4. MORPHO-SYNTACTIC CHANGE

4.1. Morphological change

Morphology is concerned with word structure and word formation. **Inflectional morphology** deals with the creation of new word forms (e.g., *book*, *books*); **derivational morphology** studies the creation of new words for the dictionary (e.g., *happy*, *unhappy*). In Unit 2 we studied word formation strategies (i.e., derivational morphology). In this unit we focus on inflectional morphology, and we'll study how the inflectional system of English developed over time.

4.1.0 Introduction

4.1.0.1. MORPHOLOGICAL TYPES

Languages can be classified in different ways.

(a) genetic or genealogical classifications of languages, which work upon the hypothesis of common origin and which typically produce a family tree for a group of languages which displays their relative chronology. e.g., Indo-European languages; Germanic languages…

(b) typological classifications of languages: according to their structural similarities, regardless of their history.

> While two languages may be grouped together typologically, this does not mean that they are genetically related, though of course it may turn out that this is the case. Similarly, it is possible for two languages that are genetically related to be typologically quite different. [...] While it is possible for a language to belong to only one genetic classification, we can group languages into as many typological groups as we want to classify them by. (Crowley 1992: 134)

Genetic or genealogical classifications do not change, while typological classifications may change over time.

Criteria for typological classifications:

- phonological: e.g., contrastive vowel length (English vs. Spanish); moveable accent (Spanish vs. Finnish).

- syntactic: e.g., word order (SOV languages like Japanese or Basque; SVO languages, like English; VSO languages like Irish or Welsh).

- morphological: e.g., based on how much information is carried within the word (see below).

English	**genetic classification**	IE, Gmc
	typological classification	SOV > SVO contrastive vowel length

Wilhem von Humboldt established in the early 19th century a very well-known **morphological** typology, classifying languages into three types:

(i) **isolating, analytic, root or monosyllabic languages**, with virtually no inflectional morphology. They show a basic one-category-per-word design and syntactic relationships are shown by word order. E.g., Chinese, Vietnamese and many West African languages.

Vietnamese (from Lass 1992: 93)

Khi tôi đen nhà ban tôi, chúng tôi băt dâu làm bài
when I come house friend I PL I begin do lesson
'When I came to my house, we began to do lessons'

(ii) **synthetic languages**, which incorporate several categories per word. Within this group we can further distinguish:

(a) **agglutinating or agglutinative languages,** which have only one category per morph. E.g., Turkish, Basque, Kannada, Finnish, Swahili and many Australian languages.

Kannada (India) (from Lass 1992: 93)

Saav-annu tadeyu-tt-a-de-yee
Death-ACC stop-pres-3-NEUT-Question
'Does it prevent death?'

(b) **inflecting, inflective, inflectional or fusional languages**, which pack more than one category per morph. E.g., Latin, Russian, Spanish, and many North American languages.

Latin (from Lass 1992: 93)

Libr-um leg-ō Book-acc./SG read-pres./ind./1/SG/active ‘I read (the) book’

Old English was an inflectional language

Old English

þa wæron beag-**as** gamel-**um** rinc-**e** gyfen-**e** thenwere ringsNOM/PL/MASC oldDAT/SG/MASC warriorDAT/SG/MASC givenNOM/PL/MASC ‘Then rings were given to the old warrior’

Which grammatical categories were marked in the OE noun? Which of them are still marked in PDE?

How was the indirect object marked in Old English? How is it marked in Present-day English?

(c) **incorporative, incorporating or polysynthetic languages**, with complex words functioning as entire sentences. These are extreme examples of synthetic languages. E.g. Eskimo and many Australian aboriginal languages.

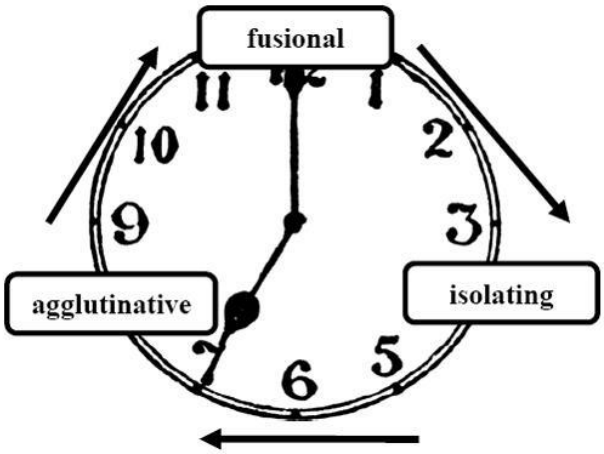
Yupik (Siberia) (from Burridge & Bergs 2017: 125, quoting Mithun 2001: 38) kaipiallrulliniuk kai -pia -llru -llini -u -k be.hungry -really past -apparently -indicative -they-.two 'the two of them were apparently very hungry'

Not many languages are perfectly consistent examples of their type. "[T]his is a question of degree, rather than of "yes" or "no". Languages tend to belong to one type of another. And they seem to be in constant flux" (Burridge & Bergs 2017: 125).

Indo-European languages, including Germanic, range from the **nearly analytic** (**PDE**, Afrikaans) to the **highly synthetic** (Latin, **Old English**). When they are synthetic they tend to be inflecting rather than agglutinating.

PDE is largely analytic or isolating (with its use of prepositions, auxiliaries, etc.), but it also shows a reduced number of inflectional features (*-s, -ed, -(e)s*).

Typological change can be cyclical:



From <https://www.languagesoftheworld.info/historical-linguistics/more-on-word-order-morphological-types-and-historical-change.html>

> Dixon (1997) [...] uses the elegant metaphor of a clock [...]. Fusional languages could be placed at 12:00, isolating languages at 04:00 and agglutinating languages at 08:00. Thus it becomes immediately clear that when languages move between these different times (and types), they show a mix of different structures and rarely can be found in their pure forms. Dixon claims that Early Chinese, for example, could have been at 03:00 as it was mostly isolating but still showed some fusional elements. Classical Chinese would then be at 04:00 and Modern Chinese (mostly isolating but on its way to becoming agglutinating) around 05:00. (Burridge & Bergs 2017: 126)

Where would you place Present-day English?

Where would you place Spanish? (as compared with Latin)

How do languages move from one morphological type to another?

Isolating languages become agglutinating in structure by a process of *phonological reduction*. That is, free form grammatical markers may become phonologically reduced to unstressed bound form markers.

Languages of the agglutinating type tend to change towards the inflectional type. By the process of *morphological fusion*, two originally clearly divisible morphemes in a word may change in such a way that the boundary is no longer clearly recognisable.

Finally, languages of the inflectional type tend to change to the isolating type; this process is called *morphological reduction*. It is very common for inflectional morphemes to become more and more reduced, until sometimes they disappear altogether. The forms that are left, after the complete disappearance of inflectional morphemes, consist of single morphemes: The functions that were originally expressed by the inflectional suffixes then come to be expressed by word order or by free form morphemes. (Crowley 1992: 136-8).

