sup>, the modern distribution of graphemes was reached: English has enjoyed, virtually from 1500 onwards, one of the very few alphabets without special letters.

However, the OE principle of a 1:1 relationship was also given up – as is apparent from double letters for long vowels (*ee*, *ij*, *oo*, *ou*, *uy*) and in the rendering of some consonants by way of h-combinations as in *chin*, *shin*, *thin*, (*whin*) and in *naught* and *night*, all these used for single consonantal phonemes. To summarize: the ME system before 1400 was somewhat chaotic, an impression strengthened by regional conventions employed for writing the great number of dialects.

Further, the handwritten characters made <o> for /u/ preferable in *son, tongue*, etc., but similar solutions using <y> for /i/ in *synne, kyng* were given up with the introduction of book printing.

The 15<sup>th</sup> century, with the coming London-based standard, saw the beginnings of a regularization – in the absence of systematic language planning not always with the best solutions chosen. The most glaring deficiency was the total disregard in reflecting the *Great Vowel Shift* (which split off the English writing system from the Continental ones) and the various re-interpretations of the final *-e* which was taken to indicate

vowel length in the preceding ‘syllable’ in *name, time, nose*,

the quality of a written <c> as /s/ in *prince* (note two functions in *nice*),

the avoidance of word-final *-s* in *dense* (to distinguish it from inflected *den*) and of final *-o* and *-u/v*, as in *toe, glue, love*,

marking the voiced character of /th/ in *mouth*,

but representing a sound in *catastrophe*.

These ambiguities (and many more) were handed on to the 16<sup>th</sup> century, book printing and school books, a situation made worse because later sound changes were not considered either, such as the loss of sounds (in *light, thought, gnaw, know*) and diverse partly conditioned developments as apparent in formerly rhyming words (compare *blood:good:mood, cat:what, hut:put*).

Minor changes in the Renaissance concern etymological spellings (*doubt,debt*), and a graphic distinction between *meat* and *meet, boat* and *boot* – the latter distinction being however quite inconsistent. So the one major systematic improvement in the 17<sup>th</sup> century was the distinction of *u/v* and *i/j* according to sound values – that is, the end of *vnto* and *haue* spellings around 1630.

The historical foundations of ModE orthography are then bewildering, in the absence of any successful spelling reform in the course of the past 600 years. Orthoepists did their best in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries, and while scholars like Hart and Gil would have deserved to succeed, they sadly did not. (Neither did the Americans after independence in 1783, which would have provided a unique chance of splitting off the local standard conspicuously from the colonial writing system inherited from Britain.)

### 3. Phonology

Since pronunciation is – and always has been – the most unstable and least homogeneous of language subsystems, we cannot expect much matter handed on from the Middle Ages to the present time. The ‘stable’ consonants /bdmnpst/ show little development, but the others were subject to a great number of conditional and unconditional changes. Many of these had of course happened by 1500, so that the new forms can rightly be considered a part of the medieval heritage. Thus, there is the split in OE /k/ and /g/ in *kin:chin* and in *geese:jiest* ‘guest’, the loss of the two allophones of /x/ in *light:thought*, complete by 1600, and the loss of /l/ and later of /r/ in certain positions (in *calm, four/ty*) – the conservative spelling system still shows their earlier presence. In syllable-initial position, clusters were simplified in OE in words like (*h/loud, hnut* and *hring*, later on in *what* and *wlite, wring*) and in EModE in *gnaw* and *knot*.

In vowels, all OE diphthongs were monophthongized, whether short or long, leaving no trace in the modern system, which is, however, full of reflexes of the *new* diphthongs which arose as a consequence of vocalizations (*day, plough, bow*, and in later ME in *all, cold*).

In late OE and early ME the quantities of vowels became dependent on syllable type, which among other things disguised morphological regularities; consider *kept*(as against *keep*), *southern*

and *holiday* (as against *south* and *holy day*), *wisdom* (as against *wise* and *doom*). Lengthening affected vowels in open syllables (*name, meat, nose* – but only in the north in the case of /i/ and /u/ - and vowels preceding *-ld, -nd, -mb* etc., but did so somewhat irregularly: *wind*, but *the wind, child*, but *children, climb*, but *limb*... lengthening being even rarer in the case of /a/.

Whereas in OE borrowing from Latin little affected the phonological system, since in Britain it was an almost entirely written language, the ME contact with spoken French resulted in filling some gaps in the system: in consonants the phonemization of *s/z, f/v* (*zero, very*) were strengthened, and in vowels /oi/ (*voice*) adopted – but not the rounded vowels in their short or long forms /y, oe/ which must have continued as a social marker of the educated for some time, but were then replaced by native equivalents.

