

OLD ENGLISH GRAMMAR. THE NOMINAL SYSTEM.

The noun

List of principal questions:

1. General survey of the nominal system

2. The noun

2.1. Gender

2.2. Number

2.3. Case


Vowel-Stems. Declension of a-stem nouns

Consonant stems. Declension of n-stem nouns

Declension of root-stem nouns

R-stem declension

2.4. Homonymity of forms in Old English and its influence on the further development of noun forms

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- OE possessed a well-developed morphological system.

A synthetic, or inflected type of language = it showed the relations between words and expressed other grammatical meanings mainly with the help of simple (synthetic) grammatical forms:

- grammatical endings, sound interchanges in the root, grammatical prefixes, and suppletive formation.
- No analytical forms in OE. Towards the end of the period some analytical verb-forms began to develop.



The noun

Grammatical categories:

- gender,
- number,
- case.

The OE Noun: GENDER

- The grammatical gender = the natural gender of the person
- **wifman** (*woman*) - masculine
- **stān** (*stone, masculine*)
- **bān** (*bone, neuter*)
- **cwen** (*queen, feminine*)

The OE Noun: GENDER

Masculine

Male beings

fæder (*father*)

sunu (*son*)

cyning (*king*)

Lifeless things

hlāf (*bread*)

stān (*stone*)

hrōf (*roof*)

Abstract notions

stenc (*stench*)

fæ̅r (*fear*)

nama (*name*)

dōm (*doom*)

The OE Noun: GENDER

Feminine

Female beings

mōdor (*mother*)

dohter (*daughter*)

cwēn (*queen*)

Ʒōs (*goose*)

Lifeless things

tunge (*tongue*)

meolc (*milk*)

Abstract notions

trywðu (*truth*)

hunting (*hunting*)

lufu (*love*)

The OE Noun: GENDER

Neuter

Living beings

cicen (*chicken*)

hors (*horse*)

mæȝden (*maiden*)

Lifeless things

ēaȝe (*eye*)

scip (*ship*)

Abstract notions

mōd (*mood*)

riht (*right*)

The OE Noun: GENDER

Nouns originally formed

- with the help of the suffix -* **an** -
Masculine

OE hunta 'hunter'

- by means of the suffix – **þu** -
Feminine
- OE **mærðu** 'glory'
- **lænȝðu** (NE length), etc.



The OE Noun: GENDER

- **talū** (NE tale) – Feminine
- **sunu** (NE son) – Masculine

Number

Nominative Singular Nominative Plural

fisc (*fish*)

fiscas

ēaze (*eye*)

ēazan

tōð (*tooth*)

tēð

scip (*ship*)

scipu



Case

4 cases

- Nominative,
- Genetive,
- Dative
- Accusative

Case

- Nominative - subject
- The rest of the case-forms, alone or preceded by prepositions, - objects, or adverbial modifiers
- The Genitive case - mostly when a noun served to modify another noun

þæs cyninȝes brōþur 'that king's brother'

- as an object

he ðær bād westanwindes 'he waited there for westen wind'.

Case

- **different stem-suffixes** originally in Old English acquired materially **different endings** in the same case, for example:

Nominative plural

○ <u>a-stem</u>	<u>ō-stem</u>	<u>n-stem</u>
stan-as	car-a	nam-an

Declensions in Old English

Declension Case and number	Vowel (strong) stems				Consonant (weak) stem			Root stems
	a	ō	u	i	n	r	s	
Nom. Sing.	stān (stone)	caru (care)	sunu (son)	wine (wine)	nama (name)	fæder (father)	lamb (lamb)	fōt (foot)
Nom. Plur.	stānas	cara	sunu	wine	naman	fæderos	lamb	fēt

Morphological classification of Nouns in Old English

Division according to stem

Vocalic stems				Consonantal stems		
Strong declension ¹						
<i>a</i> -stems and their <i>ja</i> -stems <i>wa</i> -stems	<i>ō</i> -stems variants <i>jō</i> -stems <i>wo</i> -stems	<i>i</i> -stems	<i>u</i> -stems	<i>n</i> -stems (weak de- clension)	Root- stems	Other minor stems: <i>r</i> -, <i>s</i> -, <i>nd</i> -

Division according to gender

M N	F	M N F	M F	M N F	M F	M N F
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Division according to length of the root-syllable

short long	short long	short long	short long			
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¹ Vocalic stems are also called the “strong” declension; one of the consonantal stems — the *n*-stems — are termed the “weak” declension.

