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HISTORY OF WORD FORMATION IN ENGLISH

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Three periods in the History of English led to consequences regarding the system of writing and spelling; phonological system and grammar: morphology and syntax. There are three periods in the history of English: Old English (449-1066), Middle English (1066-1475) and New/ Modern English (1475-up today). Vocabulary suffered a lot from invasions of Britain by Romans, Germanic Tribes, Anglo-Saxon Conquest and The Norman Conquest. As a result, quite a lot of words entered the language and a lot of changes were made.

Word formation in Old English. This period was represented by the technique of writing as runes (24 letters of an ancient Germanic alphabet that was used from the third century AD) and Latin Island writing by the introduction of Christianity [1]. There were comparatively few diphthongs and an underdeveloped system of consonants, but a strict subdivision of vowels into long and short. Stress was shifted to the first syllable.

The formation of new words in the Old English period derived from existing roots and bases by the method of affixation and alternation of vowels. It existed idiosyncratic spelling choices which varied from author to author and from work to work by the same author, e.g. 'and' could be spelled either *and* or *ond*. According to approximate estimates of linguists in this era, the English language borrowed from Latin more than 6 hundred words, not

counting their derivatives. These are mainly words that refer to religion, the church, and government.

Word formation in Middle English

– compounding declined dramatically. It appeared new compounds, e.g. *birthday, blackberry, craftsman, grandfather, schoolmaster, new-born, red-hot, housekeeper, moneymaker*;

– phrasal verbs increased;

– some Old English affixes changed, e.g. *-ere into -er; -estre into -ster, -in into -ing, -ð into -th*. The most frequent native prefixes were *over-, a-, by-, be-, bi-, for-, fore-, on-, un-, with-, mis-, ut-, under-*, e.g. *onward, utcome (outcome), withdrawn (withdraw)*;

– the range of suffixes increased;

– hybrid formations appear – native prefixes and suffixes are added to borrowed roots and vice versa, e.g. *unable, unarmen (unarm), lovable [2]*.

Word formation in Early Modern English

– derivation was introduced by most productive suffixes and prefixes:

Most productive suffixes		
Noun suffixes	-er	trader
	-ing	farming
Adjective suffixes	-y	healthy
	-ful	beautiful
New suffixes	-ment	treatment
	-al	approval
	-ity	validity
	-age	luggage
	-able/ -ible	readable, dirigible
Most productive prefixes		
un-	unfortunate, unabridged	
mis-	misplace, misspell	
out-	outbrave, outbreak	
over-	overbear, overcareful	
under-	underbid, underdo	

– compounds of various patterns: *handkerchief, schoolboy, heartbroken, looking-glass, greatcoat*;

– clipping is a reduction of long borrowed words to monosyllabic words (to better assimilate in the English vocabulary): *gent (gentleman), cab (cabriolet), wig (periwig)*;

– conversion is zero-derivation:

Old English	Middle English	Early Modern English
lufu – lufian	love – loven	love – to love
rest – restan	rest – resten	rest – to rest
ende – endan	end – enden	end – to end

The changes are presented below:

noun to verb	a place – to place
verb to noun	to talk – a talk
adjective to verb	clean – to clean
adjective to noun	native – a native

New English period. Displacement of local dialects and expansion of the use of English and 15-16st. in social and cultural life contributed to the formation of English national literature [3]. There was a displacement of French and Latin languages from their spheres of use, which led to the need to normalize oral and written language. The first orthographers and grammarians began their work.

To conclude, three periods in history played a significant role in the word-formation. Old English period was called the period of full inflections as paradigmatic forms were created by inflections, suffixes and sound interchange. Adjectives, pronouns and numbers agreed with nouns in number, gender and case. Gender was assigned to all nouns. Word-building was presented by affixation and compounding.

Qualitative and quantitative changes in the phonological and morphological systems of the Middle English language took place during the Middle English period (period of leveled endings). There was a loss of some of the Old English dictionaries for social and linguistic reasons. Scandinavian lexical borrowings in Middle English have developed. Borrowing French words (motivation and chronology) also took place. There was a decline in word formation according to the German models of word formation and ablaut (morphological alternation of vowels of the word root in different grammatical forms). The destruction of the Old English system of verb prefixes and the borrowing of French word-forming affixes occupied a significant place in word formation. Changes in the English language still occur every day and every moment.

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