The most important heritage is of course found in the form of the reflexes of the *Great Vowel Shift* (GVS), which changed all the long vowels and diphthongs, developments which in general are not reflected in the spelling. The cause of the major chain shift is not clear. It is however certain that it spread from the Southeast, not fully affecting northern dialects, or even Scots. In this it forms a fascinating partial parallel to the regionally restricted and similarly unexplained diphthongization of /i: and u:/ in medieval German, so that ‘house’ is /haus/ in the Modern German standard, but /hu:s/ in Scots – and in Low German and Swiss German. Note that numerous conditioned changes have made the effects of the GVS opaque, where the spelling often still illustrates the early stage of the change (compare *mood, good, blood* mentioned above).

Among the short vowels, /a/ is a case of a 16th-century conditioned change, with *cat, hat, mad* taking the ‘normal’ development, but preceding /w/ lowering the vowel as in *what*, unless a guttural follows, as in *wax*. Similar conditioning affected /u/ in *hut, but* as against *put, bull, bush* and *butcher*, which presented a serious problem for non-Southerners who wanted to teach themselves standard pronunciation from books.

In non-segmental phonology, the integration of the thousands of French loanwords entirely changed the English system of (formerly word-initial) stress. Whereas words reduced to two syllables developed initial stress, which made them look native (*battle, baron*) and some other words behaved like this, too (*tolerate, tolerance*), the majority of longer loan-words were stressed on the penultimate (*toleration*).

#### 4. Inflexional morphology and word-formation

A comparison with other Germanic languages makes it clear that it was in the field of morphology that the most drastic changes in the history of English occurred, starting in OE and being more or less complete before 1500. OE was of course fully inflected, although some inflections were zero, and others were ambiguous, or better, multifunctional. This fact made it clear how redundant most of them were – their loss would not result in any greater communicational catastrophe. The co-existence with another Germanic language in the Danelaw made the redundancy even clearer and may have speeded up the morphological simplification.

What ModE inherited then from the English system of 1200 or 1300 are the following morphological/syntactic simplifications:

- loss of grammatical gender (which had no semantic support),
- loss of all case inflexion in articles, demonstrative pronouns and adjectives,
- restriction of case inflexion in nouns to the object case (in *-e*) and the genitive in *-(e)s* after the paradigm of the *stan*-class had spread to other noun classes,
- marginal inflection retained in adjectives for ‘weak’ and the plural in *-(e)*,

- caseless plural forms in nouns, with (*e*)*s* spreading to the entire word class with the exception of many foreign words (but French had *-s* too for plurals),
- marginal inflexion for demonstratives indicating the singular:plural contrast,
- a much fuller distinction of cases, numbers and, in the third person, even gender in the personal pronouns.

Language contact is possibly the most forceful explanation for the doing-away with redundancy: Danish and Afrikaans which were bilingual in their formation period are examples of similar morphological simplifications. Retention in the system of personal pronouns has to do with their important syntactical function and their frequency (that is, they are learnt and corrected at a very early age). The retention of the genitive in nouns appears to be due to the fact that at the time of case reductions the genitive could still precede or follow the head of the NP (as in modern German), so that marking was indispensable: after all, there is a difference between *my uncle's daughter* and *my daughter's uncle*, a contrast which must be signalled.

Very poor relics of the older system, not conforming to the modern rules, have survived. Consider the ending-less plural *sheep* (earlier on also found in other long-stem neuters such as *thing*, *swine*, *horse*, *deer*, etc.), the *-n*-plural (very frequent in OE and in Modern German) reduced to *oxen* (and irregular *brethren*), and the handful of *umlaut*-plurals such as *mice*, *geese*, *feet* etc.

– again, a class which became very productive in German.

Irregularity in the verbal system fared much better. Admittedly, personal endings next to disappeared in ME times (apart from the redundant marking of the third person singular), but irregular tense formation in weak verbs of the *thought* and *sold* types, and especially the retention of strong forms without an additional dental element (*wrote*, *bound*, *spoke*, *took* etc.) is in principle not much different from German (cf. my survey of English, Scots and German in (Görlach, 1995a)). True enough, more than half of the OE strong verbs disappeared without a trace, especially if they were of difficult paradigms, were rare or exclusively used in OE poetry. Thus, the ME sets of forms are largely identical with the present list, with a few new forms established in weak *helped* or strong *dug* in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Tense formation in regular weak verbs was tremendously simplified, now covered by a single rule determining the choice of three allomorphs */-t-d-ed/* depending on the final sound of the verb stem.