Vowel-Stems. Declension of a-stem nouns

hlāf (*bread*)

hwærte (*wheat*)

hors (*horse*)

fisc (*fish*)

scip (*ship*)

Vowel-Stems. Declension of a-stem nouns

Gender		Masculine	Neuter
Case			
Singular	Nominative	fisc (<i>fish</i>)	scip (<i>ship</i>)
	Genitive	fiscēs	scipes
	Dative	fisce	scipe
	Accusative	fisc	scip
Plural	Nominative	fiscas	scipu
	Genitive	fisca	scipa
	Dative	fiscum	scipum
	Accusative	fiscas	scipu

Vowel-Stems. Declension of a-stem nouns

- The Neuter a-stems differed only in Nom. And Acc. Plural
- Short stems: **-u**
- **-u** ending disappeared after long syllables > Plural = Singular
- Eventually the nouns **house, thing, word, wife** and others acquired the regular ending **-s**.

Vowel-Stems. Declension of a-stem nouns

long-stemmed variant:

- no inflection in Nominative and Accusative Singular
- no inflection in the Plural (Nom. and Acc.).
- The traces of of Neuter long a-stems =

irregular plural forms in ModE:

sheep, deer, swine



Consonant stems.

Declension of n-stem nouns

The weak **n**-declension:

many masculine and feminine nouns

e.g. **nama** (*name*) – masculine,

tunge (*tongue*) – feminine)

but only two nouns of the neuter
gender:

ēaƷe (eye) and **ēare** (ear).

Declension of n-stem nouns

Gender Case		Masculine	Feminine	Neuter
Singular	Nominative	nama (<i>name</i>)	tunge (<i>tongue</i>)	eaze (<i>eye</i>)
	Genitive	naman	tungan	eazan
	Dative	naman	tungan	eazan
	Accusative	naman	tungan	eaze
Plural	Nominative	naman	tungan	eazan
	Genitive	namena	tungena	eazena
	Dative	namum	tungum	eazum
	Accusative	naman	tungan	eazan



Declension of n-stem nouns

ох-ен-а

**Р. имена, имен,
семена, семян**

Declension of root-stem nouns

Gender Case		Masculine	Feminine
Singular	Nominative	man (<i>man</i>)	mūs (<i>mouse</i>)
	Genitive	mannes	mūse
	Dative	man	mȳs
	Accusative	man	mūs
Plural	Nominative	men	mȳs
	Genitive	manna	mūsa
	Dative	mannum	mūsum
	Accusative	men	mȳs

Declension of root-stem nouns

- **ō > ē** : the influence of the sound [i] in the endings of those cases (**palatal mutation**).
- The pre-written * **fōtiz** (Nomin. Plural) and ***fōti** (Dative Singular) > ***fētiz** and ***fēti** > **fēt**
- After the loss of the endings:
the only distinguishing feature between the forms **fōt** and **fēt** > ModE.



Declension of root-stem nouns

OE Singular **tōp** – Plural

3ōs – Plural **3ēs**

mann – Plural **menn**

mus – Plural **mys**

Declension of root-stem nouns

Prof. A.I. Smirnitsy:

1. These words are used very frequently > the influence of analogy > the greatest number of irregularities (the verb to be, the personal pronouns, etc)

2. The difference between the Singular and the Plural: grammatical + lexical (an additional “collective” meaning)

Cf. человек – люди

R-stem declension

- IE [s] > [z] (Verner's Law)
- In West Germanic [z] > [r] (Rhotacism)

OE Nominative, Accusative Singular

lamb æȝ cealf cild

lamb egg calf child

OE Nominative, Accusative Plular

lambru æȝru cealfu cildru



R-stem declension

MidE **cildru – childre + n >**
ModE **children**

Homonymity of forms in Old English and its influence on the further development of noun forms

