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Sveučilište u Zadru

Odjel za anglistiku
Preddiplomski studij engleskoga jezika i književnosti

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Izjava o akademskoj čestitosti

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1. Introduction

The opening chapter of the paper focuses on explaining the common origin of English and German, historically two closely related languages in the West Germanic group of the Germanic branch of the Indo-European language family. The starting point for the main part of the paper, therefore, is the assumption that there is a significant number of grammatical features that are shared between the oldest recorded form of the English language and the current form of the German language, even though they are separated from each other by roughly a thousand years of history. The paper uses a combination of the diachronic, comparative and contrastive methods. In other words, Old English pronouns, articles, nouns and adjectives are compared and contrasted with their equivalents and cognates in contemporary German. The main aim of the paper is to define and attempt to explain the similarities and differences that appear when the two stages in the respective development of English and German are considered. Due to the vast temporal gap between Old English and contemporary German, the paper ignores the influence of the Norman Conquest on the development of the English language, except for the fact that it does attempt to clarify which of the typically Germanic, or West Germanic, grammatical features English lacks in its contemporary form. The basics of some of the phonological changes that affected the Germanic languages are discussed within the opening chapter, mainly to give an insight into the similarities and differences in pronunciation, but also because the phonemic environment often seems to correlate with the choice of inflectional endings in both Old English and contemporary German.

2. The Common Origin of English and German

Within the Indo-European language family, English and German not only both belong to the same branch, the Germanic one, but also to the same group within it, the West Germanic one. Like all the West Germanic languages, Dutch being the third major one, they have been descended from a number of closely related dialects that were spoken among the Germanic tribes populating the lowlands along the south-eastern coast of the North Sea at the beginning of the Common Era. A few centuries earlier, the Germanic tribes collectively formed a homogeneous cultural and linguistic group. The common language they spoke was the unattested and hypothetical primordial Germanic language that is now referred to as Proto-Germanic. The original range of its speakers encompassed what is presently southern Sweden, the entire state of Denmark, and northern Germany between the Elbe and the Oder. The movement of some of the Germanic tribes away from these regions led to the dialectal diversification of Proto-Germanic, consequently splitting the Germanic languages into three groups. In addition to the West Germanic one, these three groups include the North Germanic and East Germanic ones. The North Germanic languages of the present time are Swedish, Danish, Norwegian, Icelandic and Faroese. They have been descended from the dialects that were spoken among the Germanic tribes that stayed within the geographical borders of Scandinavia, with Old Norse being their earliest recorded form. The East Germanic languages began as a group of dialects that were spoken among the Germanic tribes that expanded east of the Oder, all the way to the coast of the Black Sea. They became extinct in the seventeenth century, but the only attested language belonging to the group, Gothic, remains a valuable asset in historical linguistics as the earliest Germanic language recorded in literary use, thanks to a fragmentary translation of the Bible that was done in the fourth century AD (Auberle and Klosa 194-195; Barber 85-91).

The expansion of the West Germanic tribes to Britain began around the middle of the fifth century AD. Therefore, this happens to be the point in history that is commonly given as the beginning of the Old English period, even though it is virtually impossible to speak of Old English as a more or less uniform language until two or three centuries later. This earliest recorded form of the English language, also known as Anglo-Saxon, possibly developed from a unique Anglo-Frisian language, that is a group of mutually intelligible dialects. Frisian, nowadays a minority language in the northern regions of both the Netherlands and Germany, is still commonly mentioned as the closest linguistic relative of English. Another closely related language is Old Saxon. It is the earliest recorded predecessor of Low German, which is presently spoken in northern Germany and sometimes considered to be a separate language from both German and Dutch. The most prestigious dialect of Old English is known as West Saxon. Considering the fact that it was the dialect in which nearly all literary texts were written between the ninth and eleventh centuries AD, West Saxon, that is the late variety of it, is used as the basis for studying the grammar and vocabulary of Old English in the present time (Barber 89-90; Cassidy and Ringler 1-3; Quirk and Wrenn 1-6).