There are many reasons for these apparently dramatic changes: language contact, erosion through performance, and expressivity, to name but a few [...]. Nevertheless, it is important not to forget that changes such as these do not have to occur (some languages are stable over a long period of time [...] **English [...] seems to have moved from fusional to almost isolating in less than 1,000 years**. But this seems to be a rare case of rapid development [...] and **undoubtedly language contact had a role to play here**. (Burridge & Bergs 2017: 127) [emphasis added]

Contact with which languages?

Changes in English: from synthesis to analysis

The major grammatical contextual drift during the history of English has been the steady shift **from synthetic towards analytic structure**, that is, from a language which marked relationships between words by special endings to one which used a comparatively fixed word-order and separable morphemes such as prepositions.

Three related grammatical changes are relevant here: 1. The obscuration and loss of inflectional endings; 2. Developments in the use of prepositions; 3. Changes in element order. (Smith 1996: 153).

Can you account for the first factor?

4.1.0.2. MARKING INFLECTIONAL CATEGORIES

Inflectional categories can be marked by means of different devices:

(i) Affixation: marking grammatical categories by dependent (bound) morphs, attached at either end of the word or in the middle (prefixing, suffixing, infixing). Suffixation has always been the favourite inflectional mode in Germanic. Systematic prefixation is rare in late Germanic, though in non-compound verbs, OE tended to mark past participles with a prefix *ge-* (along with a dental suffix, in the case of weak verbs, or *-en*, in the case of strong verbs), cf. Mod. German *ge-*.

(ii) Word-internal change: categories are signalled by phonological alternations, as in the strong verb (e.g. OE *rīdan* / *rād*; PDE *ride* / *rode*) or certain noun plurals (OE *mūs*/*mȳs*; PDE *mouse/mice*). This may be combined with suffixation, as in the preterite plural of the strong verb in OE *rid-on* 'they rode'.

(iii) Suppletion: unrelated stems may code grammatical categories within a paradigm. An example is the verb *to be*, with an unrelated past tense (*was/were*). This can also be combined with suffixation. OE *bēon* had preterite singular *wæs*, plural *wær-on*.

Paradigm The full set of inflected forms exhibited by some class of lexical items, such as the declensional forms of a class of nouns or the conjugated form of a class of verbs, often as represented by the forms of a single lexical item. (Trask 1993: 72, 197).

(iv) Zero inflection: as in sg./pl. *sheep*; present/past *spit*, *fit*.

(v) Reduplication: partial or complete repetition of part of the base. Latin *cu-curr-i* 'I ran'. Bantawa (Nepal) *oko* 'this' *oko oko* 'these'; *kho* 'that' *kho kho* 'those'. Not found in English. Present in English based creoles (e.g. *priti* 'pretty' *priti-priti* 'very pretty' in Surinam and Jamaican Creole; Kowenberg & LaCharité 2004:290).

Identify the morphological devices illustrated in the following word forms:

went, children, sings, sung

4.1.0.3.ANALOGY

Analogy

The process by which a grammatical form or pattern is altered so as to conform to another form or pattern existing in the language. (Trask 1993: 14)

Process of regularisation which affects the exceptional forms in the grammar of a language. (Crystal 1985: 16).

Two types of analogy: levelling and extension

(i) analogical levelling ⇒ complete or partial elimination of irregularities within a paradigm. It reduces allomorphy within the paradigm. It removes irregularities from the stem of the word.

Allomorph One of two or more surface forms which are assumed by a single morpheme in varying circumstances *indecent*. The negative prefix **in-**, for example, exhibits several allomorphs in such words as, *impossible, irrational* and *ignoble*. (Trask 1993: 13)
Cf. also the three different allomorphs of the plural marker *–(e)s*: /-s/, /-z/ and /-ɪz/

Cf. the verb *caber* in Spanish: **cabo* o *quepo*? **cabió* o *cupo*?

OE *cēosan / cēas / curon / coren* vs. PDE *choose / chose / chosen*

/tʃ/	/tʃ/	/k/	/k/	/tʃ/	/tʃ/	/tʃ/
infinitive	pret sg	pret pl	past pple			

- initial consonant reduced to /tʃ/
- elimination of the consonantal alternation /s/:/r/ found in the preterite forms, singular and plural (cf. *was* / *were*).
- extension of the vowel of the past pple./o/ to the preterite.

(ii) analogical extension or four-part analogy ⇒ This kind of analogy affects inflectional endings. By extension an ending is applied outside its original domain. The

process involves the remaking of a morphologically derived formation on the model of another, generally more productive pattern (which acts as an **analogical target**) by means of an analogy which can be expressed by a proportion involving four parts:

a : a' *stone : stones*
b : X (b') *book* : X = *books*
(the expected form would be: **beech* < OE*bēc*)

word : X = *words*
(the expected form would be: **word* < OE *word*)

Analogical extension is far more frequent than analogical levelling.

Analogy frequently underlies children's mistakes:

> The overgeneralisation of surface forms characteristic of analogical extension is particularly noticeable in child language; children frequently produce analogically regularised forms like *foot - foots* or *bring - brang - brung*. If corrected, children may respond by producing their proportional model; that is, a child told that the past tense of *bring* is actually *brought* may object that *sing* has the pattern *sing - sang - sung*, so that the analogous patterns *bring - brang - brung* and *swing - swang - swung* must also be correct. (MacMahon1994: 72-73)

There is a difference between analogy in language change and analogy in language acquisition: while children create new analogical forms for very frequent words (cf. *foots*), in language change high frequency words tend to resist analogy because they are deeply entrenched.

False morphological analysis, a reanalysis based on analogy:

cf. (*un*) *tenis* > [*teni*][-*s*]

This is also known as back formation (cf. lexical back formation in Unit 2)

> **Reanalysis** is a process that changes the linguistic structure without necessarily changing the surface manifestation of that structure. It entails a new analysis of a sequence. Langacker defines it as a covert change: "change in the structure of an expression or class of expressions that does not involve any immediate or intrinsic modification of its surface manifestation" (1977: 58)
>
> [*a*] [*napron*] > [*an*] [*apron*]

4.1.0.4. WHY?

Why do inflectional systems change? (Burridge & Bergs 2017: 127-130)

- **Phonological change** → languages tend to code grammatical meaning in suffixes, and these are very likely to be weakened and eroded over time. In English many inflections were affected by the weakening of unstressed vowels to schwa and the loss of /-n/ and final /-ə/.
- **Frequency** → high-frequency items tend to be more often affected by phonological weakening than low frequency items (e.g. and [ænd], [æn], [ən] or even [n] *rock n' roll*), but at the same time they are less likely to be affected by analogy (e.g. irregular plurals in English). "In sum, while high-frequency items are more affected by phonological erosion, they are less likely to be subject to analogical change. Low-frequency items are less likely to wear out but are rather subject to analogical change." (Burridge & Bergs 2017: 129).

