



# Unit 5. The Early Modern English period (1500-1700)

History of the English Language (G5061322)

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5.1. Socio-historical scenario: cultural, political and technological influences

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5.3. Debate over English: Vocabulary expansion and the standardization of spelling

5.4. Main features of the language in the period

**5.1. Socio-historical scenario: cultural, political and technological influences**

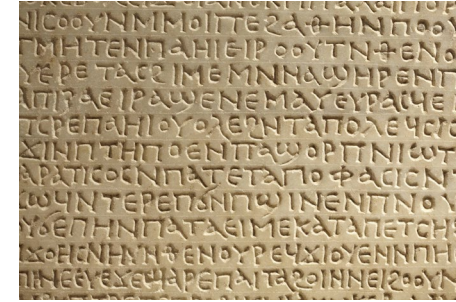
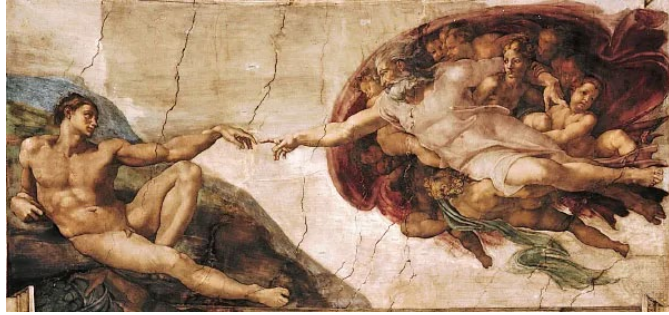
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# 5.1 Socio-historical scenario: cultural, political and technological influences

## Renaissance



- Increased activity in all fields of knowledge and **growth of specialised knowledge**.
- Interest in **classical learning** resulted in translations of authors like Caesar, Plato, Virgil or Ovid (→ **borrowing from classical languages**).

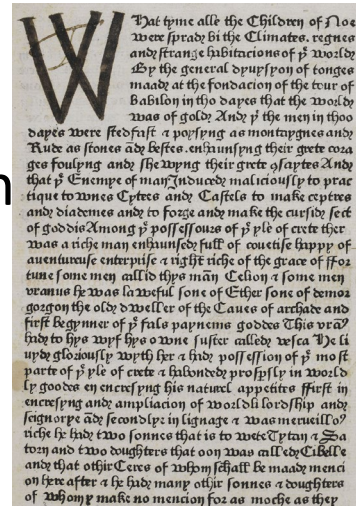


# 5.1 Socio-historical scenario: cultural, political and technological influences

## Introduction of the printing press (Caxton 1476)



- **Books become available to many** and the **new Renaissance ideas** could **disseminate more easily**.
- Effect on **standardisation** → reproduction of **identical copies** of a text.
- **Dramatic increase of the reading public** and greater demand for books in English



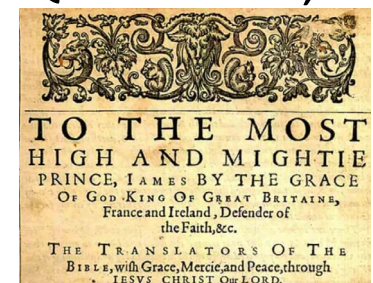
# 5.1 Socio-historical scenario: cultural, political and technological influences

- **Science** became more **empirical** → Foundation of the Royal Society in 1660
- **English** is used **for science**.
- **Spread of literacy** and education (literacy had already started to spread to the middle class in the late Middle English period, but in the Renaissance it spread even further. The **number of schools increases**).
- Literary boom, with **figures such as Marlowe, Shakespeare, Johnson, Spenser, and Milton**.



# 5.1 Socio-historical scenario: cultural, political and technological influences

- **Changes in religion:** Catholic Europe > split between the South (Catholic) and North (Protestant),
- **Religious reformation** supports the use of the vernaculars in the Bible and in liturgy (direct access to God's word, not mediated by a priest, cf. Wyclif as an antecedent).
- Numerous **translations of the Bible**, culminating in the **Authorized Version** (*King James' Bible*, 1611).
- Importance of **religious movements** of a radical nature which had an **impact on attitudes towards language** (e.g. **Puritanism**, esp. among the middle class; and **Quakerism**, esp. among the lower classes).





## 5.1 Socio-historical scenario: cultural, political and technological influences

- **Improvement of means of transportation** → bringing together of different parts of the world and of the country through commerce and political expansion.
- Impact on vocabulary (borrowing, including dialect borrowing) and on standardisation.
- Discovery of **new territories** and colonial expansionism:
  - **American colonies** founded in the 1st half of the 17th century;
  - later on expansion in **Africa and Asia** (East India Company, 1600);
  - discovery of **New Zealand** (1642).
- **Borrowing from non-European languages** and English is transplanted to new territories.





## 5.1 Socio-historical scenario: cultural, political and technological influences

- **Wool and grain** are the major industry.
- The focus of commercial activity is in London and the South-East, which continue to attract immigration.
- **London** will increase its **population** to **600,000 inhabitants in 1700** (vs. 70,000 in the late Middle Ages), becoming the **largest city in Europe**.
- Important social changes → the **power of the monarch diminishes** and the **distinctions between the nobility, the gentry, and the rich merchant class were blurred**. Social mobility increases.



