

the international lexicon: *philosophia* – *philosophy*, *phaenomenon* – *phenomenon*, *autographum* – *autograph*, *alibi*, *memorandum*, *iurisprudentia* – *jurisprudence*, *veto*, *minimum*, *maximum*, *formula*, *inertia*, etc.

In some time, English absorbed some other words from another language – French. But the main thing is that most of these words are of Latin origin: *factum* – *fact*, *defectus* – *defect*, *turris* – *tower*, *comoedia* – *comedy*, *tragoedia* – *tragedy*, *angelus* – *angel*, etc.

In conclusion, the study of vocabulary of the English language is interesting and useful, because many words are of foreign origin. But despite the large number of Latin borrowings the English language at each of the three analyzed stages was able to assimilate everything valuable and necessary from foreign language elements, while changing not only the structure, but in some cases the semantics of borrowed words.

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GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF OLD ENGLISH VOWELS

English is a language that belongs to the West Germanic subgroup of the Indo-European language family. Now it is the most widely spoken language in the world (as of 2023). English is taught as a foreign language in more than 100 countries of the world. Demand for education in English is expected to rise as from 2021 to 2028, language learning will grow by 22.3%. But the English language hasn't always been the way we know it. In this study, we want to focus our attention on Old English vowels [1-4].

Vowels played a crucial role in the Old English language, which was spoken in Britain from the 5th to the 11th century. There were the following vowels in Old English: *a*, *e*, *i*, *o*, *u*, *y*, *æ* and they were pronounced differently than in modern English.

It should be mentioned that there were short (see above) and long vowels in Old English, which were used to convey different meanings. Vowel length was an important feature of the language and could change the meaning of a word. Long vowels were held for a longer duration than short vowels, and they were marked with a macron (a horizontal line “-”) above the vowel (e.g. *ā*, *ē*, *ī*, *ō*, *ū*). For example, “hūs” (long “u”) meant “house,” while “hus” (short “u”) meant “a sow” or “hog”, the word “hāl” meant “healthy” or “whole”, while “hal” meant “hollow”.

A brief overview of how Old English vowels were pronounced is given below. All the examples are presented from the point of view of standard English:

1. *a* was pronounced as in “father” or “pot”
2. *e* was pronounced as in “bet” or “met”
3. *i* was pronounced as in “machine” or “seen”
4. *o* was pronounced as in “more” or “pot”
5. *u* was pronounced as in “boot” or “rude”
6. *y* was pronounced as in German “Sünde”
7. *æ* was pronounced as in “mat” or “cat”

In unstressed positions vowels were reduced though not as much as they are in Modern English.

All dialects of Old English had diphthongs. The same as monophthongs, analyzed above, diphthongs had short and long versions. Old English short diphthongs are the following: *ea*, *eo*, *io*, *ie* (e.g. “steorra” – “star”, “nieht” – “night”). Long diphthongs include *ēa*, *ēo*, *īo*, *īe* (e.g. “hēah” – “high”, “dēop” – “deep”).

Thus, we can conclude that Old English vowel system was quite large. In stressed syllables both short and long versions of monophthongs and diphthongs can be seen, which were pronounced in a different way. In unstressed positions, Old English vowels were reduced.

References

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