4.1.1. General tendencies in the NP

GRAMMATICAL CATEGORIES ASSOCIATED WITH THE NOUN

Gender A grammatical category which displays such contrasts as masculine/feminine/neuter or animate/inanimate. A distinction is drawn between **natural gender**, which involves reference to the sex of real-world entities, and **grammatical gender**, which is associated with arbitrary word classes, and signals grammatical relationships between words in a sentence. English has natural gender. (Crystal 1992: 151)

Gender The classification of nouns into two or more classes with different grammatical properties. In many of the world's languages, all the nouns are divided into two or more classes which require different grammatical forms on the nouns and/or certain other words grammatically linked with the noun or nouns in particular sentences. [...] A gender language must have at least two gender classes, but it may have more -eight, ten, or possibly even more. In some gender languages, we can often guess from the form of a noun which gender it belongs to; in others, we can often guess from its meaning which gender it belongs to; in very many languages, however, we cannot guess, because gender assignment is arbitrary. In German, for example, a noun which denotes a male or a female usually (not always) goes into the *der* gender or the *die* gender, respectively, and nouns with certain endings usually go into a predictable gender. After that, though, the gender of the remaining nouns is impossible to guess. In Navaho, nouns denoting humans usually go into one gender, nouns denoting round things into a second gender, nouns denoting long stiff things into a third gender, and so on, but not all nouns can have their gender guessed in this way. It is important to realize that grammatical gender need have nothing to do with sex. In German (and other European languages), there is a noticeable (but imperfect) correlation between sex and gender assignment; however, most nouns denote things that have not sex, and yet they must still be assigned to a gender. In many other gender languages, sex plays no part at all in gender assignment. English, it is worth pointing out, has no gender. We have a few sex-marked pronouns like *he* and *she*, and a few sex-marked nouns like *duke* and *duchess*, but we have no grammatical gender. (Trask 1999: 100).

Case A distinctive, overtly marked form which can be assumed by an NP to indicate that that NP bears some identifiable grammatical or semantic relation to the rest of the sentence. In English, overt case marking is confined to a few pronouns (*I/me; they/them*), but some other languages, such as German, Russian, Latin, Basque and Finnish, exhibit elaborate case systems typically involving about three to six distinct forms, but sometimes a dozen or more. (Trask 1993: 34).

Number The grammatical category, most often associated with nouns and pronouns, whose primary correlation is with the number of distinguishable entities. English has a simple two-way number contrast between singular and plural, but some other languages exhibit more elaborate number systems involving dual, trial and paucal forms as well as singular and plural. Except perhaps in pronoun systems, number is not universally present in languages; Chinese and Japanese are two examples of languages in which number contrasts are generally absent. (Trask 1993: 192).

In Arabic a noun typically has three forms: *malikun* 'king', *malikani* 'two kings', *malikuna* 'three or more kings'; the second form is called the **dual**. The Pacific language Larike has four forms for pronouns: *mane* 'he' or 'she', *matua* 'they two', *matidu* 'they three', *mati* 'they (four or more)'; the third form is the **trial**. The East African language Tigre has a different system: *färäs* 'horse',*?äfras* 'a few horses', *?äfresam* 'horses'; the second form is the **paucal.** (Trask 1999: 210).

What happened to English noun morphology?

OE nouns were marked for gender, number and case. At the close of the ME period, only number remains. The genitive does not seem to work as an inflection after the Old English period.

In Present-day English personal pronouns are the only word class which retains distinctions of gender (in the 3rd person), number (sg. vs. pl., in the 1st and 3rd person) and case (subjective case vs. objective case).

4.1.1.1. Gender

OE had a system of grammatical gender, with three genders (masculine, feminine and neuter). Gender ascription depended on the type of declension followed by the noun and could not be predicted from its meaning (reference to sex or other extra-linguistic category) or from its form (although this is possible with some nouns, e.g. *-ung* nouns are always feminine).

Masculine	e.g. *brōðor* 'brother'; *wīfmann* 'woman'; *stān* 'stone'
Feminine	e.g. *cwene* 'woman, queen'; *mūs* 'mouse'; *bōc* 'book'
Neuter	e.g. *scip* 'ship'; *wīf* 'woman'; *cild* 'child'; *mægden* 'maiden'

Gender was marked **syntactically**, by means of concord (determiners, other elements in the NP) and pronoun reference.

se [nom. sg. masc.] *brōðor* [nom. sg. masc.]...*he* [masc.]
seo [nom. sg. fem.] *cwene* [nom. sg. fem.]...*heo*...[fem.]
þæt [nom. sg. neu.] *scip* [nom. sg. neu.]...*hit*.. [neu.].

…swyðe micel sæ [fem.] *up in on lande, sēo* [fem.] *is brādre þonne ænig mann ofer*
a very large sea inland it [she] is wider than any man over
sēon mæge
see can
'a very large sea inland, it is wider than any man can see over it'

Sometimes there is harmony between grammatical and natural gender (sex; animate/inanimate), but on other occasions there is **conflict**, as in:

	stan 'stone'	*duru* 'door'	*wīf* 'woman'	*wīfmann* 'woman'
Gender	masc.	fem.	neu.	masc.
Sex	neu.	neu.	fem.	fem.

Lass (1992: 106)

Already in OE there was also a tendency to use the personal pronoun in accordance with natural gender in the case of human referents. "The preference of natural over grammatical gender in reference to humans may have contributed to the demise of the grammatical gender system". (Traugott 1992: 178)

Sum wīf [neu.] *hātte Sintice,* ***sēo*** [fem.] *wæs blind*
'a certain woman was called Syntyche, she was blind…'

In ME articles become invariable (*the*) and demonstratives are just marked for number (e.g. *this/these*), this is the final blow to grammatical gender.

OE			ME
Se / þes cyning	[masc.]		*the / this king*
Sēo / þēos cwēn	[fem.]	⇒	*the / this queen*
Þæt / þes scip	[neu.]		*the / this ship*

Grammatical gender was lost at different stages in the different ME dialects: Northern (late 10th century) > Midlands (nearly completed in the early 13th century) > South, especially Kent (second half of 14th century).

Relics of grammatical gender in the South
mi stefne [fem.] ... *ho* [fem.] *is ilich one grete horne*

my voice she is like one big horn
(*The Owl and the Nightingale*, Southern, 13th century)

yef he hedde yeue þane [acc.sg.masc.] *þridde peny* [OE *pening* masc.] *to þe poure*...
if he had given the third penny to the poor...
(*Ayenbyte of Inwyt*, Kentish, ca. 1340)

Of the surviving Germanic languages, only English and Afrikaans have lost grammatical gender. Icelandic, Faroese, German and Yiddish retain a three-gender system. Danish, Swedish most varieties of Norwegian, Dutch and Frisian have a two-way distinction (common vs. neuter).
→ English and Afrikaans are the most analytic languages among Germanic languages.

4.1.1.2. Case

OE distinguished **four** cases, nominative, accusative, genitive and dative, with remnants of an instrumental case in the demonstratives and adjectives. The inflectional endings for the different cases depended on the declension the noun belonged to.

Declension The inflection of a noun, pronoun, adjective or noun phrase for case, in languages exhibiting case distinctions. Such an item is said to decline (i.e., inflect for case).

Nouns were classified into strong nouns, weak nouns, and anomalous nouns.

