Language Change
An Introduction

Raymond Hickey
English Linguistics
Institute for Anglophone Studies
Several good reasons studying language change

1) All languages change and so the reasons for this are of immediate concern to all speakers. A seminar like the present one is concerned with trying to find reasons why languages change and with determining the course of such change.

2) The study of language change tells us about the internal structure of language, i.e. how the grammar of the language is organised.

3) Language change affects various levels of language and so studying it can give us insights into the interrelationship of the language levels.
4) Language change can help us in understanding the process of (first) language acquisition and vice versa as linguists assume that to a certain extent the two phenomena are related.

5) Language change is useful in trying to determine what structures — found in different languages — are marked or unusual statistically and hence tells us about what in theory constitutes a possible human language (see last point).

6) The study of language change also tells us about the influence which external factors, above all social ones, have on the historical development of a language.

7) Last but not least, the study of language change tells us about the way in which human cognition is organised.
The Structure of Human Language: A Synopsis
Duality of patterning in human language

Level of building blocks
- Phonemes (phonology)
  - Morphemes (morphology)
    - Words (syntax)

Level of units from these
- Morphemes (phonology)
  - Words (morphology)
    - Sentences (syntax)
Structural notions in linguistics (next 5 slides)

* Synchronic  
  Viewing language at one point in time, usually the present

* Diachronic  
  Viewing language over time, i.e. historically

* Langue  
  The system of language as used by a speech community

* Parole  
  The spoken word. Language as used.

* Signifiant  
  The word in a language, the phonetic form.

* Signifié  
  The concept outside of language which relates to the object in the world

The relationship between Signifiant and Signifié is arbitrary but set by social convention.
Parole (what the individual speaks)

Langue (what is shared by the community)

These terms stem from the Swiss-French linguist Ferdinand de Saussure (1857-1913).
Signifiant (signifier) and signifié (signified)

‘signifiant’
word in language

‘signifié’
extra-linguistic concept

referring to object in world

arbitrary relationship (set by social convention)

These terms stem from the Swiss-French linguist Ferdinand de Saussure (1857-1913).
Paradigm and Syntagm

A syntagm is a linear sequence of words as sounds in speech or writing on a page.

A paradigm is a slot in a syntagm which can be occupied by certain elements
(depends on the structure of the sentence in question)

These terms stem from the Swiss-French linguist Ferdinand de Saussure (1857-1913).
Synchrony and Diachrony

synchrony [ˈsɪŋkrəni] the view of language at one point in time

diachrony [dɪə'kærəni] is the view over a period of time

diachrony (historical viewpoint) -> time axis

synchronic 'slices' (points in time)

(often the present as in A synchronic study of the English verb)

These terms stem from the Swiss-French linguist Ferdinand de Saussure (1857-1913).
Levels of Language

Phonetics, Phonology:
- all sounds, system sounds

Morphology:
- forms and words

Syntax:
- clauses and sentences

Semantics:
- meanings of various kinds

Pragmatics:
- language use
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Object of study</th>
<th>Name of field</th>
<th>Size of unit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Language use</td>
<td>Pragmatics</td>
<td>Largest</td>
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<tr>
<td>Meaning</td>
<td>Semantics</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Sentences, clauses</td>
<td>Syntax</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Words, forms</td>
<td>Morphology</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classified sounds</td>
<td>Phonology</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All human sounds</td>
<td>Phonetics</td>
<td>Smallest</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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*Bottom-up approach to linguistic analysis*
Phonetics and phonology

*Phonetics* is the study of human sounds and *phonology* is the classification of the sounds within the system of a particular language or languages.

Three categories of sounds must be recognised at the outset: *phones* (human sounds), *phonemes* (units which distinguish meaning in a language), *allophones* (non-distinctive units).

*Phonotactics* deals with the combinations of sounds possible and where sounds can occur in a *syllable*. 
Morphology

Morphology is the study of the structure of words. Because the term *word* is imprecise, linguists prefer to talk of morphemes.

