

History of the English language (WS 2005/6)

Time: Mi 16:15 – 18:45

Room: CZ 3, Hs 7

Instructor: Prof. Holger Diessel

Office hours: Wed. 14:00

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The lecture provides an overview of the history of the English language from its earliest known Indo-European ancestry, through its most profound developments in the Old English, Middle English, and Early Modern English periods, to recent changes in Modern English. The lecture is concerned with both the socio-economic factors that affected the development of the English language and the most important linguistic changes that occurred since the Anglo-Saxons came to Britain. In addition, we will talk about some general principles of language change.

Readings

History of the English language

Barber, Charles. 2000. *The English Language. A Historical Introduction*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Baugh, A.C. and T. Cable. 2002. *A History of the English Language*. London: Routledge. [fifth edition]

Freeborn, D. 1998. *From Old English to Standard English. A course book in language variation across time*. Houndsmill: Palgrave. [second edition]

Jucker, Andreas H. 2004. *History of English and English Historical Linguistics*. Stuttgart: Klett.

Millward, C.M. 1996. *A Biography of the English Language*. Boston: Heinle. [second edition]

Mitchell, B. and F.C. Robinson. 2001. *A Guide to Old English*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. [sixth edition]

The Cambridge History of the English Language. Vol. I-V. 1992. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Introductions to historical linguistics

Aitchison, J. *Language Change. Progress or Decay*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Croft, W. 2000. *Explaining Language Change. An Evolutionary Approach*. Harlow: Longman.

McMahon, A.M.S. 1995. *Understanding Language Change*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Hock, H.H. 1991. *Principles of Historical Linguistics*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.

Trask, R.L. 1996. *Historical Linguistics*. London: Arnold.

Script

Digitale Bibliothek Thüringen

Topics

1. Indo-European
 - The Indo-European language family
 - Comparative evidence and linguistic reconstruction
 - Grimm's law and Verner's law
 - Languages across the world
2. Old English
 - Linguistic features of Germanic
 - Social history: The Germanic invasion, christianization, Viking attacks
 - Old English grammar: phonology, morphology, syntax
 - Foreign influences: Celtic, Latin, Old Norse
3. Middle English
 - Social history: The Norman conquest
 - Middle English grammar: phonology, the loss of inflection endings, the rise of analytical verb forms, word order changes
 - Foreign influences: French and Latin
4. Early Modern English
 - Social history: The printing press, the development of a written standard
 - Early Modern English grammar: the Great English Vowel shift
 - Foreign influences: borrowings from Latin, Greek, and other languages
5. Modern English
 - Social history: English as a world language, English creoles
 - Recent lexical developments, recent grammatical changes
 - Grammaticalization
6. English varieties
 - British English, American English, other Englishes
 - English-based pidgins and creoles
 - African American English
7. Quiz