STRONG MASCULINE NOUNS

	sg.	pl.
nom./acc.	cyning	cyning**as**
gen.	cyning**es**	cyning**a**
dat.	cyning**e**	cyning**um** (late OE -**an**)

STRONG NEUTER NOUNS

	sg.	pl.	sg.	pl.
nom./acc.	scip	scip**u**	land	land
gen.	scip**es**	scip**a**	land**es**	land**a**
dat.	scip**e**	scip**um**	land**e**	land**um** (late OE -**an**)

STRONG FEMININE NOUNS

	sg.	pl.	sg.	pl.	
nom	tal**u** 'tale'	tal**a**, -**e**	glōf 'glove'	glōf**a**, -**e**	
acc.	tal**e**	tal**a**, -**e**	glōf**e**	glōf**a**, -**e**	
gen.	tal**e**	tal**a**, -**ena**	glōf**e**	glōf**a**, -**ena**	
dat.	tal**e**	tal**um**	glōf**e**	glōf**um**	(late OE -**an**)

WEAK NOUNS

	masc.	fem.	neu.
sg. nom.	gum**a** 'man'	byrn**e** 'corselet'	eag**e** 'eye'
acc.	gum**an**	byrn**an**	eag**e**
gen.	gum**an**	byrn**an**	eag**an**
dat.	gum**an**	byrn**an**	eag**an**
pl.nom./acc.	gum**an**	byrn**an**	eag**an**
gen.	gum**ena**	byrn**ena**	eag**ena**
dat.	gum**um**	byrn**um**	eag**um** (late OE **-an**)

Case endings will be eroded in the transition from OE to ME due to the weakening of unstressed vowels under schwa. In ME the loss of /-n/ and the loss of final schwa will do the rest.

From synthetic to analytic
The loss of inflections did not take place at the same time in all dialectal areas of ME: North > Midlands > South. Simplification of inflections in nouns was compensated for by the rigidification of word order (SVO) and the extensive use of prepositions. These two analytic devices will be used to mark syntactic function.

In OE we already find a mixed system, with case endings and prepositions (which govern case). In the ME period, only prepositions will be used.

Synthetic marking
OE
hie sendon þa **þam gesæligan cyninge** [dat. sg. masc.] sumne arwurðne bisceop [acc.sg.masc.]
'they sent a certain honourable bishop to the king'

'Mixed' marking
OE
he sende ða **to þam cyninge** [prep. + dat. sg. masc.] beotlic ærende [acc. sg. neu.]
'he sent an arrogant message to the king'

Analytic marking
ME ⇓
1300: use of a prepositional phrase with a non-inflected noun

þe barons sende **to þe king philip of france**
'the barons sent (a message) to king Philip of France'

4.1.1.3. Number

OE ⇒ different plural markers depending on declension; expression of number conflated with gender and case, see the declensions above (OE is an inflectional language).

nom. sg nom. pl.

OE	*stān*	*stānas*	'stone'
	dæd	*dæde*	'deed'
	scip	*scipu*	'ship'
	land	*land*	‘land’
	nama	*naman*	'name'
	bōc	*bēc*	'book'
	hæleþ	*hæleþ*	‘saint’
	brōðor	*brōðor*	‘brother’
	ridend	*ridend*	‘horseman, knight’
	cild	*cildru*	‘child’

ME ⇒ generalization of the *-(e)s* marker, a separate representation of {plural}, i.e. no longer fused with gender and case. This involves the extension of a pattern beyond its original domain (from strong masculine nouns to all nouns).

a : a’	*stone : stones*
b : X (b’)	*deed* : X = *deeds*

"The spread of *-s* may be considered as an example of **the survival of the fittest** in language." (Baugh & Cable 1993: 156)

Why the fittest?

-as (nom./acc. pl. of strong masc.nouns) the fittest ⇒ (a) phonetically the most salient and the least vulnerable to phonetic weakening; (b) more distinctive from a functional perspective than other endings; (c) one third of all nouns belonged to strong masculine declension, *-as* was the most frequent plural marker.

- *-as* was already an analogical target in OE: *ridendas* (vs. historical *ridend*, *hæleðas* (vs. historical *hæleð*), *brōðras (vs.* historical *brōðor*).
- a large number of French loanwords also had plurals in *–s* ⇒ *-es* plurals are reinforced.

Extension of *-(e)s* and dialect:

The *-(e)s* plural marker spread at different rates in the different dialectal areas:
North, late 10th century > East Midlands, mid 12th century > South, 14th century

Extension proceeded **more slowly in the rest of the country**, since *-es* had a rival *-en*.

Southern dialects maintained historical *-en* plurals (like e.g. *eyen*), and even extended this ending by analogy to nouns which did not belong to the weak declension in OE (analogical extension), like ME *devlen* 'devils' vs. OE *deoflas*, ME *englen* 'angels' vs. OE *englas*, ME *shon* 'shoes' vs. OE *scos*, or ME *sunnen* 'sins' vs. OE *synna*.

EMidlands, *Peterborough Chronicle*, mid 12th century:

Warsæ me tilede, þe erthe ne bar nan corn, for þe land was al fordon **mid swilce dædes** (<OE *dæde* fem.)

'Whatever one cultivated, the earth bore no corn, because the land was all destroyed by such deeds' (*The Peterborough Chronicle*, 52-3)

London:

And than, foryeven **al hir wikked dede** (<OE *dæde* fem.)

'And, with all their wretched deeds forgiven, then...' (late 14th century, *Chaucer's The Parliament of Fowls*, 82)

The PDE distribution of allomorphs of *-(e)s* /-s, -z, -ɪz/ emerges in EModE after the syncope of /ə/.

bookes /bʊkəs/ > /bʊks/
sinnes /'sɪnəs/ > /'sɪnz/ (assimilation in contact with a voiced element)

The syncope of /ə/ was prevented in contact with sibilants, hence /-ɪz/ as in *churches* /'tʃɜ:tʃɪz/

Survivals of old plural markers:

- *-en* plurals → After 1600 only four survive: *children, brethren, kine* and *oxen*.
- mutated plurals → most OE mutated plurals resisted analogy; some were regularized in the ME period, e.g. *get* 'goats' vs. later *goats*.
- *r*-plurals. No longer productive and transparent in ME. Only three retained: *lomb*/*lomber, calf/calvre* and *child/childre*. The marker *-r-* was no longer transparent, and, as a result, it is not unusual to find **double plurals**, like *lombren, calvren* and *children*. The first two acquired *-es* plurals by the end of the ME period; *children* is the only survival of this group. Why do you think it survived?
- uninflected plurals. Although many OE uninflected plurals were regularized to *-es* in the course of eME, a few survivals of OE neuter nouns that were unchanged in the
- nom./acc. pl. can still be found: *word, þing*, and names of animals like *hors* and *shep*. Of these only *sheep* and *deer* survived. Zero plural was reinterpreted as a property of nouns denoting animals, and has had some productivity (cf. OE *fisc/fiscas; fugol/fuglas* > PDE *fish/fish; fowl/fowl*).

Other effects of *-(e)s* as analogical target:

- Creation of new analogical singulars of nouns whose singular ended in /-s, -z/

OE *pisa* 'pea' (pl. *pisan*) > eModE *pease* /pe:z/

Reinterpreted as plural ⇒ backformation

bean-s : bean
pea-se : X

The older singular survives only in the fixed expressions *pease-pudding*, *pease-brose*.