A *morpheme* is the smallest unit which *carries meaning*. An *allomorph* is a *non-distinctive* realisation of a morpheme.

*Affixation* is the process of attaching an inflection or, more generally, a bound morpheme to a word. This can occur at the beginning or end and occasionally in the middle of a word form.

Morphemes can be classified according to whether they are *bound* or *free* and furthermore *lexical* or *grammatical*.

*Word formation* processes can be either *productive* or *lexicalised* (non-productive). There are different types of word-formation such as *compounding*, *zero derivation* (conversion), *back formation* and *clipping*. 
Word classes

These are sets of words defined by the role they can play in a sentence

Major word classes

Nouns —— refer to objects, ideas, feelings, concepts, etc.
Verbs —— refer to states or actions

Minor word classes

Determiners —— include articles and pronouns of various kinds
Adjectives —— qualify a noun
Adverbs —— qualify verbs or parts of a sentence

Prepositions —— express relations between major word classes
Conjunctions —— link up parts of a sentence
Lexicology

*Lexicology* investigates the internal structure of the lexicon. *Lexicography* concerns the compilation of dictionaries. *Etymology* is about the historical development of word meanings.

A *lexeme* is the minimal distinctive unit in the semantic system of a language. A *lexical set* is a group of forms which share a basic meaning. A *lexical gap* is a missing item in a language's lexicon and *lexical selection* concerns what words can combine with what others, e.g. what nouns are permissible with what verbs.

A *word field* is a collection of words which are related by a common core of meaning, such as furniture, plants, colours, the instruments of an orchestra or whatever.
Syntax

Syntax concerns the possible arrangements of words in a language. The basic unit is the sentence which minimally consists of a main clause (containing at least a subject and verb).

Linguists distinguish between deep structure - the level on which the unambiguous semantic structure of a sentence is represented - and surface structure - the actual form of a sentence.
Acquisition of Syntax

Input  Language heard in child's surroundings

Step 1  Abstraction of structures from actual sentences

Step 2  Internalisation of these structures as syntactic templates
         (leads to unconscious knowledge)
Semantics

Semantics is concerned with the study of meaning and is related to both philosophy and logic. Semiotics is the study of communication systems in general. Sign language is a common means of communication among those who are deaf and can, if learned from childhood, approach natural language in terms of scope and flexibility.
Types of meaning

There are four recognisable types of meaning: *lexical* meaning, *grammatical* meaning, *sentence* meaning and *utterance* meaning which refer to the areas of derivational morphology, inflectional morphology, syntax and pragmatics respectively.
Meaning relationships

External meaning relationships involve sense (relationships between words) and denotation (relationship of word to what it signifies).

There are various internal meaning relationships such as synonymy (sameness of meaning), antonymy (difference in meaning), hyponymy (hierarchical order of meaning).
Pragmatics

*Pragmatics* is the study of language from the point of view of *usage*. It has various sub-forms depending on the emphasis given by linguists, for instance it can be investigated from a strictly linguistic stance or with regard to social factors.

Pragmatics investigates the strategies we use when speaking to each other, for instance, how we express politeness or how we try to influence people using language (by means of different types of *speech acts*). The analysis of conversation is termed *discourse analysis* and is part of pragmatics.
Handling Variation in Language
Variation across time

No language is static so there will always be variation in the phonetic stream young children are exposed to during the crucial phase of first language acquisition. At the very least children will hear speech around them in some features may be on the increase and some may be on the decrease. This applies to all levels of language not just phonology.

A graphic representation of this situation might look something like the following.
Variation across time

$F_x$  $F_x$

Feature increase

Feature decrease

$F_y$  $F_y$
The essential question for historical linguistics is:

How is unidirectional change maintained across several generations? This is what Edward Sapir and linguists after him have called ‘drift’.

Back to the children again: they recognise intuitively which features are on the increase and which are on the decrease.