# 5.1 Socio-historical scenario: cultural, political and technological influences

- **EModE is politically marked by the changes of dynasty (Tudors, 1485-1603; Stuarts 1603-1649; restored 1660), the Civil Wars (1642-1646 & 1648-1649) and the Revolution (1688, Glorious Revolution).**
- **Henry VIII** breaks with the Church of Rome → **Head of the Church of England** (Act of Supremacy, 1534)
- Succeeded by his daughter **Mary I (Bloody Mary)**, for her persecution of Protestants).
- **Elizabeth I** → strong **nationalistic feelings** promoted the **English language**.



## 5.1 Socio-historical scenario: cultural, political and technological influences

- **James VI of Scotland**, Mary Stuart's son, **becomes king James I of England (Union of the Crowns, 1603)** → Scots in the court.
- Period of **domestic unrest**, culminating with the **Civil Wars** (1642-1646; 1648-1649), the **execution of Charles I**, and the **Commonwealth**.
- **Restoration of the monarchy in 1660** under **Charles II** after a period of antipathy towards foreign ideas.
- **French ideas** and social ideals were again **in vogue** (→ **loanwords from French**).
- **Union of England and Scotland as Great Britain (1707)**.

5.1. Socio-historical scenario: cultural, political and technological influences

**5.2. Varieties, the standard and the expansion of English beyond England**

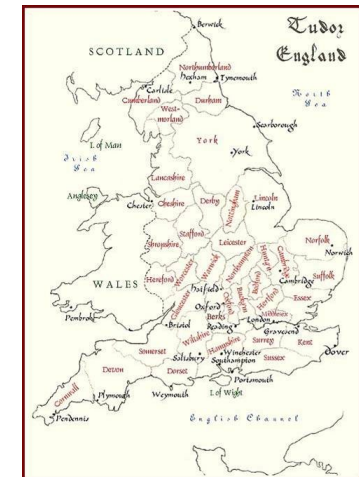
5.3. Debate over English: Vocabulary expansion and the standardization of spelling

5.4. Main features of the language in the period

## 5.2.1 Varieties and the standard

### EModE:

- **English** gained most of the earlier functions of Latin and French (**high functions** → language of administration, education, learning, religion).
- **Standardisation**, most notably in **spelling**.
- The **dialectal divisions** of Middle English are **maintained** in Early Modern English: Northern, East/West Midlands, South and Kentish.



## 5.2.1 Varieties and the standard

### EModE:

- Alexander Gil, *Logonomia Anglica* (1619) distinguishes several dialects: the General, the Northern, the Southern, the Eastern, the Western and the Poetic. He combines register and regional criteria.
  - The 'General' was what we now would regard as the standard (identified with 'persons of genteel character and cultured upbringing', i.e. upper classes).
  - The 'Poetic' dialect was the appropriate variety for poetry → old-fashioned; features of the Northern dialect, which is regarded as the purest form of English.

## 5.2.1 Varieties and the standard

- **Prestige of the Southern variety** in EModE:

it was **Southern**, rather than Northern or Western and was to be found **especially among the well-bred and well-educated classes in London** [...] It rules out speakers of regional dialects as well as what were called vulgar, effeminate, or affected speakers. (Gramley 2012: 129) [emphasis added].

→ John Hart, *Method* (1570), it is in 'the Court and London, where the flower of the English tongue is used'.

→ William Harrison, *A Historie Description of the Iland of Britaine* (1577): 'this excellencie of the English toong is found in one, and the south part of this Iland' [...] 'The Scottish english hath beene much broader and lesse pleasant in vtterance than ours'.

→ George Puttenham, *The Arte of English Poesie* (1589), encourages his readers to imitate 'the vsuall speech of the Court, and that of London and the shires lying about London within lx.myles, and not much aboue' and the language of 'the better brought vp sort'.

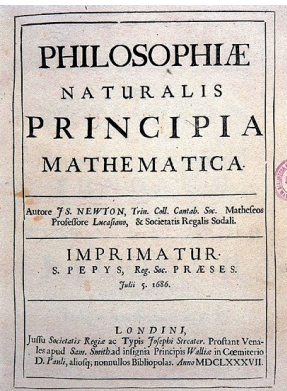


## 5.2.1 Varieties and the standard

- Tolerance towards dialect speakers diminishes and **dialectal features tend to be avoided** (e.g. very few traces of Shakespeare's native Stratford dialect; James I's efforts to avoid Scottish features).
- Dialect features are **still found** and are not criticised in:
  - **Private texts** (e.g. private letters, diaries, etc.): the same speaker could use standard or dialect depending on the type of text and the kind of audience s/he intended to address;
  - **spoken language**;
  - **theatre**: dialect used to identify characters as country bumpkins;
  - **poetry** (e.g. pastoral poetry → recreation of rustic atmosphere)

## 5.2.1 Varieties and the standard

- Less tolerance to the use of dialects is paired with the **expansion of the standard dialect**.
- The **elaboration of functions**, which had started in the late ME period, continues in the 16th and 17th centuries. English **continues** to expand replacing Latin:



- as the **language of religion**: Protestantism attracted particularly the lower classes (books and pamphlets in English, services in English, *Book of Common Prayer*);
- as the **language of scholarship**: triggered by those social groups willing to learn Latin. English is also used to translate Latin works and finally also in scientific works (e.g. Newton wrote his *Principia* (1687) in Latin, but *Opticks* (1704) in English).

- Despite this expansion to high functions, **English** was **still greatly influenced by Latin** (not only in **lexis**, but also in **spelling** and in **style** (long paragraphs, heavy subordination, etc.)