- **-es** — genitive singular, masculine and neuter
- **-a/ena** — genitive plural, all genders
- **-um** — dative plural, all genders
- **-as** — nominative and accusative plural, masculine

Reference table of the principal grammatical noun suffixes in Old English

Gender Stem Case		Masculine				Feminine				Neuter		
		a	i	u	n	ō	i	u	n	a	i	n
Singular	Nominative	—	e	u/o	a	u	—	u/o	e	—	-/e	e
	Genitive	es	es	a	an	e	e	a	an	es	es	an
	Dative	e	e	a	an	e	e	a	an	e	e	an
	Accusative	—	e	a	an	e	-/e	a	an	—	e	e
Plural	Nominative	as	e/es	a	ana	e	a	a	n	u/o	u	an
	Genitive	a	a	a	ena	a	a	a	ena	a	a	ena
	Dative	um	um	um	um	um	um	um	um	um	um	um
	Accusative	as	e/as	a	an	a	e	a	an	u/o/-	u	an

OLD ENGLISH GRAMMAR.
THE NOMINAL SYSTEM.
The Pronoun

Classes of pronouns in Old English:

- personal
- possessive
- demonstrative
- interrogative
- relative
- indefinite



The Pronoun

Grammatical categories:

- gender
- number
- case



The personal pronoun

Gender

Three genders:

- Masculine
- Feminine
- Neuter

***Different forms for different genders -
only in the third person singular,
the rest of the forms - indifferent to
gender***

The personal pronoun

	<i>Masculine</i>	<i>Feminine</i>	<i>Neuter</i>
Nom. Singular	<i>hē (he)</i>	<i>hēo (she)</i>	<i>hit (it)</i>
Nom. Plural	<i>hī (they)</i>		

The personal pronoun

Number

- In the first and second person - three categorial forms: singular, dual and plural, for instance:
- **Singular Dual** **Plural**
- **ic** (*I*) **wit** (*two of us*) **wē** (*we more than two*)
- **pū** (*you one*) **zīe** (*two of you*) **zē** (*you more than two*)

The personal pronoun

Case

Personal pronouns (noun-pronouns) –
a 4-case system:

- ***Nominative***
- ***Genitive***
- ***Dative***
- ***Accusative***

The personal pronoun

First person				
Case	Singular		Dual	Plural
<i>Nom.</i>	ic		wit	wē
<i>Gen.</i>	mīn		uncer	ūre, ūser
<i>Dat.</i>	mē		unc	ūs
<i>Acc.</i>	mec, mē		uncit	ūsic, ūs
Second person				
<i>Nom.</i>	þū		ʒit	ʒē
<i>Gen.</i>	þīn		incer	ēower
<i>Dat.</i>	þē		inc	ēow
<i>Acc.</i>	þēc, þē		incit, inc	ēowic, ēow
Third person				
	Singular			Plural
	M	F	N	All genders
<i>Nom.</i>	hē	hēo, hīo	hit	hīe, hī, hȳ, hēo
<i>Gen.</i>	his	hire, hierē	his	hira, heora, hiera, hyra
<i>Dat.</i>	him	hire, hierē	him	him, heom
<i>Acc.</i>	hine	hīe, hī, hȳ	hit	hīe, hī, hȳ, hēo

Declension of the personal pronoun Ic

Case \ Number	Number		
	Singular	Dual	Plural
Nominative	ic	wit	wē
Genitive	mīn	uncer	ūser, ūre
Dative	mē	unc	ūs
Accusative	mec, mē	unc	ūsic, ūs

The personal pronoun

The Genetive case of personal pronouns: forms of the oblique cases (as objects) & an attributive function
e.g. **his modor, sunu mīn**

The Genetive case of personal pronouns – possessive pronouns
mīn, pīn, hīs, hire, ūre

Other pronouns

Grammatical categories:

- gender (***masculine, feminine and neuter***)
- number (***singular and plural***)
- case (five categorial forms:

Nominative

Accusative

Dative

Genitive

Instrumental

Demonstrative Pronouns

Gender, number Case	Masculine Singular	Feminine Singular	Neuter Singular	Plural
Nominative	sē (<i>that</i>)	sēo (<i>that</i>)	þæt (<i>that</i>)	þa (<i>those</i>)
Genitive	þæs	þære	þæs	þāra
Dative	þæm	þære	þæm	þæm
Accusative	þone	þā	þæt	þā
Instrumental	þȳ, þon			þȳ

Demonstrative Pronouns

Modern demonstrative **“this”, “these”, “those”** < OE pronouns with full demonstrative power (Masculine **pes**, Feminine **pēos**, Neuter **pis**).