How? Either (i) by noticing that individuals use Fx more often than Fy or (ii) by noticing that Fx occurs more often in the speech of those they take their linguistic cues from, i.e. their peers, not their parents.
Variation across time

Importantly, each generation of children push the changes they recognise as happening just a little bit further. Over time this means one can recognise a trajectory for language change.

Note furthermore that the demise of a feature Fx can often be causally linked to the rise of another feature Fy.
Variation across time
Variation across time

What is the advantage of this view of things? One can explain drift across the generations and does not need recourse to any *deus ex machina* such as reifying language, e.g. ‘English did this or that’.
Variation, symmetry and reanalysis

In the first few years of life children analyse the phonetic stream they hear around them. Variation in this stream can cause the children to interpret sounds differently from the way their parents did this in the preceding generation. The result is reanalysis. For instance, at some stage in late Old English the phonetic length of vowels before clusters of sonorant + voiced stop was interpreted as indicating phonologically long vowels and so these vowels were ‘reanalysed’.
Variation, symmetry and reanalysis

The result of this reanalysis is that word like *blind* and *child* are no longer pronounced [blind] and [t$ild] but [blaind] (< Old English [bli:nd]) and [t$aild] (< Old English [t$:ld]) respectively.

Such reanalysis is a frequent source of symmetry in sound systems.

The symmetry resulting from reanalysis is particularly striking in inflectional morphology leading to paradigmatic regularity.
Reconstruction

How can one reconstruct the sound system of a language, i.e. its phonology?

One can look as primary texts which attempt to represent pronunciation through a system of their own, e.g. The Middle English text *Orrmulum* written in the author’s own writing system.

Examine corpus texts for misspellings, e.g. *write* for *right* in late Middle English which would indicate that the fricative after the nucleus vowel had been lost, i.e. *right* had become /riːt/ (from and earlier /rixt/).
Reconstruction

And one can consult metalinguistic texts such as prescriptive commentaries on the pronunciation of English through the centuries (from the late 16th century to the present-day).

To do this one has to concern oneself with the manner in which authors in previous centuries talked about pronunciation and sound systems, but usually their statements can be seen to be quite reliable and of value for historical phonological research.
Motivation for change

Language change can basically be assigned to one of two types:

1) the change is caused by structural realignments through reanalysis, mostly during first language acquisition — this is *internally motivated change*.

2) The change results from the linguistic behaviour of teenage and adult speakers in their community, — this is externally motivated change.
Motivation for change

1) Young children start by making maximally generally assumptions about the language they are acquiring and refine their picture of it as they get older. If they reanalyse some of the input during acquisition they this leads to regularity, hence reanalysis is symmetry-enhancing.

2) Teenagers and young adults may introduce very slight variations into their speech which, seen cumulatively, can to shifts in the system, hence variation in symmetry-breaking.
Motivation for change

The interplay of internal and external factors is a key concern of historical linguistics and had been the focus of much research in recent years as shown in major publications like the recent handbook of historical sociolinguistics.
The Uniformitarian Principle

This specifies that internally – in system and structure – and externally – in the interface with society – language has been basically similar since recorded history began so that we can assume that similar forces have operated despite the differences in societies now and in the past.
The Nature of Language Change
Please note:

The following slides give some overview information on various aspects of language change. You should also check the *English Linguistics in Essen* website (at [www.uni-due.de/ELE](http://www.uni-due.de/ELE) for further information, especially the branch labelled *Language Change* on that website. In addition you should look at the website *Studying the History of English* (at [www.uni-due.de/SHE](http://www.uni-due.de/SHE)).
Any treatment of linguistics must address the question of language change. The way languages change offers insights into the nature of language itself. The possible answers to why languages change tell us about the way language is used in society, about how it is acquired by individuals and may reveal to us information about its internal organisation.

1) All languages change There is no such thing as a language which is not changing. The rate of change may vary considerably due to both internal and external factors (see below). English, for example, has changed greatly since Old English. Other languages, like Finnish and Icelandic, have changed little over the centuries.