## 5.2.2 Geographical expansion of English: The British Isles

### Scotland

- **Languages** in Scotland → **Scottish Gaelic** (esp. in the North and West), **Norn** (in the Shetland and Orkney islands, < ON) and **English** (in the Lowlands, since OE).
- **Scottish English** was very similar to Northern English (< OE Northumbrian and ME Northern dialects), but now it is the language of **Scotland**, an **independent kingdom**.
- Inglis, only **known as Scottis at the end of the 15th century**, then became the language of commerce, law and a large body of literature (starting with **Robert the Bruce**, late 14th century) (i.e. HIGH functions, therefore it can be considered a standardised variety). Scots is **heavily influenced by Old Norse and French**.



## 5.2.2 Geographical expansion of English: The British Isles

### An illustration of Scottish English:

*Bot as to this work, **quhilk** is institul**it**, The Reul**is** and cautel**is** to be observ**it** & eschew**it** in Scottis Poesie, **ze** may marvell paraventure, **quhairfore** I **sould** have writtin in that mater, **sen** sa many learn**et** men, **baith** of **auld** and of late hes already written thei**rof** in diverse and sindry languages: (King James VI, *Reulis and Cautelis*, 1584)*

Scottish spellings <quh>, <z> *quhilk*, *ze* for *ye*. Scottish pronunciations reflected in spelling <-it, -is>; Scottish vowels /a, ai, au/ *sa*, *baith*, *auld*; /s/ instead of /ʃ/ *sould*. Specifically Scottish words *quhilk*, *sen*, *cautelis*

## 5.2.2 Geographical expansion of English: The British Isles

Over time, the **Southern influence on Scots** increases:

→ **religion**: the Reformation and translations from the Bible and preachers from the South move to the North;

→ the **Union of the Crowns (1603)**: King James moves to London;



→ southern printers established their businesses in Scotland, so **books in southern English** were **printed in Scotland**;

→ writers adopted southern spellings (e.g. <quh-> replaced by <wh->, *quhilk* vs. *which*; preterite *-it* becoming *-ed*, *intendit* > *intended*; *na* and *nocht* > *no* and *not*), and grammatical features (e.g. pres. pple. *-and* replaced by *-ing*; expansion of *do*-support).

## 5.2.2 Geographical expansion of English: The British Isles

**From the late 16th century onwards → emergence of the Scots dialect movement**

attempts to produce a **written language which reflected** the way **Scots speak** (18th century poet Robert Burns).

But having a dialect literature of this kind is not the same thing as having a standard Scots literary language. When Middle Scots was the standard literary language of Scotland, all written transactions (if not in Latin) were carried out in this language –official documents, private letters, contracts, sermons, pamphlets, works of scholarship. But since the eighteenth century, when Scotland has had a dialect literature, this has not been so: there have been plays and poems in Scots, but the contracts and the history books and the chemistry textbooks have been written in the southern literary language. (Barber 1997: 21)

## 5.2.2 Geographical expansion of English: The British Isles

### Wales

**Act of Union (1536)** → English becomes the official language of Wales

- **Welsh** still **predominates** as a **spoken language** and is preserved as a literary medium (esp. in religious texts).
- Welsh could **not** be **used at court**, so the use of **English increases among the upper classes**.
- By the **18th century Welsh** was confined to the **lower classes**.





## 5.2.2 Geographical expansion of English: The British Isles

### Ireland

- **first settlements in the 12<sup>th</sup> century**, but the English and the Scots who invaded the island shifted to Gaelic.
- in EModE settlers from the South and SWMidlands populated southern Ireland and settlers from the North and Scotland moved to northern Ireland.
- English became the language of dominion and the use of Gaelic receded gradually, although it continued to be the major language until the 19th century, where there was a movement towards English (esp. by those who wanted to immigrate to England, America or Australia).

## 5.2.2 Geographical expansion of English: Overseas

- Expansion to **America** → **late 16th/early 17th centuries**:
  - c. 400,000 English immigrants take English to the Caribbean and North America.
- Three large waves of immigration to North America:
  - **Puritans** from East Anglia to the **Massachusetts Bay**;
  - gentry from the South to Virginia;
  - **Quakers** from the North Midlands to the Delaware Valley.



## 5.2.2 Geographical expansion of English: Overseas

- English dialectal features were taken to America, although the English language in North America during the colonial period (until 1776) was pretty homogeneous in comparison with English in Britain.
- **Borrowing from Native American languages**, esp. from the Algonquian family. These borrowings are particularly frequent in names for flora (e.g. *persimmon* < Algonquian) and fauna (*raccoon* < Algonquian) and words related to native culture and society (*moccasin* < Algonquian; wigwam > Abenaki).
- Also different uses of existing words (e.g. *robin*) and borrowings from other European languages.

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## 5.3.1. Vocabulary expansion and the *inkhorn controversy*

- The monopoly of Latin as the language of scholarship and religion had left the **vernaculars** underdeveloped. **Three major challenges:**
  - 1) **recognition** in fields where Latin had been the prestige language (esp. religion, learning);
  - 2) **enrichment of vocabulary** to meet the demands of new fields;
  - 3) establishment of a **uniform orthography**.

EModE → **great expansion of the English lexicon**, and great **debate**.