Some of the West Germanic tribes continued to move further towards the south, concentrating in the regions adjacent to the Rhine and eventually expanding all the way to the Alps. Their migration is believed to have stopped by the end of the sixth century AD, by which time the dialects they spoke had started to diverge from the remaining West Germanic dialects. The diversion would eventually prove to have been strong enough to make these dialects become a separate subgroup within the West Germanic group of languages. The cause of it was a consonant shift that was primarily concerned with the transformation of the voiceless plosives [p], [t] and [k] into the voiceless fricatives [f], [s] and [x], respectively. The dialects affected by the consonant shift became known as High German, due to the fact that, as opposed to Low German in the lowlands of the north, they were spoken by the inhabitants

of the hilly and mountainous south. These changes are attested in Old High German, a literary language between the eighth and eleventh centuries AD. However, since a later High German dialect provided the basis for the first standardized variety of the German language, it is possible to illustrate the High German consonant shift by synchronically comparing and contrasting the affected words in contemporary German with their equivalents and cognates in English and Dutch. For example, the German word that corresponds to the English and Dutch word *water* happens to be *Wasser*. In some cases, the original plosive would be paired with the resulting fricative. As a result of this secondary type of the High German consonant shift, the English word *apple* and the Dutch word *appel* are found as *Apfel* in German, with the affricate [pf] occurring in the position of the usual West Germanic plosive [p]. Needless to say, Low German and Frisian remained unaffected by the High German consonant shift, too, which is why they nowadays happen to share more similarities with Dutch and English than standard German (Auberle and Klosa 256-259; von Polenz 28-34).

The High German consonant shift was not the first major consonant shift that affected the Germanic languages. It was preceded by a prehistoric consonant shift that is believed to have created Proto-Germanic as a distinct dialect of Proto-Indo-European in the first place. The three most important characteristics of this primordial Germanic consonant shift were defined by Jacob Grimm and Karl Verner in the course of the nineteenth century. Grimm identified two sets of the original Proto-Indo-European plosives that underwent regular changes in the process of being transferred into Proto-Germanic. The first set included the voiceless plosives [p], [t] and [k] being substituted for the voiceless fricatives [f], [θ] and [x], respectively. The second set of Grimm's findings was concerned with the Proto-Germanic conversion of the Proto-Indo-European voiced plosives [b], [d] and [g] into their voiceless counterparts [p], [t] and [k], respectively. An example of the former is the transformation of the Latin word *piscis* into the Gothic word *fisks*, the Old English word *fisc* and the

contemporary English word *fish*. The Latin word *decem* underwent both types of the consonant shift, being found as *taihun* in Gothic and *zehan* in Old High German. Furthermore, the fricative [x] that occurs as the middle consonant sound in the latter two examples is no longer found in the contemporary English and German equivalents of the Latin word *decem*, which turn out to be *ten* and *zehn*, respectively. As a note, the letter *h* in *zehn* is not pronounced, being a mere indicator that the vowel that precedes it is a long one. Five decades after Grimm, Verner explained some of the discrepancies that were previously thought to be random, having concluded that the normally voiceless fricatives were substituted for their voiced counterparts wherever there had been an unstressed syllable preceding the corresponding sounds in the primordial language, that is in the period of time before the placement of the main stress became fixed on the first syllable in the Germanic languages (Barber 97-100; Quirk and Wrenn 125-127; von Polenz 15-18).