That < OE **pæt** Neuter for **sē**.

OE Demonstrative Pronouns

OE pronouns with weakened demonstrative power - before nouns. The demonstrative meaning approached that of the definite article developed from the pronoun **sē, sēo, þæt** in Middle English

OE Demonstrative Pronouns

The Instrumental case form **þȳ:**

Modern English:

the more, the better.

The adjective

OE adjectives: the categories

- number (**singular and plural**)
- gender (**M., F., N.**)
- case (**N., G., D., A., Instr.**)
- comparison (3 degrees – **positive, comparative** and **superlative**)
- a certain category of “**definiteness**” – “**indefiniteness**” connected with the **two-fold declension** of adjectives (Definite - if the noun had another attribute – a demonstrative pronoun, and Indefinite - otherwise)

Declension of adjectives

Declension Case	Indefinite (Strong)	Definite (Weak) -
Nominative Genitive Dative Accusative Instrumental	3ōd (<i>good</i>) 3ōdes 3ōdum 3ōdne 3ōde	3ōda 3ōdan
Nominative Genitive Dative Accusative	3ōde 3ōdra 3ōdum 3ōde	3ōdan 3ōdra 3ōdum 3ōdan

Degrees of comparison of Adjectives

The degrees of comparison were expressed synthetically, namely:

- a) by means of ***suffixation***:

heard — heard**ra** — heard**ost** (*hard*)

- OE **-ra**, - **ost** < Germanic ***-ozan** and ***ōsta**

(**z** > **r** due to Verner's Law).

Degrees of comparison

- by means of **vowel gradation** *plus suffixation*:

eald — ieldra — ieldest(*old*)

- Germanic suffixes of comparison
***izan, *ista + palatal mutation**
(the root-vowel **ea** ← the original stem-forming suffix **-i**)

Degrees of comparison

- by means of **suppletive forms**
3ōd — bettra — betst (*good*),
yfel — wyrsa — wyrst (*bad*),
mycel — māra — mæst (*'great', much*),
lȳtel — læssa — læst (*little*)

The Adverb

- The adverb in OE : only comparison
- The comparative: + **-or**
- The superlative: + **-ost**

E.g. **hearde** 'severely' – **heardor**
– **heardost**.

The Adverb

The most productive adverb-forming suffix:
-e

By origin it was the ending of the
instrumental case, neuter of strong
declension of adjectives.

The adverbialisation of this case-form →
many adverbs of adjectival nature

Cf. **dēop** (deep) – **dēope** (deeply),

lanȝ (long) – **lanȝe**

ночью, верхом, боком

The Adverb

OE adjectives:nouns + **-lic**

e.g. **frēondlic, cræftlic** ('skillful') +
-e (frēondlice, cræftlice)


Gradually a great number of adverbs in
-lice > -lice was regarded as an
adverbial suffix which could be used
beside or instead of **-e**.


E.g. **hearde** and **heardlice**.

Later **-lice** developed into **-ly**

Grammatical categories of declinable parts of speech

Categories Parts of speech	Gender	Number	Case
Noun	+	+	+
Pronoun	+	+	+
Adjective	+	+	+
Numeral	+	+	+

- 
- There were three kinds of declensions — noun, pronoun (with two subdivisions) and adjective. They had the same grammatical categories, the main difference being in the quantity of the categorial forms of number (three number-forms in personal pronouns) and case (four case-forms - nouns, five case-forms - personal pronouns and adjectives).

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- The subdivision within the system of each part of speech was based on the difference in the material forms (the noun - based on the original stem-suffix, the pronoun - the number of categorial forms, the adjective - strong and weak declensions with the functional difference).