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LECTURE 2

**OLD ENGLISH PHONOLOGY.**

# Plan

- 1. Word Stress in OE.**
- 2. Comparison of PIE, PG and OE vowel systems.**
- 3. Qualitative changes within the system of vowels.**
- 4. Quantitative changes within the system of vowels.**
- 5. The system of consonants.**
- 6. The main processes within the system of consonants.**

# Literature

- Расторгуева Т.А. История английского языка. – М.: Астрель, 2005. – С. 75-90.
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# Word Stress in OE

- Word stress inherited from PG underwent no changes in OE.
- In EPG the stress was still movable; in LPG it became fixed on the first syllable.
- The OE period was characterized by a system of fixed stress. The stress was fixed on the first syllable.
- Due to the force of articulation the stressed and unstressed syllables underwent different changes: stressed syllables were pronounced with great distinctness and precision, while unstressed syllables became less distinct and phonetically weakened.

- In disyllabic and polysyllabic words the stress fell on the root morpheme or on the first syllable. Word stress was fixed: it remained on the same syllable in different grammatical forms of the word and as a rule didn't shift in word building as well.  
**e.g. *Nom. Sing. scip (ship), 'hlaford (lord)***  
***Dat. Sing. 'scipu, 'hlaforde***
- Polysyllabic words, especially compounds, may have had 2 stresses (primary and secondary).  
**e.g. *OE boc-hus (a library)***
- The verbal prefixes were unstressed  
**e.g. *OE mis'faran (to mislead),***  
***and 'swarian (to answer),***  
the nominal, adjectival prefixes were stressed  
**e.g. 'andswaru (an answer).**

# PIE and PG VOWEL SYSTEMS

	PIE		PG	
	FRONT	BACK	FRONT	BACK
High	i	u	i	u
Mid	e	o	e	
Low		a		a
High	i:	u:	i:	u:
Mid	e:	o:	e:	o:
Low		a:		

# OE VOWEL SYSTEM

	FRONT	BACK	FRONT	BACK
High	i	y	u	
Mid	e	o		
Low	æ	a	ã	
+ diphthongs: ea, eo, io, ie    ea:, eo:, io:, ie:				

**PG [a] and [a:] were fronted and, in the process of fronting, split into several sounds.**

**[a] > [æ] in closed syllables;**

**[a] > [o, ã] before a nasal;**

**[a] remained unchanged if it was followed by a back vowel in the next syllable.**

<b>PG</b>	<b>OE</b>	<b>Examples</b>
	<b>æ</b>	<b>Goth. þata, dags – OE þæt (that), dæʒ (day)</b>
<b>a</b>	<b>o, ã</b>	<b>Goth. manna – OE mon (man)</b>
	<b>a</b>	<b>Goth. dagos – OE daʒas (days)</b>
	<b>æ:</b>	<b>OHG slafen – OE slæpan (to sleep)</b>
<b>a:</b>	<b>o:</b>	<b>Oldcel. mānaðr – OE mōnaþ (month)</b>



# The tendency to assimilative vowel changes

- Under the influence of succeeding and preceding consonants some Early OE monophthongs developed into diphthongs.
- If a front vowel stood before a velar consonant there developed a short glide between them, as the organs of speech prepared themselves for the transition from one sound to another.
- The glide together with the original monophthong formed a diphthong.

# OE Breaking (fracture)

- diphthongization of short vowels before certain consonant clusters.

before clusters **l, r, h + consonant**

**a (æ) > ea**

Goth. **a**lls – OE **e**all

Goth. **a**htau – OE **e**ahta

**e > eo**

OHG. **e**rk – OE **de**orc

OHG. **e**rza – OE **he**orte

OHG. **e**lcan – OE **me**olcan

# Front mutation (Palatal mutation, I-Umlaut)

Fronting and raising of root vowels  
under the influence of [i], [j]  
in the following syllable.

**i / y** < **u** Goth. **f**uljan – OE **f**yllan, OE **m**us-m**y**s

**e** < **o** Goth. **d**ohtar – OE **d**ehter, OE **b**oc-b**e**c

**æ** < **a** Goth. **s**aljan, **ā**n – OE **s**ellan, **æ**n**i**z

**ie** < **ea, eo** OE **e**ald – OE **i**eldra, **i**eldest

# Back mutation (Velar mutation, U-Umlaut)

Diphthongization of root front vowels under the influence of back vowels in the following syllable.