2) Language change is largely regular One can recognise regularities in the types of change which languages undergo, even if these cannot be predicted.
Language change can basically be assigned to one of two types: either the change is caused by a structural aspect of the language – this is internally motivated change – or it does not in which case one speaks of externally motivated change.

*Internal change* Internally motivated change usually leads to balance in the system, it produces regularity in the grammar. As languages consist of different levels, a change in one quarter may lead to an imbalance in another and provoke a further change. For instance, a change in the pronunciation can affect the morphology of a language. In Old English the blurring of word endings led to the demise of the case system and the loss of grammatical gender in Middle English.

The existing structure of a language is important in furthering or indeed inhibiting change. For instance, English has maintained a distinction in voice among interdental fricatives as seen in *teeth* /tiːθ/ and *teethe* /tiːð/ although the functional load is very slight, that is there are very few words which are distinguished by the difference between /θ/ and /ð/.
Analogy This is another type of internal change. The term has a number of meanings; the one intended here can be paraphrased as ‘regularisation of irregular sets of forms (paradigms)’. The simplest example comes from strong and weak verbs. In English the weak verb pattern (with a /d/ or /t/ as ending in the past) is the most common. The reason for this is probably that it leaves the stem unaltered and involves only one type of ending. It is the form favoured in first language acquisition and which has spread at the expense of the strong verbs as these involve stem alteration with unpredictable forms in the past. Examples of the change from strong to weak would be to dive : dived (former dove) or prove : prooved (former proven as past participle).

Regularisation can occur within a verb paradigm. Consider English lose and German verlieren ‘lose’. In the latter verb the /r/ has been generalised – compare Verlust ‘loss’ which still has the /s/ whereas with the English verb the /s/ (later /z/) has become dominant – compare forlorn (borrowed from Dutch) as in a forlorn hope which still shows the /r/ which alternated with /s/ originally. In Dutch one has the infinitive verliezen (with a sibilant) ‘to lose’ but the simple past has an /r/: verloor ‘lost’, hence English forlorn.
External change Change in history is regarded as externally motivated if there is no obvious internal reason for it. An instance of this is the major shift is long vowels which began in the late Middle English period (14th century). This is basically a raising of long vowels by one level and the diphthongisation of the two high vowels /iː/ and /uː/ as can be seen from the following table.

There was no discernible internal reason why this change should have started as it did in the late Middle English period, so the assumption in that there was external motivation: for some reason a raised realisation of long vowels, or a slight diphthongisation of high vowels – whichever came first – became fashionable, caught on in the speech community and so the ball starting rolling and has, for Cockney at least, not come to rest since. This means that social reasons can be given for why external change appears.
## Great Vowel Shift

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1300</th>
<th>1400</th>
<th>1500</th>
<th>1600</th>
<th>1700</th>
<th>1800</th>
<th>present</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>driven</td>
<td>/i:/</td>
<td>/i:/</td>
<td>/ei/</td>
<td>/ɛ:/</td>
<td>/ɔi/</td>
<td>/ai/</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>house</td>
<td>/u:/</td>
<td>/uu/</td>
<td>/ou/</td>
<td>/ʌu/</td>
<td>/au/</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>feet</td>
<td>/e:/</td>
<td></td>
<td>/i:/</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fool</td>
<td>/o:/</td>
<td></td>
<td>/u:/</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>beat</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>/e:/</td>
<td>/i:/</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>foal</td>
<td>/ɔ:/</td>
<td></td>
<td>/o:/</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>/œu/</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>take</td>
<td>/a:/</td>
<td>/æ:/</td>
<td>/ɛ:/</td>
<td>/e:/</td>
<td>/ei/</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sail</td>
<td>/ai/</td>
<td>/æi/</td>
<td>/ɛi/</td>
<td>/e:/</td>
<td>/ei/</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>law</td>
<td>/au/</td>
<td>/ʌu/</td>
<td>/ɔu/</td>
<td>/œ:/</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>/ɔ:/</td>
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</table>
The Course of Language Change
The course of language change

Language change typically follows a three-part course.