### 5. Word-formation (Marchand, 1969)

The system saw even more drastic changes which determine the character of ModE. In derivation it will be good to look at a few patterns:

Post-nominal verbs were formed in two different ways in OE: Nouns like *dom*, *lar*, *tun* derive verbs with the help of *umlaut/i-mutation* (*deman*, *laeran*, *tynan*) as do adjectives (*full*, *gold*, *hal*, *hat*) which will give *fyllan*, *haelan*, *haetan*, *gyldan*, but alternatives do without an *umlaut*: in noun-derivatives *sorgian*, *weardian*, or in adjectival ones as in *lathian*, *leanian*, *leasian*. (The two patterns are in principle of course only possible if the stem vowel of the base is back and affected by *umlaut*). *Umlaut* is also effective in derivations of postverbal (causative) transitive verbs: *biegan*, *drencan*, *lecgan*, *settan*, *swencan*, *wendan*), but they can do without, sometimes including a difference of meaning (Görlach, 2002a, p. 70).

Derivations of nouns from adjectives are now dominated by the OE suffix *-nes*. However, OE also possessed a great number of alternatives, of which only isolated fossils survive, some no longer analysable because the formation rules are no longer productive: *length*, *height*, *strength*,

*filth, sloth, freedom, pride*. In adjective formation many patterns remained productive (compare denominal ones on *-y, -ly*, and restricted in *-ish*). However, the general pattern was, from ME on, to borrow the respective adjective from Latin/French, so that *maternal, paternal, fraternal* became the normal complements to *mother, father, brother*, with *motherly, fatherly, brotherly* becoming rare and stylistically marked (dissociation). Another major development shading into syntax is the ME regularization of reducing the number of verbs with inseparable prefixes (*beget, behold, beset*, but to place the separable element behind the verb in finite forms (*he came in, out, up*), reserving pre-position to infinite forms, namely the first and second participle and verbal noun, as in *outstanding, outcast, income* and *outcome*).

To summarize: *Umlaut* ended to be productive in morphology, earlier formations might survive into ME, but not necessarily did: *fill, deem, gild, heal, heat, set, wend* do survive, but their formation is opaque. The normal development is to select the morphologically less complex model or to form new derivatives: of OE *weorc, wyrcan, wyrhta* the modern equivalents are *the work, to work, worker*. Since all these more regular forms are ME, they can count as heritage elements for ModE, all of this providing the morphological simplicity of the modern system, often claimed to make the learning of English much easier than that of German. *Why* the latter retained most of the complexity mentioned for OE above is a matter of speculation. It cannot be the absence of a regulating standard conserving irregular forms, since the sociolinguistic situation of the two medieval languages was similar.

One pattern profited from the morphological simplification, namely the zero-derivation, as in *work* n. deriving *work* vb. mentioned above. The method had been used in OE, (and is used in ModGerman, as in *Arbeit: arbeiten*), but its frequency obviously increased in ME with the demand to morphological transparency. With the loss of the last endings (apart from ambiguous *-(e)s*) part of speech category is no longer signalled morphologically, that is, we could consider zero-derivation as belonging to the field of syntax – some scholars indeed call the process ‘conversion’ to refer to the changed functions.

However, as a whole, the conspicuous reduction in new formations, in derivation as well as in compounds, is most certainly an effect of the overwhelming lexical impact of the standard language French in ME times, which made it seem unnecessary to derive a new English word where an elegant French equivalent could more easily be borrowed, also adding sociolinguistic prestige (see chapter 7. below). Note that it is rare for a French derivational pattern to replace a native one, which has happened to the unlimited productivity of *-able (lovable)*, which replaced OE *-baere* from the 13<sup>th</sup> century onwards.