A number of phonological changes other than the two major consonant shifts have affected the West Germanic languages since the time when Proto-Germanic was spoken, but examples that can be used to illustrate the main point of Grimm and Verner's conclusions remain abundant. Barber uses the Old English equivalent of the contemporary English verb *cut* to do so in reference to Verner's findings, with the infinitive *snīþan* featuring a dental fricative, either the voiceless [θ] or the voiced [ð], only for it to be substituted for the voiced alveolar plosive [d] in the past participle *sniden* (100). The same difference is visible in contemporary German, too, with the infinitive *schneiden* featuring [d], only for it to be replaced by [t], its voiceless counterpart, in the past participle *geschnitten*. The conclusion, then, is that the two conjugated forms must have been stressed differently in Proto-Germanic. Another example is found when comparing and contrasting the equivalents of the contemporary English nouns *father* and *brother* in both Old English and contemporary German. In Old English, *fæder* features [d] in the same position where *brōðor* has one of the

two dental fricatives. In contemporary German, the voiceless alveolar plosive [t] in *Vater* is substituted for its voiced counterpart [d] in *Bruder*.

Regarding the voiceless fricatives [θ] and [x], English is nowadays the only major West Germanic language that has retained the former, but also the only one that has dropped the latter. The voiceless dental fricative [θ] and its voiced counterpart [ð] have generally been replaced by the voiced alveolar plosive [d] in both German and Dutch. Thus, the English word *three*, which is related to the Latin word *trēs* in accordance with Grimm's conclusions, is found as *drei* in German and *drie* in Dutch. The voiceless velar fricative [x] has disappeared from the standardized varieties of contemporary English, which only feature its glottal counterpart [h]. However, it remains a commonly used phoneme in the standardized varieties of both German and Dutch. The digraph *ch* is used to represent it in writing. In standard German, the presence of the fricative has even been strengthened as a result of the High German consonant shift, which meant that it has taken the place of the usual West Germanic plosive [k] in words such as *Buch*, which corresponds to *boek* in Dutch and *book* in English. Finally, Old English also featured its voiced counterpart [ɣ], which was represented by the letter *g* in writing. Dutch is the only major West Germanic language that has retained [ɣ] as a standard phoneme, for example in the adjective *goed*, which corresponds to *gut* in German and *good* in English. Similarly to the present situation of its voiceless counterpart [x] in standard German, that is its palatalization to [ç] whenever it follows a close front vowel or another consonant, the Old English velar fricative [ɣ] was palatalized to become [j] in the vicinity of any front vowel (Barber 98; Cassidy and Ringler 17-18; Mangold 27).

3. Case, Gender and Number

All of the earliest attested Germanic languages were highly inflected, featuring a declension

system for nouns, pronouns and adjectives. Emonds and Faarlund list the existence of a system of four productive grammatical cases in the declension of nouns as one of the defining characteristics of the Germanic languages (19). Both Old English and contemporary German do feature this defining characteristic. However, the English language of the present time has only retained it vestigially. In other words, it has transformed from a synthetic language into an analytic one. Lacking case as a productive grammatical category, analytic languages use fewer inflectional morphemes. As a result, they are forced to resort to other means of producing grammatically acceptable sentences. These means commonly include the usage of prepositions and a fixed word order.

Barber believes that five of the eight grammatical cases of Proto-Indo-European were transferred into Proto-Germanic: the nominative and the accusative, which are the basis when it comes to relating the subject and the object of a sentence, as well as the genitive, the dative and the instrumental (92-93). Old English features the same five grammatical cases, even though it has to be mentioned that its instrumental displays a significant level of amalgamation with the dative when it is applied to nouns (Quirk and Wrenn 64). Regarding the usage of the instrumental in Old English, the situation is quite similar to the one found in contemporary German, in which the traditional function of the instrumental has been completely assumed by the dative. It is an instance that could also be proven if it would be compared and contrasted with the way the instrumental functions in the Slavonic languages of the present time, the majority of which have retained it as a productive grammatical case. The conclusion would be that the function of the instrumental in the Slavonic languages is more or less equal to that of the combination of the preposition *mit* ‘with’ and the dative in German. Quirk and Wrenn mention the corresponding Old English preposition, *mid*, as one of a few prepositions that can be used to establish the function of the instrumental in the same way. Furthermore, the instrumental case is able to function in the comitative sense, that is to

express accompaniment, occasionally employing the combination of the preposition *mid* and the dative to do so, too (66-67). In contemporary German, equally, the comitative function is achieved by combining the preposition *mit* and the dative, with the concurrent Slavonic languages using the instrumental for this same purpose as well.

