

Linguistic features of Germanic languages

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WORD STRESS

- Early Proto-Germanic – free and movable
- Late Proto-Germanic – fixed on the first syllable – root or prefix.
- In simple forms the root-syllable was normally stressed.
- In compound forms (especially in nouns and adjectives) the stress fell on the prefix.
- In verbs the prefix was still a separate particle at that time and did not take the stress.

PG fiskaz, Gt fisks, O Icel fiskr, OE fisk

VOWELS

- IE short /ǝ/ and /ǣ/ correspond to GLs short /ǣ/: Gr *octō* – Goth *ahtau*, Rus *ночь* – Germ *nacht*
- IE long /ō/ and long /ā/ correspond to GLs long /ō/: Lat *frāter* – Goth *brōþar* (брат), Lat *flōs* – OE *blōma* (цвѣток).
- In the root syllable IE /e/ = GL /i/, if it was followed by 1) /i/ 2) /j/ 3) nasal+consonant, **else** IE /e/ = G /e/.

Examples: Lat *medius* – OE *middle* (середина), Lat *ventus* – OE *wind* (ветер) **but** Lat *edere* – OE *etan* (есть).

- IE /u/ = GL /u/ if followed by 1) /u/ 2) nasal+consonant, **else** IE /u/ = G /o/.

Example: Lat *sunus* – OE *sunu* (сын)

CONSONANTS

- The 1st Consonant Shift, or Grimm's Law

- IE G Examples

/ p / / f / Lat *plēnus* – Eng *full*

/ t / / þ / Gr *tres* – Eng *three*

/ k / / h / Lat *noctem* – Goth *nahts*

/ b / / p / Rus *болото* – Eng *pool*

/ d / / t / Lat *duo* – Goth *twan*

/ g / / k / Lat *ego* – OE *ic*

/ bh / / b / Sans *bhratar* – Eng *brother*

/ dh / / d / Sans *madhu* – OE *medu*

/ gh / / g / Lat *hostis* – Rus *зость* – Germ *gast*

CONSONANTS

- Verner's Law: unstressed vowel + voiceless stop → voiceless fricative → voiced fricative → voiced stop: /t/ → /þ/ → /ð/ → /d/ Gr *patēr* => OE *fæder*.
- The consonant pairs involved in grammatical alternation were f/b, þ/d, h/g, hw/w, s/r.
- Some words retained traces of Verner's Law:
death – dead was – were

Morphology

- Inflections were the principal means of form-building .

Verb Forms	Gt.	OE	Mod. E
Past. sing.	bar	bær	bore
Infinitive	bairan	beran	bear
Past. pl	berum	bæron	
Part. II	baúrans	boren	born

- Sound interchanges became very productive.

The principal gradation in IE languages was *e – o* which is qualitative. (умереть – мор, беру - брал).

- Suppletion- the forms of one and the same word are built from different roots or stems: *иду –шел, хороший – лучше, я – меня; I-ты, mine- те; ego-теi*

NOUN

- **Classes of nouns:** 1. vocalic stems a, o, i, u formed strong declension;
2. n-stem formed the paradigm of weak declension;
3. s/r-stems;
4. root-stem nouns which had never had any stem suffix, the root and the stem in these words always coincide.
- **Categories:** 1. declension;
2. gender (masculine, feminine, neuter);
3. case (Nominative, Genitive, Dative, Accusative).
4. number (singular and plural).

ADJECTIVE

- Adjective declension in all GLs has no parallel with other IE languages.
 1. strong declension which is a combination of substantival and pronominal endings;
 2. weak declension which reflected the declension of n-stem substantives.
- Categories:
 1. gender;
 2. number;
 3. case;
 4. degrees of comparison (positive, comparative, superlative). Comparative degree was built by means of the suffixes -iza, -oza; superlative degree was built with the suffixes -ist, -ost.

PRONOUNS

- The oldest classes are personal, demonstrative and interrogative.
- Personal pronoun had only two persons, the 3rd person developed later from the demonstrative pronouns.
- Another ancient feature was the dual number of personal pronouns (ic – wit – wē; þu – zit – zē).

VERBS

- 1. Strong verbs (had four principal forms - Infinitive, Past singular, Past plural and Participle II);

faran - fōr - fōrum – farans (ехать)

letan – lailot – lailotum – letans (оставлять)

- 2. weak verbs (Past tense, Participle I);

class	infinitive	past sing.	past plural	Participle II	translation
I	hausjan	hausida	hausidēdum	hausiþs	слышать
II	salbōn	salbōda	salbōdēdum	salbōþs	мазать
III	haban	habaida	habaidēdum	habaiþs	иметь
IV	fullnan	fulnōda	fullnōdēdum	-	наполнять

VERBS

- 3. united preterit-present verbs (used vowel gradation to derive the forms of the present tense while their form of the preterit was build with the help of the dental suffix..

Examples: OE *wītan* (inf) - *wāt* (pres sg) - *witon* (pres pl) - *wiste* (pret sg) - *wiston* (pret pl) - *zewiten* (P2) (ЗНАТЬ).

Here belong modal verbs , verbs denoting possession and verbs denoting estimation.

- Categories: 1. number;
2. tense (Present and Past);
3. mood (indicative, imperative and subjunctive);

VOCABULARY

● IE words

Mod. E	OE	O Sc	Lat	Greek	Russia n	Sans
man	mann	maðr	mās			manu
father	fæder	faðir	pater	patér		pitá(r)
mother	mōdor	moðir	mater	mētér	мать	mātá(r)
heart	heorte		cor	kardia	сердце	
nose	nosu		nasus		нос	nāsa

● Pure Germanic words

Mod. English	OE	German	Swedish	<u>Gothic</u>
head	hēāfod	Haupt	huvud	haubiþ
hand	hand	Hand	hand	handus
bear	bera	Bär	björn	
fir	furh	Föhre	furu	
sea	sæ:	See	sjö	saiws
land	land	Land	land	land

VOCABULARY

- Borrowed words

Mod. English	OE	Other Germanic languages	Latin
pound	pund	Gt. pund, O. Ic. pund	pondō
street	stræt, strēt	OHG atrâza OSc strâta	strata
plum,	plūme	O Icl plóma	prunus
wine	win	OHG, O Sc win G wein	vinum
shield	scyld	O Sc skjoldr	scutum
write	scrifan	O Sc scrifa	scribere
canon	canonic	O Sc kanunkr	canonicus