## 6. Syntax

What made the developments of OE to ME syntax not more conspicuous than they actually were? In word-order SVO was the dominant choice already in OE prose, deviations were stylistic choices, possible if case marking precluded semantic ambiguity. To illustrate the principle I varied a Biblical statement producing four similar OE sentences distinguished by inflexions and word order, as follows:

Glaedne giefend lufath God	God loves a cheerful giver	
Glaed giefend lufath God	A cheerful giver loves God	
Glade giefendas lufath God	God loves cheerful givers	
Glade giefendas lufiath God	Cheerful givers love God	(Görlach, 2002c, p. 50)

The stark contrast leading to ModE was not fully efficient before 1400, even though with the loss of inflexions one might have expected that alternative forms of marking would have become necessary. These emergency measures led to an increased use of prepositions and a slow increase of SVO. The first constituent being increasingly interpreted as the subject of the sentence, the loss of object marking effectually pushed out the impersonal construction in the 15<sup>th</sup> century (*The kinge liketh the cake, me listeth...*). However, the major changes that led to ModE syntax (although some had been stylistic options in ME) do not really come to be functional before the Renaissance. They consist of:

- a stylistic modelling of the vernacular on French legal and Latin medical and literary texts, which included a drastic increase of hypotaxis, with an accompanying growth in conjunctions and participles;
- the loss of full-verb status of modal auxiliaries;
- a functional distinction between the preterite and present perfect;
- the increase and grammaticalization of the progressive form;
- and the regularization of the uses of functional *do* in certain types of questions and *not*-negated sentences.

These changes became fully effective only in the late 17<sup>th</sup> century, which justifies the simplifying statement that “Modern English syntax begins with Dryden”. (The statement has also to do with the stylistic ideal changing from the ideal of copiousness to that of perspicuity). It seems an inevitable conclusion that the major changes in EModE syntax have to do with

- the expansion of text types which needed more complex structures to render complex arguments,
- and the final demise of Latin as a second language, in particular in the sciences and as a dominating stylistic model up to 1650 or so.

Later developments are few (such as progressive forms of passives: *The house is being built* and other innovations related to new text types, for instance to various forms of newspaper texts (see Section 8. below)

## 7. Lexis (Scheler, 1977; Serjeantson, 1961)

There is little continuity in many parts of OE lexis surviving after 1066. This fact made the editors of the *OED* exclude OE lexis from their dictionary unless the items were still recorded in ME. This decision is also reflected in the *Historical Thesaurus* (Kay, 2009). This does not include items restricted to OE, lexis which was covered by Samuels, Michael & Kay (in a separate work (Marchand, 1969)).

The reasons for the extensive verbal turnover including very many lexical losses are manifold:

- the restriction of a great number of words to the poetical register, with heroic poetry not surviving beyond the Norman Conquest,
- the disappearance of many loan translations made with purist motives whose currency is now impossible to determine, such as Aelfric’s Englishing of grammatical terms,
- changes in the social and cultural background which made concepts, and thereby lexical elements, unnecessary,
- the competition of Scandinavian, and later French, words, which often supplemented or replaced native items.

Even if we assume that, say, half of the 30,000 words recorded from OE survive into ModE (Clark, 1969), they constitute a very small part indeed of the 600,000 items recorded in the *OED*.

What then survives and forms the lexical heritage of OE lexis are mainly portions of the central vocabulary, which also means frequent words learnt in early childhood – they still make up the majority of tokens in modern newspaper texts. Survivals also include a number of early compounds where the strong initial word-stress had made their composition opaque: *barn, lady, lord, woman*. Retentions further include central terms of the Christian religion adopted as semantic loans or loan translations in the very early stage of the Celtic and Augustine missions, such as *God, Almighty, Holy Ghost, church, gospel, sin*, but other central terms such as the word for ‘disciple’ did not survive. Others were later adapted to Romance forms, such as *engel/angel*. In all, the percentage (3%) of loanwords recorded in OE – without any purist language planning!

- is surprisingly low. This changed dramatically when the floodgates were opened in ME times.

In other word classes, the survival rate is high among strong verbs, most of them still with Irregular forms in tense and participle formation – even though the retention rate is not nearly as high as in the more conservative German (statistics in Görlach under (Görlach, 1995b, p. 62)).

The substantial increase of lexis in ME is not only due to the survival of more manuscripts, but largely to the willing adoption of French and Latin words (for many the two source languages were impossible to determine formally). The social reasons for borrowing are obvious from the fact that many ‘unnecessary’ words were taken over into ME. The concepts for ‘joy, case, family, grace’ and many more were of course rendered in OE, and the take-over of loanwords in other fields increased at best the initial precision of the OE term. I have illustrated this development using the OE word *dom*, whose wide range of meaning made it impractical for legal and similar contexts, which led to the takeover of *s tatute, decree, judgment, sentence, opinion, fate, destiny, destruction, ruin, process, trial, justice, authority* (Görlach, 2002a, p. 110), limiting the semantic range of *dom* dramatically, but also leading to polysemy in many of the replacements in due course.