When it comes to contemporary English and its nouns, the only remnant of a declension system is the distinction between the nominative and the genitive. For example, in the singular, the nominative *cat* becomes the genitive *cat's*. In the plural, *cats* is the nominative and *cats'* is the genitive. In addition to its primary purpose as an indicator of possession, the genitive case can have a handful of other functions in contemporary English. It can be used in the subjective and the objective sense, that is to attribute an action to either the subject or the object of a phrase or sentence, it can indicate origin or measure, and it can assume the descriptive, partitive and appositive functions. In most situations, the preposition *of* and the nominative can be combined to create a periphrastic form that is synonymous with the genitive. For example, *the Queen's arrival* and *the arrival of the Queen* are two equally valid and synonymous forms of the subjective genitive. However, this type of arbitrary alternation is not always possible. For example, *a stone's throw* is not the same as *a throw of a stone*, as only the former can be an indicator of measure. Furthermore, the periphrastic form is preferred when the genitive is used in the descriptive, partitive or appositive sense (Brinton 107-109). Knowing that the genitive already was an equally versatile grammatical case during the Old English period, it should not be surprising that it has survived in the English language to the present day. In Old English, its functions often overlap with the functions of other grammatical cases, which can cause difficulties in categorizing them. Still, the main two can be said to be the subjective and the objective one, with possession and origin belonging to the former. The latter can be used to express measure, such as in *fōtes trym* 'the space of a foot', as well as in the descriptive or defining and in the partitive sense, with *mæres līfes man* 'a

man of glorious life' being an example of the former and *hūsa sēlest* 'the best of houses' being an example of the latter (Quirk and Wrenn 61-62). In contemporary German, *ein Mann des guten Lebens* 'a man of good life' and *das beste der Häuser* 'the best of houses' are also in the genitive, but they feature a different word order. The former positions the genitive after the nominative, that is it reverses the order that is found in the similar Old English example above. In the latter, the adjective comes before the genitive, but in Old English it is the other way around. When the genitive is related to the nominative as a mere notion of its possessor, contemporary German does have the ability to alternate between the two possible ways of ordering the nominative and genitive cases within a phrase or sentence. An example is *meines Vaters Haus* 'my father's house', which can be arbitrarily transformed into *das Haus meines Vaters* 'the house of my father'. In the former, the genitive precedes the nominative. In the latter, the order is reversed. Comparing and contrasting the two examples, it is also possible to notice that the genitive "swallows" the definite article if it is positioned before the nominative.

The second defining characteristic of synthetic languages is the existence of grammatical gender. Again, both Old English and contemporary German do productively employ the inflectional category, with each noun being either masculine, feminine or neuter. Grammatical gender does not have to correspond to sex or animacy, with an example being the regular usage of the neuter pronoun *it* in reference to animals in contemporary English. An oft-cited example from contemporary German is *das Mädchen* 'the little girl'. Regardless of the fact that it refers to an animate being belonging to the female sex, this is grammatically a neuter noun. Accordingly, the pronoun *es* 'it' is used when referring back to it (Barber 93). The reason why *Mädchen* is a neuter noun is purely morphological. Since it features the noun suffix *-chen*, it is possible to recognize it as a diminutive. All diminutives are neuter nouns in contemporary German. Quirk and Wrenn define the situation with the most similar noun suffix in Old English, *-en*, as a much more complex one, with the ending being attached to

nouns in all three grammatical genders and having a variety of functions (115-116). Nevertheless, if *Mädchen* is compared and contrasted with *mǣden*, its equivalent in Old English, it becomes obvious that both are neuter nouns. In contemporary English, the etymologically related word is *maiden*. It is the diminutive of *maid*, just as *Mädchen* is the diminutive of *Magd*, a feminine noun. Furthermore, *Mädchen* is a shortened variant that is believed to have supplanted the full form *Mägdchen* in the seventeenth century. Similarly, Old English features *mægden* as the alternative to *mǣden*, while the non-suffixed form *mægð* turns out to be a feminine noun (Auberle and Klosa 499-500; Cassidy and Ringler 447; Quirk and Wrenn 20).