### 5.3.1. Vocabulary expansion and the *inkhorn controversy*

From the beginning of the sixteenth century until the 1580s, the “insufficiency” of the vernacular was a common cause of complaint. Much of the controversy arose in connection with translation of the classics and the Bible. It was argued that English lacked the prestige of French and Latin as a language of learning and literature. English was “rude” and “barbarous”, inexpressive and ineloquent, and it did not have the technical vocabulary required in specialised domains of language use, for example in medicine. The need to expand the lexicon was then partly practical, to coin new words for new concepts, and partly stylistic, to provide a richness of vocabulary, known as *copiousness* or *copy* (*copia verborum*), which was considered the hallmark of a literary language. (Nevalainen 1999: 358)

## 5.3.1. Vocabulary expansion and the *inkhorn controversy*

Barber (1997: chapter 2) distinguishes **three main schools of thought concerning borrowing**:

- 1) The **neologisers** (in favour of borrowing);
- 2) The **purists** (against borrowing and in favour of using native English words: with word formation strategies/reusing words);
- 3) The **archaisers** (revival of archaic words).



### **Borrowing:**

- Previous borrowing from French and Latin in ME;
- All languages (including Latin) had enriched themselves through borrowing;
- The strangeness of the new terms would disappear over time.



## 5.3.1. Vocabulary expansion and the *inkhorn controversy*

### Neologisers

→ Thomas Elyot



- **Borrowing from classical languages** served **to improve English**, as it was either motivated by a given need or to make English more eloquent and elegant.
- From the 16<sup>th</sup> c. borrowing was clearly exaggerated and faced **strong opposition**, since some words were argued to be **obscure** and **strange**:

Among all other lessons this should first be learned, that we never affect any straunge ynkehorne termes, but to speake as is commonly received. [...] Some seeke so far for outlandish English, that they forget their mothers language. And I dare sweare this, if some of their mothers were alive, thei were not able to tell what they say. (Thomas Wilson, *Arte of Rhetorique*, 1553)

## 5.3.1. Vocabulary expansion and the *inkhorn controversy*

### Purists

→ John Cheke or Ralph Lever

- Purists **objected to any borrowing**, even when they were not necessary. They proposed to enlarge the vocabulary of English **using native resources**:

Cheke's proposals:

*parable* → *byword*

*centurion* → *hunderder*

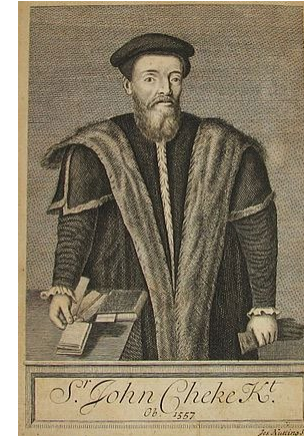
*resurrection* → *vprising*

Lever's proposals:

*logic* → *witcraft*

*conclusion* → *endsay*

*definition* → *saywhat*



## 5.3.1. Vocabulary expansion and the *inkhorn controversy*

### Archaisers:

→ Edmund Spenser and his followers (pastoral poetry).

- Some purists were **archaisers**, and advocated the **revival of obsolete words** and the use of **dialectal words** (esp. northern words), e.g. *algate* 'always', *sicker* 'certainly', *yode* 'went'.
- Although the purists' and archaisers' proposals were not very successful, they helped to control neologisers, so that a **compromise** was met:



### 5.3.1. Vocabulary expansion and the *inkhorn controversy*

Although the most memorable exchanges of the Inkhorn Controversy are the tirades of the extremists, there are notable moderates who preferred “the middle way” of judicious borrowing. The most famous and discriminating was Sir Thomas Elyot, who in his treatise on education (a word he coined) called *The Boke of the Governour* (1531) introduced such neologisms as *dedicate*, *animate*, *encyclopedia*, *frugality*, *metamorphosis*, *modesty*, *persist* and many others. He sensibly followed the practice established from Middle English of pairing neologisms with established words and phrases to make the newcomers comprehensible. Examples of this practice are “animate and give courage”; “education or bringing vp of noble children”; “persist and continue”. (Hughes 2000: 156)

### 5.3.1. Vocabulary expansion and the *inkhorn controversy*

While for most of the 16th century **English** was considered “barbarous” and “uneloquent”, **after 1580** it seems to have acquired **prestige** and is regarded as **eloquent**:

- 1) It has **important works** written in it;
- 2) Its **vocabulary** has **expanded** and achieved the ideal copiousness;
- 3) It is adorned by classical **rhetoric**;
- 4) The **language** is now **fixed** and ruled.