Although conclusions based on poetical diction are problematic, it is significant that in Chaucer’s work (written between 1370 and 1400) the proportion of foreign-derived words is some 60% of the total lexis – the same proportion as found in dictionaries of ModE. Here then, we can in late ME clearly see the foundations of the lexis of ModE, however much the Renaissance and the 18th/19th centuries added to more special words of the sciences and other specialized domains.

Less spectacular in numbers, but important for their frequency in everyday life, are the words derived from the 10th-century Scandinavian settlers of the Danelaw. Although these items were taken over into the spoken dialects of late OE, they were recorded only when Midland dialects came to be written down in greater numbers in ME times. Consider the importance of *sk-* words alone: *skill, skin, skirt, skull, sky*. Although their distribution was regional at first, many words, as a consequence of inner-English migrations, made it into London English, most notably *they, them, their*. Chaucer’s language is a good test of which of these words had arrived by 1400 – and were not only found in the northern diction of the students in the *Reeve’s Tale*.

A major problem in understanding historical texts is involved in semantic change – we seem to interpret many contexts properly, but in fact fail to do. Such cases are particularly frequent in texts before 1500 (compare, in the first lines Chaucer’s Prologue to the *Canterbury Tales*, the meaning of *lycour, vertu, fowles, corages*, but the problem is also found in later texts, as when in Puttenham (1579) the poet is advised not to use the language of ports, “where *straungers* haunt for *trafike* sake” - ‘where they frequent for the sake of trade’ (Görlach, 1991), or in Hamlet, where the proper interpretation of his statement “thus conscience doth make cowards of us all” will affect the understanding of his character and of the entire play. It seems even more problematic to determine exactly what the (immaterial) value system of Chaucer’s Knight was, who loved “*chualrye*” which



for him consisted in “trouth and honour, fredom and curteisye” (the definitions in the *OED* and in Davis et al. (1979) will help).

### 8. Text types (Görlach, 2004)

A description of the development of ModE would be incomplete without a discussion of what foundations the emergence of vernacular text types laid for the modern language. If English was to represent a ‘full’ language, it had to take over genres from Latin and French in the Middle Ages. English had accordingly to develop many new types for the expansion of the range of the vernacular. This requirement had consequences for the precision and flexibility of the syntax and the lexis in particular.

The New Testament had been translated into OE (a version which was unknown in ME times), but the entire Bible was Englished anew in the late 14<sup>th</sup> century by the Wycliffites, so that following translators could build on safe linguistic foundations: Tyndale has therefore not much need for new words – and the ‘low’ character of the Biblical texts saved him from inventing any rhetorical beautification and artificial innovative lexis, which is so conspicuous in secular translations of the time. Likewise, the compilers of the *Authorized Version* in 1611 heavily relied on the many Bible versions available.

By contrast, medical, administrative or legal texts needed a huge amount of precision in lexis (mainly achieved by using unadapted loanwords) and in syntax making arguments and thereby sentences much more complex and longer.

An expansion of text types is also evident from the increase of literary forms. Spenser, in his *Shepherd’s Calendar* of 1579, in imitating the bucolic literature of antiquity, created a diction made up from Chaucerisms, dialect words and classical clichés (a mixture which made Ben Jonson comment: “Spenser in affecting the ancients, writ no language”). Almost 80 years later, Milton had to decide on the proper language for his national epic, *Paradise Lost*. He chose English and noted that he had to “pursue Things unattempted yet in Prose or Rhime” (Görlach, 1991, p. 328). That not all people liked his attempt at Latinized English is apparent from Addison’s remark that Milton created a wonderful temple – of brick (Latin would have been marble).

### 9. Conclusion

The unique history of English, in particular what the modern language owes to the medieval and Renaissance foundations, would become even clearer when compared to the development of other European standard languages. I have tried to do this for the development of Scots (Görlach, 2002a) and inherently used my native competence of German to contrast this more conservative tongue with English – but a comprehensive comparison, which is likely to bring out many arguments here offered more clearly is a matter much beyond the scope of a short article.

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## ЛІНГВІСТИЧНА СПАДЩИНА В ОСНОВІ СУЧАСНОЇ АНГЛІЙСЬКОЇ МОВИ

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Епістеміка історичної лінгвістики завжди включала питання про те, як і коли виникали мовні зміни. Проте для складної історії англійської мови не менш вагомий також і погляд на *перебіг* історичного процесу. Стаття зосереджує увагу на діахронних константах та тому, що утримувалося у мові, роблячи її стабільною впродовж століть.

*Ключові слова:* історія англійської мови, діахронія, панхронія, історичні імплікатури.