1) A slow first part when a change is becoming established.

2) A fast mid-section in which the change spreads rapidly.

3) A slow final section in which the changes loses momentum.

An important question for all instances of change is whether it goes to completion, i.e. There may be a residue of forms which did not undergo a change as shown in the following image.
S-curve as model of language change

- 1: Initiation
- 2: Expansion
- 3: Termination
- 4: Not affected (residue)
Types of Language Change
Levels of Language

- Phonetics, Phonology: all sounds, system sounds
- Morphology: forms and words
- Syntax: clauses and sentences
- Semantics: meanings of various kinds
- Pragmatics: language use
Change on the level of sounds
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Disappearance of /x/ (ch sound in German)</th>
<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Old English</td>
<td>Modern English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>þruh /θru:x/</td>
<td>through /θru:/</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Loss of /r/</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Old English</td>
<td>Modern English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>born /bɔrn/</td>
<td>born /bɔ:n/</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rise of voiced fricatives</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Old English</td>
<td>Modern English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>roof ~ rovas</td>
<td>roofs ~ rooves</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/roːf/ ~ /roːvas/</td>
<td>/ruːf/ ~ /ruːvz/</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Change on the level of word forms
Shift in pronouns forms during Old English

Anglo-Saxon
<hie>
<hiera>
<hem>

Scandinavian
<they>
<their>
<them>

English adopts Scandinavian forms for third person plural pronouns, perhaps to disambiguate these from the singular forms <he> 'he' and <heo> 'she'
Morphological change (ii)

Adoption of plural forms of 'to be'

Anglo-Saxon <sindon>

Scandinavian <are>
Change on the level of clauses and sentences
Shift of word order, from SOV to SVO

In Old English the finite verb generally comes at the end of a subordinate clause (SOV word order)

Othere sæde his hlafordæ þe æalra Nordmanns norþmest bude.  
[Othere said his lord [DAT] that he all Northmen [GEN] northernmost lived]

In Modern English, the verb follows the subject but precedes the object (SVO word order)
Othere said to his lord that he lived northernmost of all the Northmen.

Loss of V2 (verb-second rule)

In Old English the verb is always in second position
þa forleton þa Brettas Centland.  
[then abandoned the Britons Kent]

In Modern English the verb is always preceded by the subject
Then the Britons abandoned Kent.

Demise of ‘be’ as an auxiliary verb

(King James Bible, 1611)  
So when even was come, the lord of the vineyard saith unto his steward, Call the labourers.  

Modern English  
So when the evening had come, ....
Change on the level of meaning
Types of semantic change

What happens when two words have the same meaning?

1) One of the two is lost
2) The words differentiate in meaning

Sources of two words with the same meaning

1) Borrowing, Old Norse *take* and Old English *nimon*
2) Two borrowings from different times *wine* and *vine*, *catch* and *chase*
3) Two different pronunciations, e.g. standard and dialect as in *person* and *parson*
Semantic doublets

Common source in Germanic

- Scandinavian
  - skirt
  - scrub
  - dike
  - hale

- Anglo-Saxon
  - shirt
  - shrub
  - ditch
  - whole
Lexical replacement (i)

Old English <niman> → dies out

Scandinavian <kutta> → Old English <cut>
Lexical replacement (ii)

Old English <snipan> → restricted to fixed expression <a snide remark>

Scandinavian <kutta> → Later English <cut>
Semantic shift (ii)

Old English  
\textit{<steorfan>  
'to die'}

\textit{<starve>  
restricted to mean 'to die of hunger'}

Scandinavian  
\textit{<deyja>  
'to die'}

\textit{Later English  
general meaning <die>
Lexical split

Old English
\textit{\textless seoc \textgreater}
'in bad health'

Later English
\textit{\textless sick \textgreater}
'vomit'