## 5.3.1. Sources of borrowings

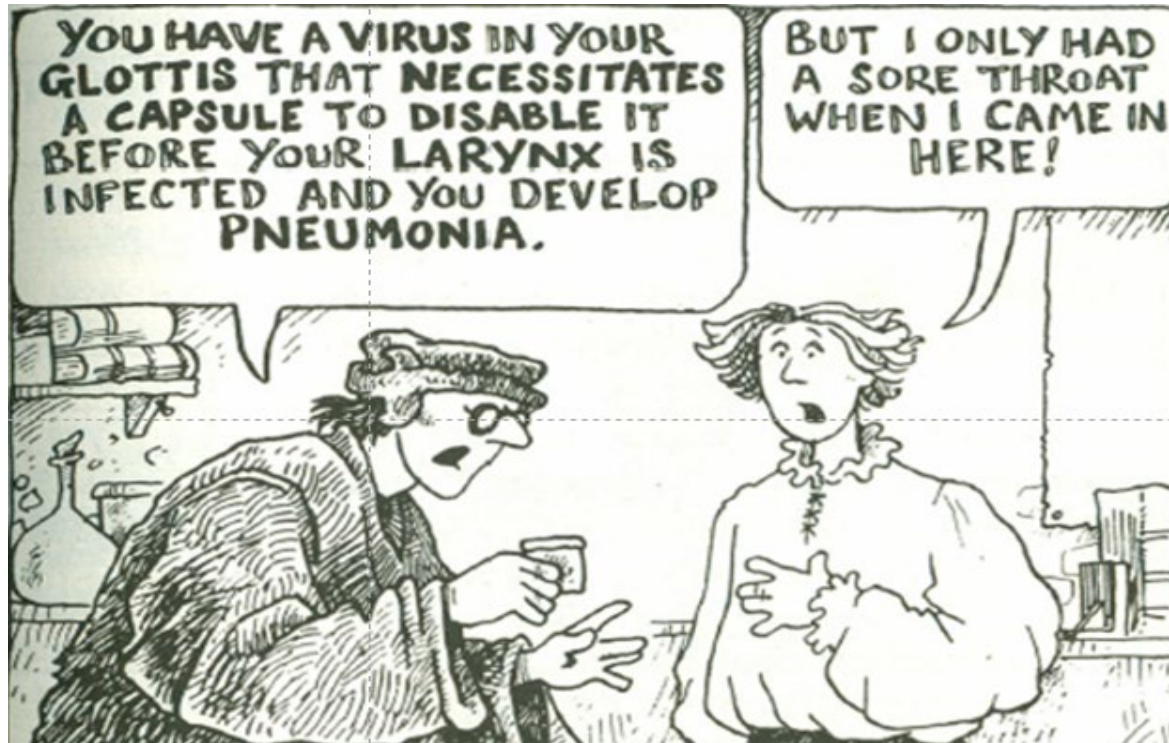
**Latin** → the **most common source for EModE loanwords**, more than French. The peak in frequency of Latin loanwords was between 1575 and 1675, with more than 13,000 new words. Most Latin words are **learned** (< education, sciences, and learning in general).

- many retain their Latin form (*circus* or *interior* in the nominative, *folio* and *proviso* in the ablative);
- some verbs adopted as nouns (*caveat*, *exit*, *deficit*);
- some forms are adapted (no derivational ending/replacement with a French one, e.g. *terrific*, *constriction*, *maturity*);
- technical terms keep their Latin form: *formula* – *formulae*; *fungus* – *fungi*.

## 5.3.1. Sources of borrowings

**Greek** → mainly in technical terms from various fields, e.g. *catastrophe*, *crisis*, *cosmos*, etc.

- Latin (and Greek) words have clear **advantages for the scientific register**: since Latin was the **international *lingua franca*** of science, these **terms are international**.





## 5.3.1. Sources of borrowings

**French** → given the cultural and political links with France, French continued to be the **source of many borrowings**.

- French as the language of fashion and refined culture.
- Some loans are well adapted (e.g. reshaped endings: *-ité* > *-ity*), while others retain their original form (e.g. *naïveté*).
- Examples: *colonel, pilot, trophy, bourgeois, genteel, madame, class, décor, beau, liaison, ménage, cabaret, champagne, memoirs, soup, vinaigrette*.



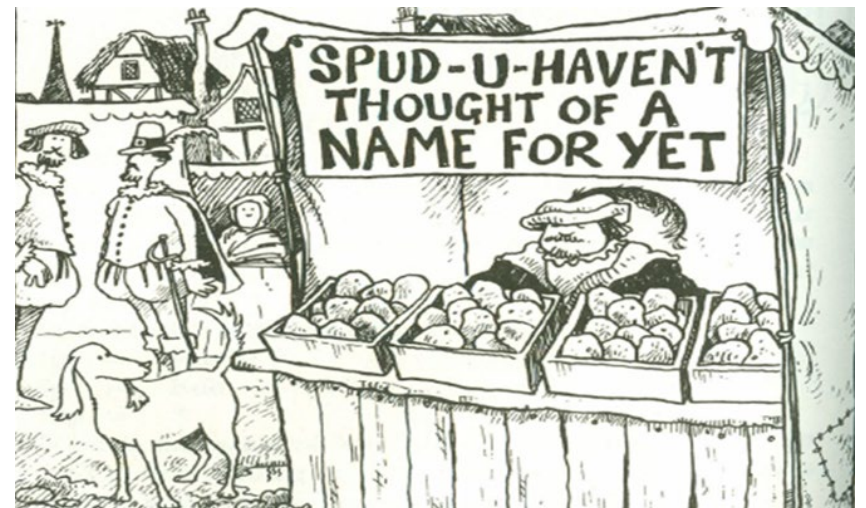
**EModE French loanwords** tend to retain **French pronunciation**, accentual patterns or even French **diacritics** (as **opposed to ME French loanwords**, which are totally adapted to English).

## 5.3.1. Sources of borrowings

**Italian and Spanish** → **Italian** (*cupola, fresco, piazza, balcony, opera* ...) and **Spanish** (*anchovy, sherry, desperado, tornado*...) also contributed to the vocabulary of EModE.

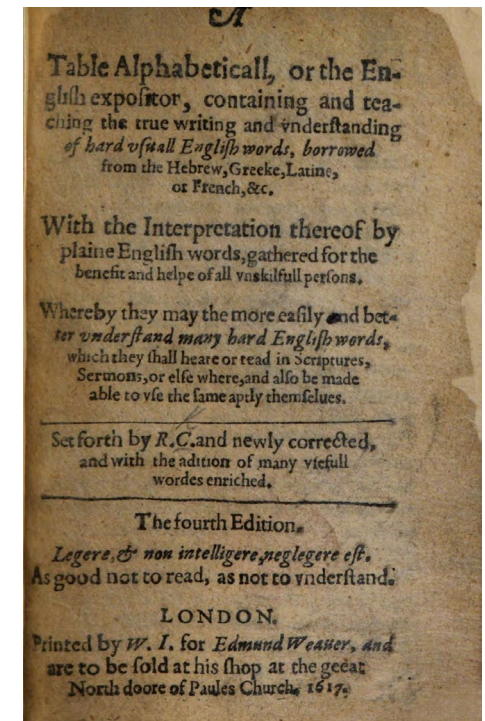
→ Words ultimately coming from **South or Central American Indian languages** made their way into English through Spanish and Portuguese (e.g. *tomato, potato, cocoa*).