- Creation of new analogical plurals of nouns whose plural does not end in /-s/. Many nouns which have a learned plural in *-a* (e.g. *bacterium, criterion, datum, medium, phenomenon, stratum*), lacking the standard *-s* of plural marking, are sometimes apprehended as singular. The Italian plural noun *graffiti* (singular *graffito*) is very often used as a singular.

Other irregular plurals:

- *Calf, half, knife, leaf, life, loaf, sheaf, shelf, thief, wife* and *wolf*, i.e., nouns ending in /f/ have plural in *–ves*. Their irregularity is related to phonology, can you explain why we have /f/ in the singular but /v/ in the plural?

- Some /f/-nouns are now regular: *roof* : *roofs* (no longer *rooves*); *cliff*: *cliffs* (no longer *clives*) Some of the nouns above are also regularized in New Englishes and non-standard varieties: *knifes*, *wifes*, etc. Which kind of analogy is at work?

4.1.2. General tendencies in the VP.

4.1.2.1. Verb types

PDE FULL VERBS

regular: *work-worked-worked*
irregular: *swim-swam-swum*
drive-drove-driven
burn-burnt-burnt
bring-brought-brought
meet-met-met
cost-cost-cost
show-showed-shown

PRIMARY VERBS

BE, HAVE, DO

MODAL AUXILIARIES

*will, shall, can, may...*etc.

In historical linguistics a different classification is normally used: Verbs are classified into strong verbs, weak verbs, anomalous verbs and preterite present verbs.

STRONG VERBS

- Indo-European origin
- tense marked by word internal change (vowel alternancy or Ablaut) + affixation. E.g. OE *drīfan-drāf-drifon-drifen* 'drive-drove-driven'. Ablaut can be either quantitative (*drīfan vs. drifon*) or qualitative (*drīfan* vs. *drāf*). In OE there were seven different classes of strong verbs. The strong verb could show up to four different Ablaut vowels (cf. PDE, up to three).
- Past participle is marked with *–en* (*haten*, *riden*, *boren*, etc.).

OE basic Ablaut series

	PRES	$PRET_1$	$PRET_2$	PART				
I.-	ī	ā	i	i	*ridan*	*rād*	*ridon*	*riden* 'ride'
II.-	ēo/ū	ēa	u	o	*crēopan*	*crēap*	*crupon*	*cropen* 'creep'
III.-	e	æ	u	o	*berstan*	*bærst*	*burston*	*borsten* 'burn'
IV.-	e	æ	æ	o	*beran*	*bær*	*bæron*	*boren* 'bear'
V.-	e	æ	æ	e	*cweþan*	*cwæþ*	*cwædon*	*cweden* 'say'
VI.-	a	ō	ō	a	*faran*	*fōr*	*fōron*	*faren* 'travel'
VII.-	various	ē/ēo	ē/ēo	various (=PRES)	*hātan*	*hēt*	*hēton*	*hāten* 'call'

Strong verbs in PDE: *ride/rode/ridden*; *bear/bore/born*; *swim/swam/swum*; *get/got/got* (AmE *gotten*).

Strong verbs have not been productive since OE times, however, some strong classes have been an analogical target (notably class I strong verbs, *ride/rode/ridden*, which were very numerous):

OF *striver* (borrowed in the 13th century → *strive/strove/striven*

BrE *dive /dived /dived* but AmE *dive / **dove** / dived*

Q1. What type of analogy is at work here?

WEAK VERBS

- Germanic origin
- derivative origin (derived from nouns, adjectives, forms of strong verbs, adverbs). The derivative affixes that formed weak verbs are **-j-* (**dōmjan* > *dēman*) or **-ōj-* (**lufōjan* > *lufian*). The first one causes i-mutation.

OE *dēman* 'to judge'	*deem*	⇐ OE *dōm* 'judgement' *doom*
OE *fyllan* 'to fill'	*fill*	⇐ OE *ful* 'full' *full*
OE *settan* 'to set'	*set*	⇐ OE *sæt* pret. of *sittan* 'to sit' *sit*
OE *fremman* 'to advance'		⇐ OE *fram* 'from'
OE *lufian* 'to love'		⇐ OE *lufu* 'love'

- preterite and past participle show a dental suffix (cf. PDE *-ed*). The origin of this dental suffix is a matter of debate. Most widely accepted view is that the weak preterite was a compound of a noun + a verb 'do', so *I worked* < *I work did*. The past participle was derived from a noun or adjective + suffix *-to-* (cf. Latin *da-tu-s*) (Lass 1994: 164).

OE *dēman* / *dēm**de*** 'to judge' OE *cēpan* / *cēp**te*** 'to keep'
OE *fremman / fremm**ede*** 'to advance'
OE *lufian* / *luf**ode*** 'to love'

- weak verbs are the only productive type from OE onwards, it became the **target conjugation** for borrowings from other languages and for strong verbs. Coinages also follow the weak conjugation:

(i) Borrowings →
pray < OF *preier*
*c*1330 *Sir Tristrem* (1886) l. 2283 (*MED*) For hir þo **praiden** þai.
'then they prayed for her'

ravage < F *ravager*
*a*1649 W. DRUMMOND *Hist. Scotl.* (1655) 158 Men abhorring quietness **ravaged** the Countrey and did what they pleased.

(ii) Strong verbs →
help (OE *helpan*, preterite *healp*)
c1305 *Judas* 108 in *E.E.P.* (1862) 110 He **halp** menie man.
'he helped many men' (strong preterite)

a1300 *Cursor M.* 20184 Freindes..me **helped**. (weak preterite)
'friends helped me'

fare (OE *faran*, pret. *fōr*, pple. *faren*)
1664 *Floddan Field* i. 5 And how he **fared** was into France. (weak preterite)

(iii) Coinages → OALD word of the month (posted 1 November 2018):
humblebrag 'When you, usually consciously, try to get away with bragging about yourself by couching it in a phony show of humility.' (*Urban Dictionary*)

She **humblebragged** about how 'awful' she looks without any make-up.

Weak verbs in PDE: regular verbs such as *help/helped/helped*; *work/worked/worked*, but also irregular verbs such as *burn/burnt/burnt* /-t/; *sleep/slept/slept* /-t/; *think/thought/thought* /-t/.

Some of these irregular weak verbs have developed regular forms: e.g. *dream / dreamt / dreamt* vs. *dream / dreamed / dreamed*.

Set/set/set is also a weak verb, can you reconstruct its preterite form?

OE **setde* > ……..>……

Strong/weak vs. regular/irregular

PDE regular verbs are always weak; PDE irregular verbs can be strong (e.g. *swim*) or weak (e.g. *sleep*)

ANOMALOUS VERBS

- BE, GO, DO and WILL. Idiosyncratic formation.

The verb BE is not a single verb, but a collection of semantically related paradigm fragments from different verbs (suppletion). There are three roots in OE: (i) an *s*-root (pres. ind.: *eom, eart, is, sindon*; pres. subj. *sie, sien*); (ii) a *b*-root (pres. ind. *beo, bist, biþ, bēoþ*; pres. subj. *beo, beon*; infinitive *beon*); (iii) a *w*-root: (inf. *wesan*; pret. *wæs, wæron*). The PDE present form are goes back to a Northern variant *(e)aron* or to Old Norse.