Scandinavian
\textit{\textless ill \textgreater}

Later English
\textit{\textless ill \textgreater}
'in bad health'
Lexical split (ii)

Register

- English <boy> 'young male'
- Scandinavian <lad> colloquial term for same

Dialect

- English <girl> 'young female'
- Scandinavian <lass> northern English/Scottish term for same
Meaning relationships

Sense

The semantic relationship which obtains between words, e.g. *cow calf*, *bull* or *horse, mare, stallion* are related by sense. (German: *Sinn*)

Denotation

The relationship between a word and the non-linguistic, ‘outside’ world. For instance, one could say that the denotation of *cup* is a small vessel-like object for holding beverages, usually placed on a saucer. The word *mug* is similar in its denotation, but the object is larger and thicker and not used with a saucer (German: *Denotation*)
**Word fields**

A word field is a set of words which are related in their senses. Virtually all our knowledge of language is organised as word fields. Typical word fields from our surroundings would be clothes (*shirt, blouse, trousers, slack, jacket, coat*), furniture (*chair, table, stool, bench*), food (*meat, vegetables, bread, sweets*), utensils of various kinds (*knives, forks, spoons*), modes of transport (*car, lorry, bicycle, motorbike, plane*). From our conceptual world one could mention such word fields as mental ability (*clever, smart, intelligent, bright; dumb, stupid, silly*), motion (*walk, run, saunter, trot*), feelings (*like, dislike, hate, abhor, love, adore, admire*), actions (*work, beaver, relax, idle*).

It is typical of word fields that they subdivide into further word fields, e.g. food can be broken down into many sub-types. Subdivisions are usually determined by some general characteristic, e.g. cooked or raw food, liquid or solid food, with or without meat, dairy products and non-dairy products, etc.
Latin influence on English

Continental Germanic period

• Many trade terms stem from the period before the coming of the Germanic tribes to England, e.g. street from via strata ‘the paved way’, mile from mil(l)ia passum ‘a thousand steps’, cheese from caseus or wine from vinum. Note that all of these loan are also present in German: Straße, Meile, Käse, Wein.

Christianisation period

2) Ecclesiastical terms enter the language with the Roman Christianisation of England from the south as of the end of the sixth century, e.g. monk from monacus or bishop from episcopus.
Latin influence on English

Early modern period

• With the expansion in the sciences from the 16th century onwards many words enter English from either Latin or Greek (the latter often via the former), e.g. biology, astronomy, geology, geography. Many Latin loans, however, served the function of filling a lexical gap in English, e.g. the adjectives were created where none were present in English or which were not stylistically neutral, e.g. equestrian as adjective to horse, marine as adjective to sea, aquatic as adjective to water.
Scandinavian influence on English vocabulary

From about 800 onwards the Vikings came to harass the north of Europe, including the north of England. Initially they came as conquerors, later as settlers. Over the ensuing two centuries or so, the language of the Vikings, Old Norse, had a considerable influence on English, chiefly in Scotland and the north of England. As the Vikings could understand Old English, there was little difficulty in communication and the everyday contact meant that many common words entered English.

The sound shape of Scandinavian words is easy to recognise in present-day English, e.g. *sky*, *skin*, *skull*, *skill* all with an initial /sk-/.

This sequence had become /ʃ-/ in the south of England and the phonetic difference led in a few cases to semantically differentiated word pairs from the same Germanic root, e.g. *shirt* and *skirt*. A peculiarity of the Scandinavian influence is the complete replacement of many Old English words by the Scandinavian equivalent, e.g. *nimon* by *take*, *snipan* by *cut*. In some cases there was a semantic narrowing, e.g. Old English *steorvan* ‘to die’ became later ‘to starve’.