As a consequence of the **geographical explorations**, words from distant countries were borrowed in this period (e.g. from **Arabic** (*coffee*), **Indian languages** (*rupee, guru*), **Chinese** (*tea*), **Malay** (*orangutan*), **Japanese** (*katana*).



## 5.3.1. Sources of borrowings

- Influx of foreign words in English → **urgent need for dictionaries.**
- 1<sup>st</sup> monolingual English dictionaries in EModE:
  - At first **dictionaries of hard words** (esp. Latin and Greek)
  - **Earliest dictionary** → Robert Cawdrey's *A Table Alphabeticall* (1604) (c. 3,000 words).



## 5.3.1. Sources of borrowings

- **3 layers of vocabulary** in English:

### **Germanic**

*ask*

*fast*

*fire*

*rise*

### **French**

*question*

*firm*

*flame*

*mount*

### **Latin**

*interrogate*

*secure*

*conflagration*

*ascend*

## 5.3.2. The spelling reform

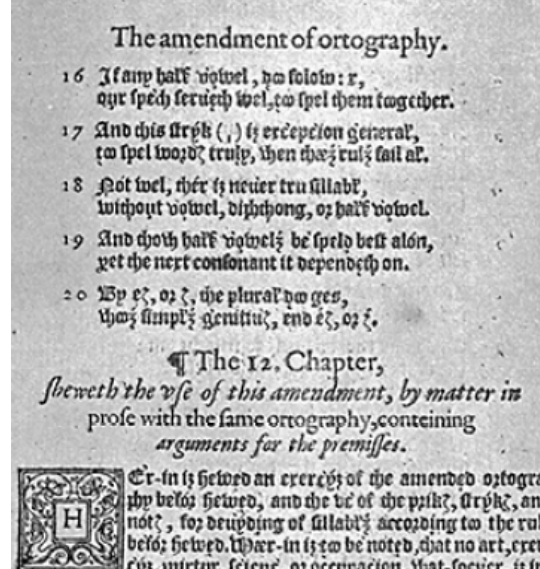
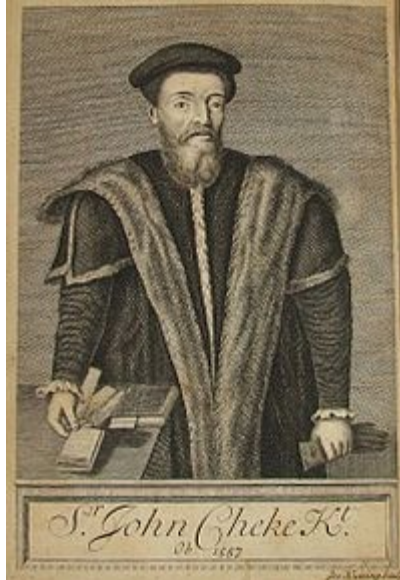
- **Great variability in ME spelling.**
- 1550-1650: important movement advocating a **spelling reform**, with **3 basic tendencies**:
  - 1) Advocates of a **phonemic spelling**;
  - 2) Those in favour of retaining **traditional spellings**;
  - 3) Those in favour of **etymological spellings**.
- **Around 1650 English spelling was fixed** in its modern form. Printers had a very important role in this process.

## 5.3.2. The spelling reform

### 1) Spelling reform based on pronunciation (phonemic spelling)

Many reformers were in favour of a **more phonemic spelling, reflecting pronunciation as closely as possible**. Some reformers proposed radical changes, including the introduction of new symbols.

→ John Cheke, John Hart and William Bullokar





## 5.3.2. The spelling reform

### 1) Spelling reform based on pronunciation (phonemic spelling)

**John Hart** (1551) *The Opening of the Unreasonable Writing of Our Inglish Tounge* (also *An Orthography*, 1569, and *A Method*, 1570). A number of ‘vices’ should be avoided:

- **Superfluity** (more symbols than speech sounds): e.g. <g> in *eight*, <p> in *condempned*, <b> in *doubt*. Avoidance of final –e to mark a long vowel.
- **Usurpation**, i.e., the use of the same letter for 2 sounds (e.g. <g> /g/ in *geve* ‘give’ and /dʒ/ in *gentle*).
- **Misplacing**, i.e., putting symbols in the wrong order (e.g. *fable* > *fabel* and *circle* > *cirkel*)

## 5.3.2. The spelling reform

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#### Proposals:

- /s/ and /z/ are distinguished <s> and <z>; same goes for /ð/ and /θ/, he invents new symbols for them; <g> is only used for /g/.
- All **silent letters** are **avoided**; the principle of correct order is always followed, e.g., *huen* for *when*.
- **dots** below vowel symbols to indicate a **long vowel**.



Our fader hui& art  
in hevn hallu-ed bi  
dei nam. Dei king-  
dum kum. Dei uil bi dun  
in erth, az it iz in hevn.  
Giv u2 dei2 de, our deli-  
bred. And for-giv u2  
our tres-pas-ses, az ui  
for-giv dem, dat tres-  
pas a-genst us. And led  
u2 not in tu tem ta-sion.  
But deliv-us from evl.  
so bi it.