PRETERITE-PRESENT VERBS

- Their present forms derive from morphologically strong preterite forms which acquired a present meaning. This accounts for the lack of 3rd person singular inflection (*he can, shall, may*, etc. vs. *he works*).
- Their preterite forms are analogical formations on the weak model, i.e., with a dental suffix (*coul**d**, shoul**d**, migh**t***, etc.). Which kind of analogy is at work here?

4.1.2.2. Historical development of verb classes

Over time verb classes are going to be reorganized by means of analogical processes, both **levelling** and **extension**. The verb paradigm was also affected by **phonological** processes.

(i) LEVELLING PROCESSES

STRONG VERBS

- **Reduction of Ablaut vowels per verb**, with the **loss of PRET1 vs. PRET2 distinction**. Ablaut becomes restricted to a tense marker.

  The elimination of the sg. / pl. opposition in the strong verb did not obey specific rules. The vowel generalized or discarded varied from verb to verb and even in one and the same verb and one and the same writer. There were different possibilities:

  (a) **levelling under PRET1**, keeping the past pple vowel distinct, as *in ride/rode/ridden* (< OE class I *rīdan/rād/ridon/riden*) or *sing/sang/sung* (< OE class III *singan/sang/sungon/sungen*).

(b) **levelling under PRET2**, as in *find/found/found* (OE class *III findan/fand/fundon/funden*).

(c) **levelling under the vowel of the past pple.**, as in *choose/chose/chosen* (OE class II *cēosan/cēas/curon/coren*).

We commonly find variant forms:

find, pret. sg.
?c1200 *Orm.*(Jun 1) 13: Þær he **fand** off oþre treos Full gode treos inoȝhe.
(a1402) *Trev.DCur.*(Hrl 1900) 39/12: Ich..**fonde** þere wise doctors stryue vppon þe beggerie.
(a1470) Malory *Wks.*(Win-C) 29/5: Kyng Arthure..**founde** Ulphuns and Brastias on foote in grete perell of dethe.

The MED records the following forms for the preterite singular of the verb *sing*: *sŏng(e, sang(e, sangge, sunge, sounge*

Non-standard dialects and New Englishes sometimes differ from the standard in the vowel selected, or reduce even further the number of Ablaut vowels:

E.g. *drink/drank/drank*; *ring/rang/rang*, *swim/swam/swam*

Examples from **Glo**bal **W**eb-**b**ased English (GloWbE): < https://www.english-corpora.org/glowbe/>

Like I said, if she'd **swam** it more evenly she'd have surely gone even faster, (GB)
By that it should have **rang** a bell that Nigeria is insecure physically and materially. (NIG)

- **Loss of consonant alternations** (PRES and $PRET_1$ vs. $PRET_2$ and PART), /s/ vs. /r/ as in *cēosan/cēas/curon/coren*; /θ/ vs. /d/ as in *sēoþan/sēaþ/sudon/soden*). Consonantal alternation is only found in the verb *to be* (*wa**s*** vs. *we**r**e*) and some past participles fossilized as adjectives, like *forlo**r**n* (< OE *leo**s**an*) or *so**dd**en* (<OE *sēo**þ**an*, PDE *see**th**e* 'boil').

WEAK VERBS:

- Some weak verbs had **i-mutation** in the present system only (cf. PDE *teach /taught/taught*; *tell/told/told*; *think/thought/thought*. Their number was drastically reduced, some of the verbs joined the group of 'regular' weak verbs (e.g. *w**y**rcan* / *w**o**rhte* vs. *w**o**rk* / *w**o**rked*); but cf. ***wrought** iron*. Dialects have reduced the number of these verbs even further:

One thing that our fellow Germans have **teached** us though, is how important team spirit is. (GB)
Let me tell u what i **thinked** about it, (PAK)
He means well, as I **telled** yo' yesterday, and tell yo' again and again. (GB)
I don't want to own anything **selled** by Samsung! (US)

(ii) EXTENSION

- **Hybridization of classes in the strong verb**, or transfer from one strong class to another, with the survival of the **most representative classes** (i.e. those with a higher frequency). E.g. class V *sprecan / spræc / spræcon / sprecen* is reformed following the model of class IV, and thus acquires a past pple. *spoken* (cf. OE *brecan* 'break' class IV, past pple *brocen*).

- **Transfer** (complete or partial**) of strong verbs to the weak category**, with the development of new preterite forms on the analogy of weak verbs, their use alongside strong forms and eventual change over to the class of weak verbs. This development started timidly in late OE (e.g. OE *hebban* 'heave' had both strong *hof / hefen* and weak forms *hefde /hefod*), and became common in the course of the ME period. The final transfer to the weak class followed **a period of fluctuation between strong and weak variants of the same verb, which could last for centuries, and even continue into the present day.**

mow / *mowed* /*mown* or *mowed*

Weak past forms are attested from the 16th cent. onwards; the past tense is now chiefly *mowed* , while in the past participle the strong and weak forms are both current. (OED s.v. *mow* v.1)

cleave /kli:v/, *cleaves*, *cleaving*; a formal or literary word. The past tense can be either *cleaved* or *clove*, an the past participle can be *cleaved*, *cloven* or *cleft*. (from Collins COBUILD s.v. *cleave*)
a cleft palate, a cleft sentence, a cloven hoof

Identify weak and strong forms in the paradigm of *cleave*.

List the preterite and past pple. of the following verbs:

saw
shear
show
swell

Sometimes the strong past participle is no longer perceived as part of the verb paradigm, but as an independent adjective:

shaven, Adj. Classif. Something that is **shaven** has been shaved (from Collins COBUILD s.v. *shaven*)

(iii) PHONOLOGICAL CHANGES

- **Loss of final /-n/ in the strong past participle** (esp. in the S): e.g. *(i)drunken* > *drunke* > *drunk*. It did not affect all strong verbs. Differences between varieties (e.g. BrE *got* vs. AmE *gotten*)

- **A number of originally 'regular' weak verbs became 'irregular'** as a result of phonological changes:

e.g. *keep kept kept* (< OE *cēpan* /e:/ *cēpte* /e:/, but in eME long vowel shortened when followed by certain consonant clusters, so ME *kepte* /e/. Loss of final schwa. In the eModE period, due to the Great Vowel Shift, ME /e:/ > /i:/). Similarly *sweep, leap, creep*.

bleed bled bled (< OE *bledan bledde*, shortening after long consonant, simplification of long consonant, loss of final schwa in the preterite. Great Vowel Shift ME /e:/ > /i:/). Similarly *breed, lead, read, meet* and *hide*.

Some of these 'irregular' weak verbs have developed 'regular' weak forms by analogical extension (e.g. *burnt* vs. *burned*; *smellt* vs. *smelled*; *learnt* vs. *learned*; *dwellt* vs. *dwelled*).