In still other cases the general Old English word is only found in a fixed expression, e.g. Old English *sweltan* ‘to die’ continues in the phrase ‘sweltering heat’. The word *die* is itself of Scandinavian origin.
French influence on English vocabulary

The French influence on the lexicon of English can be divided into two periods. The first, the Anglo-Norman period, is one of direct influence when there were French speakers from Normandy in England. This lasted from about 1066 to 1204 when the political union with Normandy ceased under King John. The second period, the Central French period, is characterised by an indirect cultural influence due to the high prestige which French enjoyed in England from about 1200 to 1500. Loanwords entered the language from both periods. Those from the first period in general show an older form and have been adapted to the sound system of English more completely. For instance, *hostel* in an Anglo-Norman loan but *hotel* is a much later borrowing with the loss of *s* before *t* and stress on the second syllable. Sometimes two loanwords show the same root as is the case with *catch* (from Anglo-Norman) and *chase* (from Central French). The same is true of *cattle* and *chattel* ‘possession’. One can recognise here the following phonetic correspondence: word-initial /k-/ with the Anglo-Norman word and word-initial /tʃ-/ with the Central French one. Sometimes the sources of doublets are Central French and Latin, as with *royal* and *regal* (both ultimately from Latin *rex, regis* ‘king’).
A singular feature of Central French influence on English is that the words are generally on a higher stylistic level and are more abstract than the corresponding English words. This difference can be clearly seen with word pairs like *freedom* and *liberty*, *work* and *labour*. In other cases the French word has a slightly different meaning compared with the inherited English word, e.g. *ask* and *demand* (French), *see* and *perceive* (French).

On borrowing some French words were misunderstood by the English, e.g. *pea* and *cherry* result from the final /-s/ being removed from the French source as the English thought these words were plurals, compare Modern French *pois* and *cerise* respectively. Other words were segmented incorrectly, e.g. French *naperon* became *apron* because the English speakers thought the initial /n-/ was part of the indefinite article *an*.

French loans into English have continued since the Middle English period. Many of these later loans are recognisable by their sound shape, e.g. they have not gone through the Great Vowel Shift, compare the earlier *polite* /pəlait/ with the later *police* /pəlɪ:s/ or *gown* /gaun/ with *rouge* /ru:ʒ/ or *divine* /dəvain/ with *machine* /məʃi:n/. In the last example one can also see /-ʃ-/ where earlier loans, e.g. *duchess*, have /-tʃ-/.

Some words may have been borrowed twice (as between the Anglo-Norman and Central French period) with a semantic differentiation, e.g. *risky* ‘involving risk’ and *risqué* ‘slightly indecent or shocking’.
Examples of semantic expansion of *food* at the expense of *meat*

Word field in Middle English

- meat
- food

meat = "food in general"
food = "provisions; item of food"

Word field in Modern English

- food
- meat

meat = "animal flesh"
food = "all types of nourishment"
Examples of semantic expansion of *bird* at the expense of *fowl*

**Word field in Old English**
- *fowl*
- *bird*

fowl = "flying animal"
bird = "young bird, fledgling"

**Word field in Middle/Modern English**
- *fowl*
- *bird*

fowl = "poultry"
bird = "flying animal"
Dialect and standards words

The word for 'person' in English (from Latin 'persona')

- Standard <person>
  Meaning 'individual'

- Dialectal <parson>
  (lowering of /e/ to /a/ before /r/)
  Meaning 'a clergyman'
Words borrowed at different periods (relative chronology)

The Latin word 'vinum' was borrowed twice into the English language

Older borrowing
<vinum> becomes <vine> with /v/
(Latin /v/ was [v] then)

Later borrowing
<vinum> becomes <wine> with /w/
(Latin /v/ was [w] then)
Change on the level of language use
Changes in the address system of English in the past few centuries (from roughly 1600 to the present day)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Early Modern situation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Singular</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>thou</em> nom.</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>thee</em> acc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Plural</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>ye</em> nom.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>you</em> acc.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Present-day situation</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>you</em></td>
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<tr>
<td><em>(ye)</em></td>
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<tr>
<td><em>thou</em> nom.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>thee</em> acc.</td>
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