## 5.3.2. The spelling reform

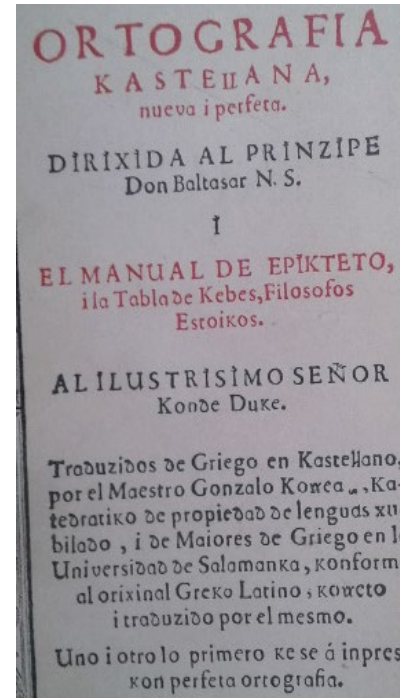
### 1) Spelling reform based on pronunciation (phonemic spelling)

John Cheke (1569):

- Silent letters should be avoided.
- Double vowel letters for long vowels.

William Bullokar (1580):

- Diacritic letters to distinguish /g/ and /dʒ/.



tra un sonido no mas, kon ke eskriua-  
mos pura i linpiamente, komo se pro-  
nunzia, konforme á la dicha regla, ke  
se á de eskrivir, komo se pronunzia, i  
pronunziar, komo se eskrive, ke no ái  
otra de ortografía en el mundo. Para  
lo kual es de saber lo primero, ke tene-  
mos en el kastellano veinte i zinko bo-  
zes, ó sonidos, diferentes en todas nues-  
tras palavras, ke es, veinte i zinko le-  
tras en boz: i ke para sinifikarlas en es-  
krito, son menester otras veinte i zin-  
ko figuras, ó karateres, ke las represen-  
ten, kada una su boz diferente de la o-  
tra. Para ello, komo digo, nos serviran

- Phonemic spelling reforms were not exclusive of English. In the case of Spanish, for instance, Gonzalo Correas published his *Ortografía Kastellana nueva i perfeta* in 1630

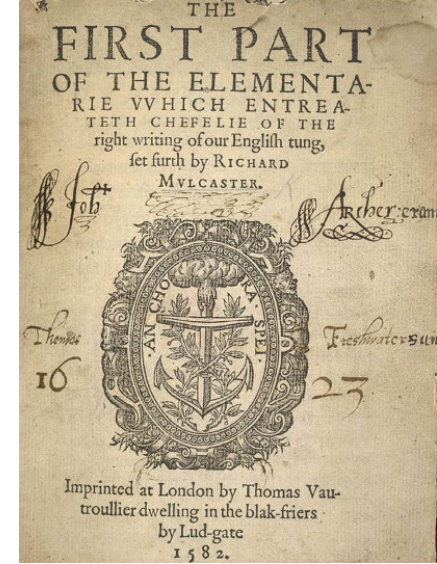
## 5.3.2. The spelling reform

### 2) Regularisation of spelling according to tradition:

Other reformers were **more conservative** and proposed **less radical changes**.

→ Richard Mulcaster (1582) *Elementarie*

- Mulcaster was a London headmaster. His *Elementary* was a book intended for the pre-grammar school stage of education and was meant as a **guide for teachers**.
- Phonemic spelling was not practical because there was too much variation in speech, especially in dialects.
- Defence of **traditional spellings**: he even accepted highly irregular spellings if they were widely used.

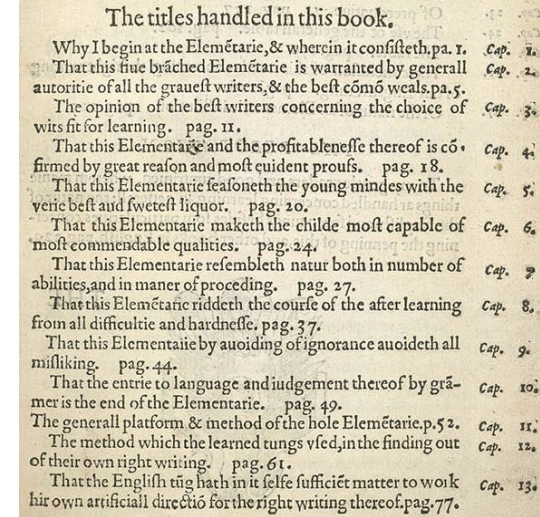


## 5.3.2. The spelling reform

### 2) Regularisation of spelling according to tradition:

Richard Mulcaster's proposals:

- **Elimination of superfluous letters:** e.g. double consonants to indicate that the preceding vowel is short. (e.g. <putt> for *put*).
- **Final <e> to indicate a preceding long vowel** (e.g. *seme* 'seem' and *sene* 'seen'), but he approves of <oo> to indicate a long vowel (*soon*, *took*).
- He does not use <j> (<i> instead), and does not use <u> and <v> to distinguish the vowel from the consonant.