4.1.2.3. The fate of finite verb inflections

Gramatical categories related to the verb

Tense: A category used in the grammatical description of verbs (…), referring primarily to the way the grammar marks the time at which the action denoted by the verb took place. Traditionally, a distinction is made between past, present and future tenses, often with further divisions (perfect, pluperfect, etc.) (Crystal 2008: 480)

Aspect: A category used in the grammatical description of verbs (…), referring primarily to the way the grammar marks the duration or type of temporal activity denoted by the verb (…) The English verb phrase makes a formal distinction which is usually analysed as aspectual: the contrast between progressive (or 'continuous') and 'non-progressive' (or simple) duration of action. (Crystal 2008: 38)

Mood: [It] refers to a set of syntactic and semantic contrasts signalled by alternative paradigms of the verb, e.g. indicative (the unmarked form), subjunctive, imperative. Semantically, a wide range of meanings is involved, especially attitudes on the part of the speaker towards the factual content of the utterance, e.g. uncertainty, definiteness, vagueness, possibility. (Crystal 2008: 312)

Voice: A category used in the grammatical description of sentence or clause structure, primarily with reference to verbs, to express the way sentences may alter the relationship between the subject and object of a verb, without changing the meaning of the sentence. The main distinction is between active and passive. (Crystal 2008: 516)

> Statistics themselves don't mean very much; but there are some numbers that cast an interesting light on the development of Germanic languages, in particular English. A typical Sanskrit verb paradigm may have as many as 126 distinct verb forms (that is, marked for tense/person/number, excluding infinitives, participles, verbal nouns, etc.); the most complex Germanic system, Gothic, has twenty-two; Old English, somewhat more typically for Old Germanic, has a maximum of eight; Modern English at its richest has three (Lass 1994: 151)

OE distinguishes five different grammatical categories in the verb (marked by inflection)

(i) tense present vs. preterite (some scholars label them 'past' and 'non-past', since the traditional present not only shows present time reference).

(ii) mood indicative vs. subjunctive vs. imperative

(iii) number singular vs. plural

(iv) person only in the singular (1st vs. 2nd vs. 3rd)

(v) voice only active voice. A remnant of the synthetic passive is found in the verb *hātan* 'name, call', in the forms *hātte/hātton* 'is/was/are/were called'

In PDE we find:

(i) **tense** (present vs. preterite);
(ii) **mood**, with a residual subjunctive (e.g. *God save the Queen!, be as it may; bless you*; and in some mandative constructions: *I suggest that she go*).
(iii) **number**, residual. Only marked in the verb *to be*.
(iv) **person**: 3rd person singular present indicative.
(v) **voice**: only active

The verb paradigm in OE

Present

CAT.	BOTH STRONG AND WEAK VERBS
Inf.	*-an*
1 sg pres ind	*-e*
2 sg pres ind	*-(e)st*
3 sg pres ind	*-eþ*
Pl pres ind	*-aþ*
Sg pres subj	*-e*
Pl pres subj	*-en*
Sg imp	*-ø*
Pl imp	*-aþ*

Preterite

CAT.	STRONG	WEAK
1 sg ind	*-ø*	*-e*
2 sg ind	*-e*	*-est, -st*
3 sg ind	*-ø*	*-e*
Pl ind	*-on*	*-on*
Sg subj	*-e*	*-e*
Pl pres subj	*-en*	*-en*

CHANGES IN THE MIDDLE ENGLISH PERIOD

1. Simplification of the OE system due to several sound changes:

(i) merger of unstressed vowels under schwa in the late OE period ⇒ the original 7 endings of the OE paradigm are reduced to 5 in eME (zero, *-e, -(e)st, -eþ, -en*).
(ii) loss of final schwa ⇒ only 4 stable inflections remain (zero, *-(e)st, -eþ, -en*).
(iii) loss of final nasals ⇒ *-en* > *-e* > *-ø*

2. Emergence of a new inflection *–(e)s* in the North

Old Northumbrian, the Northern dialect of OE, had developed "a highly innovative present system, probably Scandinavian-influenced, with a collapse of 2nd and 3rd person singular and of both with plural, and an ending in *–s* for all three collapsed categories [...] The innovating *–s* forms penetrated well into the more northerly reaches of the midlands during the Middle English period, and –as we can see from PDE *–-(e)s* –eventually reached the south as well" (Lass 1992: 136)

Present system

CAT.	NORTH	MID	SOUTH
Inf.	unmarked	*-en*	*-en*
1 sg pres ind	*-(e)*	*-e*	*-e*
2 sg pres ind	*-es*	*-est, -st, -es*	*-est, -st*
3 sg pres ind	*-es*	*-es, -eþ*	*-eþ, -þ*
Pl pres ind	*-es*	*-en*	*-eþ*
Sg pres subj	*-(e)*	*-e*	*-e*
Pl pres subj	*-(en)*	*-e(n)*	*-en*
Sg imp	unmarked	*-ø, -e*	*-ø, -e*
Pl imp	*-es*	*-eþ*	*-eþ*

Present 3rd person singular and present plural as regional indicators in ME.

Fig. 9.

Fig. 10.

from Mossé (1952: 77)

Some examples (singular vs. plural)

North

The bee has three kyndis. An es, þat scho is never ydill and scho is noghte with thaym þat will noghte wyrke, bot castys thaym owte and puttes thaym awaye. Anothire es, þat, when scho flyes, scho takes erthe in hyr fette. The thyrde es, þat scho kepes clene and bryghte hire wyngez. Thus ryghtwyse men þat lufes God are neuer in ydyllnes. (North; 14th century. Richard Rolle, *The Nature of the Bee*)

'The bee has three characteristics. One is that she is never idle, and she is not with those that will not work, but casts them out and puts them away. Another is that, when she flieds, she takes earth in her feet. The third is that she keeps her wings clean and bright. Thus righteous men who love God are never in idleness'

Midlands

And men fynden many a tyme harde dyamandes in a masse, þat cometh out of gold, whan men puren it and fynen it out of the myne, when men breken þat masse in smale peces. And sum tyme it happeneth þat men fynden summe as grete as a pese, and summe lasse. (Midlands; 14th century. *Mandeville's Travels*)

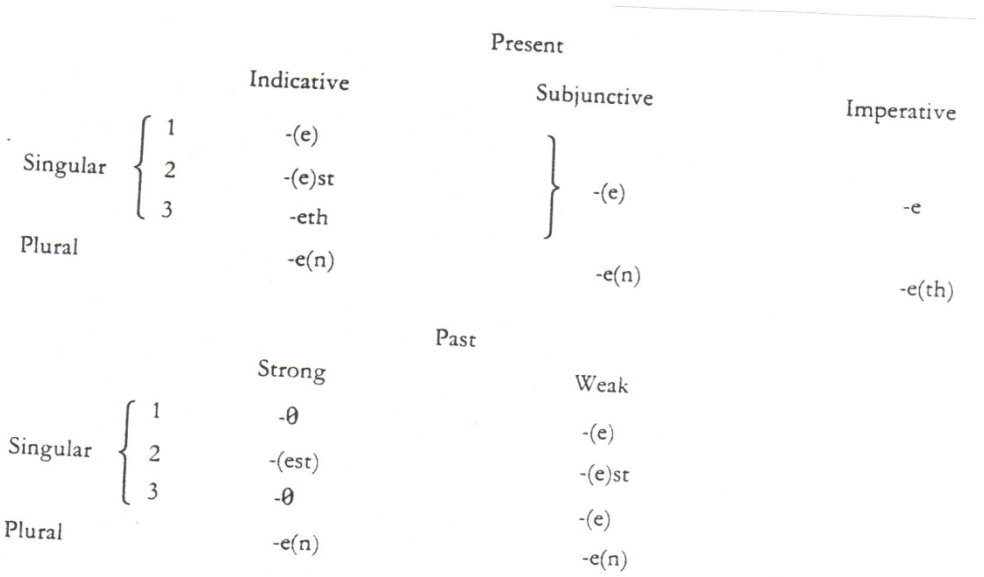
'and men find many times hard diamonds in a mass which comes out of gold, when they purify and refine it out of the mine, when men break that mass in small pieces. And sometimes it happens that people find some as big as a pea, and some smaller.'