**i** > **io** OE silufr – siolufr (silver), OE hira -hiora (their)

**e** > **eo** OE sifon – siofon, OE hefon - heofon (heaven)

**æ** > **ea** OE cæru – cearu (care)

# Diphthongization due to initial palatal consonants

Diphthongization of root vowels after the palatal consonants  $\text{ȝ}$  [g'],  $\text{c}$  [k'] and  $\text{sc}$  [sk']

**e** > **ie**

OE  $\text{ȝefan}$  –  $\text{ȝiefan}$  (to give),

OE  $\text{ȝeldan}$  –  $\text{ȝieldan}$  (to pay)

**o** > **eo**

OE  $\text{scort}$  –  $\text{sceort}$  (short)

**a** > **ea**

OE  $\text{scan}$  –  $\text{scean}$  (to shake)

Goth.  $\text{scadus}$  – OE  $\text{sceadu}$  (shade)

# Contraction

**Two vowels were contracted into one long vowel**

OE\*slæhan > \*sleahan > slēan (to slay)

OE\*sehan > \*seahan > sēon (to see)

# Quantitative changes within the system of vowels

- **Lengthening before fricatives (f, θ, s) due to the loss of nasals**

OE \*onþar > OE oþer (other)

OE \*uns, ʒons, munþ > OE ūs (us), ʒōs (goose), mūþ (mouth)

- **Loss of [χ] after a vowel**

OE \* mæχden > mæden (a maiden)

- **Lengthening in the final stressed position** OE by, swa > OE bý, swā (as)

# Quantitative changes within the system of vowels

- **Lengthening before certain clusters ld, nd, mb**

OE ald, cild, wild, wind – OE āld (old), cīld (child), wīld (wild), wīnd (wind)

- **Shortening before other clusters**

OE wīfmann (wife), cēpte (kept) – OE wifmann, cepte



# The system of consonants in OE

		Labial	Dental	Palatal	Velar
<b>Plosives</b>	voiceless	p	t	<b>k'</b>	k
	voiced	b	d	<b>g'</b>	g
<b>Fricatives</b>	voiceless	f	θ    s	<b>x'</b>	x
	voiced	<b>v</b>	<b>ð</b> z	<b>y'</b>	<b>y</b>
<b>Sonorants</b>		m <b>w</b>	n r    l	<b>j</b>	ŋ

# Splitting of velar consonants (Palatalization)

Before and after front vowels	In other positions	Examples
k'	k	OE cinn (chin), birce (birch), can (can), macian (to make)
g'	g	OE sen <sub>3</sub> an (to sing), ec <sub>3</sub> (edge), <sub>3</sub> an (to go)
x' y' (j)	x y	OE niht (night), hors (horse), OE dæ <sub>3</sub> (day), da <sub>3</sub> as (days)

# Splitting of velar consonants (Palatalization)

- The velar consonants were palatalized before a front vowel (sometimes after front vowels) unless followed by a back vowel. **OE cild** [kild] > [k'ild] (before a front vowel), **OE spræc** (**speech**), but in ***sprecan*** (**to speak**) [k] was followed by a back vowel. The differences between velar and palatal consonants were not reflected in the spelling.

# Loss of consonants

**n, m** were lost before the fricatives

(**x, f, s**) Goth. **fimf, uns** - OE **fīf** (five), **ūs** (us)

**X** was lost between vowels

PG **\*fōhan** > **\*fōan** > OE **fōn** (to catch)

**3** was lost before the dentals (**d, t, n**)

OE **sæ3de** > **sæde** (said)

**X** was lost before sonorants

OE **hring, hnutu** > OE **ring, nute** (ring, nut)

# Metathesis [məˈtæθəsis]

**Two sounds exchange their place**

**There are two stages:**

- 1) The vowel disappears and [r] becomes syllabic;**
- 2) Eventually the vowel reappears  
on the other side of [r]**

**\*hros > hors (horse)**

**OE þrida > \*þrda > þirda (third)**

**OE rinnan > \*rnan > irnan (to run)**

- **Assibilation** is the change of **palatal consonants (not velar)** into **affricates and sibilants**: ***g', k', sk'*** change correspondingly into ***dʒ, tʃ, ʃ*** *bryʒʒe* – *bridge*, *cild* – *child*, *scirt* – *shirt*.
- **Long consonants in the final position** became short – hence the process of **Shortening**: *mann* – *man* (*but manna*)

**THANK YOU FOR  
YOUR ATTENTION!**