## 5.3.2. The spelling reform

### 3) Regularisation of spelling according to etymology:

- **French borrowings** were **reshaped according to their Latin etymology**: *adventure* (ME *aventure*), *advice* (ME *avis*) *debt* (ME *dett*) *doubt* (ME *doute*), but sometimes they overdo it (cf. *scissors* (< AN *cisours*, but interpreted as < Latin *scindere* 'cut'), *abhorrible* (wrongly interpreted as *ab homine* 'away from man'), and *island* (as coming from Latin *insula*, but actually from OE *igland*).
- **By 1650** there was a **high degree of spelling uniformity**, and the result is **very close to PDE use** (some exceptions for <'d> for <-ed>; <-ick> for <-ic> and <-or> for <-our>).
- This **standardized spelling** was used **in printing**, but there was still a great deal of spelling variation in private writings.

5.1. Socio-historical scenario: cultural, political and technological influences

5.2. Varieties, the standard and the expansion of English beyond England

5.3. Debate over English: Vocabulary expansion and the standardization of spelling

**5.4. Main features of the language in the period**

## 5.4. Main features of the language in the period

### Spelling

- **Coexistence of more than one spelling** for the same word.
- **Final –e** to indicate that the preceding vowel was long.
- <u> and <v>: <v> normally occurred in **initial** position, while <u> tended to appear in **medial** position. Their use, however, was regularised after 1630.
- The spelling <i> was used **for /dʒ/** (e.g. *iack* for Jack and *iolly* for jolly). <j> was **introduced** towards the end of the period, **around 1630**.
- Coexistence of <s> and <f> (beginning of words).
- Use of **apostrophes** to mark missing vowels (esp. **participles**). Use of the apostrophe in the genitive **singular** first (**17th century**) and then in the **plural (18th century)**.



## 5.4. Main features of the language in the period

### Spelling

- Variation in the use of <s> and <z>: while <z> always represented /z/, <s> could be used for /s/ and /z/.
- Certain **abbreviations** were common during the period, e.g. **y<sup>e</sup>** (*the*) and **y<sup>t</sup>** (*that*).
- <i> and <y> could be used interchangeably in medial position, as <y> was **common in the vicinity of ‘minim’ letters** such as <m, n, u> (e.g. *hym, fruyte*).
- <ie>, <ye>, and <y> could all be used **in final position**, and it was only at the end of the period that the spelling <y> prevailed (e.g. *pitie, pitye, pity*).
- **Capitalisation**: any noun, verb, or adjective could be capitalized (after 1750 this practice declined)

## 5.4. Main features of the language in the period

### Pronunciation

The following video will give you an idea of **how English sounded like during EModE**, since it contrasts the pronunciation of Queen Elizabeth I with that of Queen Elizabeth II. **What major pronunciation differences do you notice with respect to PDE?**





## 5.4. Main features of the language in the period

### Pronunciation

- **The Great Vowel Shift:** all long or lengthened stressed vowels were raised in articulation, and, if already high vowels, were diphthongised. This important change started in the **15th century** and was **completed in the 18th century**.

#### Great Vowel Shift

(1300)	1400	1500	1600	1700	1800	present
<i>driven</i>	/i:/	/ii/	/ei/	/ɛi/	/Δi/	/ai/
<i>house</i>	/u:/	/uu/	/ou/	/ɔu/	/Λu/	/au/
<i>feet</i>	/e:/		/i:/			
<i>fool</i>	/o:/		/u:/			
<i>beat</i>	/ɛ:/			/e:/	/i:/	
<i>foal</i>	/ɔ:/			/o:/		/əu/
<i>take</i>	/a:/	/æ:/	/ɛ:/	/e:/	/ei/	
<i>sail</i>	/ai/	/æi/	/ɛi/	/e:/	/ei/	
<i>law</i>	/au/	/ɒu/	/ɒ:/			/ɔ:/

## 5.4. Main features of the language in the period

### Pronunciation

- **EModE** was **rhotic** (r-pronouncing), but there is evidence of loss of /r/ in certain words. **Loss of /r/** will be fully implemented **in the 18th century**.
- **New phoneme /ŋ/** → as a result of the loss of [g] in [ŋg] around 1600.
- **New phoneme /ʒ/**, via palatalisation of the group /zj/, as in *vision*, originally pronounced /'vɪzjən/ (French loanwords such as *rouge* and *beige*).

## 5.4. Main features of the language in the period

### Morphology

- **Case** marking in nouns was similar to PDE: **only** marked in the **genitive singular** (-s, -'s). *His-genitive*, as in *the king his palace*.
- **Synthetic and analytic comparatives** varied freely, with **double marking** at times (both inflectional and periphrastic, e.g. *more easier*).
- At the beginning of EModE, distinction was made between the **nominative form ye** and **the objective case you**, but the two forms soon began to be used indiscriminately, since they were both pronounced /jə/. **By 1600 you** had largely replaced **ye**.
- Introduction of the analogical form *its*.
- Spread of northern features to the standard (e.g. **-(e)s** for the 3<sup>rd</sup> p. sg. and **are**).
- **Reduction of verbal inflections** (subjunctive).
- Further **extension of weak verbs** at the expense of strong ones.

## 5.4. Main features of the language in the period

### Syntax

- **SV order** established as basic. V2 only after some sentence-initial adverbs (*then, there, yet*, and negative adverbs).
- **Do-support not yet obligatory**, but steadily gaining ground.
- **Multiple negation decreases in frequency.**
- **Periphrases with modals** take over the functions of the subjunctive.
- **Increasing** use of **subordination** in imitation of Latin models.
- **Conjunctions** were **frequently reinforced by *that*** (already in ME).
- Relativizer ***which*** could resume both **animate and inanimate** antecedents; ***that*** could occur **in non-restrictive relative clauses**; ***who*** was rare before the mid 16th century, and could also occur **with inanimate antecedents**. **Zero** could appear **in subject and object function**.

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