South

Þarfore clerkes […] makeþ and wryteþ here bokes in Latyn. […] ȝe cunneþ speke and rede and understonde Latyn. þanne hyt nedeþ noȝt to have such an Englysch translacion. (South; 14th century; Trevisa's *Dialogue*)

'therefore clerks make and write their books in Latin. You can speak and read and understand Latin, then it is not necessary for you to have an English translation.'

London standard 14th century (from Lass 1992: 138)



From the five grammatical categories encoded by means of inflections in OE (tense, mood, number, person, voice?), **tense** becomes the only obligatory category, since person is only marked in the singular (*-(e)s*) and mood marking is just found in a few recessive subjunctives. The zero ending (bare verb stem) takes over more and more functions.

DEVELOPMENTS IN THE EMODE PERIOD

- **Loss of present plural ending** (already under way in the ME period). The London standard shows the original Midland ending *–en* (which is ultimately reduced to zero after /n/-deletion and loss of final schwa), and this is the source of the PDE uninflected form. The original Southern (*-th*) and Northern (*-s*) endings persist in the standard as minority variants into the 17th and 18th centuries respectively.

- **Variation between *–(e)s* and *–(e)th* in the 3rd person singular, and eventual loss of *–(e)th*.** Originally the distribution of these two forms depended on **dialect** (N, part of Mid *–(e)s* vs. *–eth* elsewhere). In London forms in *–s* first occur in fourteenth-century texts, but are rare; they increase gradually during the 15th century, and explosively in the next two. By about 1600 *–s* is probably the norm. In the period of variation, the choice of one or the other seems to have been sensitive to register and style: "In the earlier sixteenth century *–s* was probably **informal**, and *–th* **neutral and/or elevated**; by the 1580s *–s* was most likely the **spoken** norm, with *–eth* as a **metrical** variety" (Lass 1999: 164).

  Since *–eth* was still syllabic, the two variants could be used for metrical purposes:

  > *With her, that **hateth** thee and **hates** vs all* (2 *Henry VI* II.iv.52)
  >
  > *He **rowseth** vp himself, and **makes** a pause* (*The Rape of Lucretia* 541)

  The old ending survived longer with high-frequency verbs like *have, do* or *say* (*hath, doth, saith*).

  In the 17th century there are clear indications that people wrote <-eth> as a conventional spelling for *–(e)s:*

Richard Hodges, 1643, Special help to orthography

most of our English words (as they are commonly pronounc't) are monosyllables: for howsoever wee use to write thus, *leadeth* it, *maketh* it, ...&c Yet in our ordinary speech...wee say, *leads* it, *makes* it...Yea far, custom hath so prevailed in this kinde, not onely with the Learned in their Writings, but also with the Pres: as it may plainly appear by many wel-Printed books...Therefore, whensoever *eth*, cometh in the end of any word, wee may pronounce it sometimes as *s* & sometimes like *z* as in these words, namely in *bolteth* it and *boldeth* it, which are commonly pronounc't, as if they were written thus, *bolts* it, *bolds* it...

FURTHER SIMPLIFICATION IN THE LATE MODERN ENGLISH PERIOD

- **Loss of the 2nd person singular inflection** (both present and past) *–(e)st*, together with the loss of the pronoun *thou*.

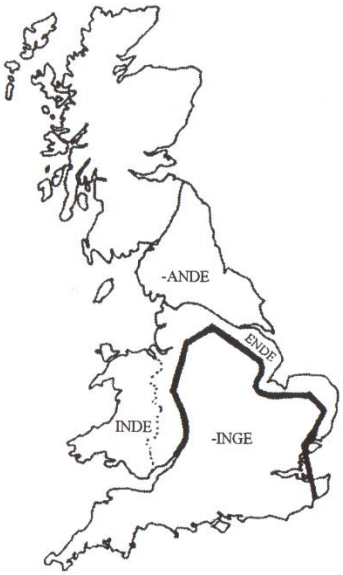
NON FINITE FORMS OF THE VERB

INFINITIVE

The infinitive is historically a deverbal noun, which has retained its characteristic inflection in all Germanic languages (cf. German *fahr**en**, schreib**en***) but English and Afrikaans. In OE, the infinitival inflection was *–an* (*beran*). The infinitive retains traces of its original nominal nature in that it can be inflected for the dative, normally after the preposition *to* in constructions denoting purpose (*to beranne* '(in order) to bear'). The process of loss of the infinitive inflection started already in OE times in Northumbrian, which shows *–a* where other dialects have *–an*. In the course of the ME period we find zero in the North and *–e(n)* in other dialects. The inflection was eventually lost by the 15th century.

PRESENT PARTICIPLE

The source of the present participle is in a verbal adjective. The OE inflection was *–ende* (e.g. *ber-ende*). In ME the present participle becomes a very good dialectal marker, as we find *–ande* in the North (probably originating in the Scandinavian inflection *–andi*), *-ende* in the Midlands and *–inde* in the South (both from OE *–ende*). Already in the eME period in the South some participles show the ending *–ing*, which was originally that of an OE verbal noun (*-ung* > *-ing*). By the 15th century *–ing* was the dominant ending in the standard.



From De la Cruz et al. 1995: 129)

PAST PARTICIPLE

Part participles are originally deverbal adjectives. In OE he strong inflection is *–en* and the weak ending *–ed* or *–od*. The weak ending has survived into the present day, while the strong ending was subject to nasal loss in ME so that we find variation between *–en ~ -n ~* zero sometimes even in the same writer. The strong past pple ending was retained in some verbs while it was lost in others (cf. PDE *–en* vs. zero strong participles like *ridden* vs. *sung*), while a number of verbs show alternative forms until the 18th century (cf. *forgotten* vs. *forgot*; *holden* vs. *held*).

In OE and other Germanic languages past pples were marked with the prefix *ge-* (unless the verb had another prefix). This prefix remains intact in all West Germanic languages but English (cf. German *gefahren*, *geschrieben*), where it was lost as early as the 10th century in the North (probably due to Scandinavian influence). In the ME period it remains in the South and the southern Midlands in its reduced form *y-/i-*. By the late 15th century it had died out in all dialectal areas.

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