Number is the third grammatical category that is found in synthetic languages. It has been preserved in contemporary English, with the majority of its nouns differentiating between the singular and plural forms. While Old English employs the singular and plural forms of its nouns in a way that is similar to the one found in contemporary German, a notable difference in comparison with the contemporary forms of both English and German lies in the fact that the Proto-Indo-European dual forms are preserved in the Old English declension of personal pronouns. For example, *wit* is the dual form in the first person, clearly distinguished from the singular form *ic* and the plural form *wē* (Cassidy and Ringler 23).

4. Pronouns

Personal pronouns are the part of speech that has most obviously retained the Old English declension system in contemporary English. For example, in the first person singular, the nominative *I* becomes *me* in the accusative. In the genitive, a further distinction is made between the possessive determiner *my* and the possessive pronoun *mine* (Brinton 107). As it turns out, the Old English first-person personal pronoun in the nominative singular happens to

be *ic*. The declension of *ic* yields the following inflected forms: *mīn* in the genitive, *mē* in the dative and accusative, with *mec* being the accusative form that can also be used reflexively in a way that is identical to the usage of *myself* in contemporary English. An example of the latter can be provided in the form of the simple sentence *Ic sceal mec hȳdan* 'I shall hide myself' (Cassidy and Ringler 23-24). With the sentence translated into contemporary German, the outcome is *Ich soll mich verstecken*, a sentence that is syntactically identical to the Old English original in that it displays the typically West Germanic sentence-final positioning of the non-finite verb. In contemporary German, the following forms are found when declining the first-person personal pronoun in the singular: *ich* in the nominative, *meiner* in the genitive, *mir* in the dative and *mich* in the accusative (Kunkel-Razum and Münzberg 267). It remains to be mentioned that the dative form requires the preposition *to* before *me* in contemporary English, but the personal pronoun itself has remained more or less unchanged since the Old English period. As a note, the dative refers to the indirect object of a sentence. The accusative, on the other hand, refers to the direct object of a sentence. Therefore, the two grammatical cases are often considered to be a single objective case in contemporary English.

In both Old English and contemporary German, the genitive forms of all personal pronouns can be transformed into possessive determiners, that is words like *my* and *your* in contemporary English. The genitive form of a personal pronoun, thus, becomes the nominative form of a possessive determiner. The possessive determiner is inflected as if it were a strong adjective (Cassidy and Ringler 24; Kunkel-Razum and Münzberg 276-277). For example, when the Old English equivalents of *my* define a masculine noun in the singular, *mīn* represents the nominative, *mīnes* the genitive, *mīnum* the dative, *mīnne* the accusative and *mīne* the instrumental form. The equivalents in contemporary German turn out to be *mein* in the nominative, *meines* in the genitive, *meinem* in the dative and *meinen* in the accusative. The nominative form *mein* is additionally used with a neuter noun in the nominative and

accusative, the same as *mīn* in Old English (Cassidy and Ringler 36-37; Kunkel-Razum and Münzberg 277). To sum up the remaining comparable patterns in this example, the Old English long vowel [iː] is regularly substituted for the diphthong [aɪ] in contemporary German, the genitive is universally formed by attaching the suffix *-es* to the nominative form, with the dative and accusative featuring similar suffixes in both languages as well.

As far as the declension of personal pronouns in contemporary English is concerned, one notable exception is the second-person personal pronoun *you*, which has come to be the universal form. However, the form *ye* was used in the dative and accusative until the seventeenth century. At the time, the speakers of English still productively employed the T/V distinction. The T/V distinction is a sociolinguistic phenomenon that survives in the majority of the Indo-European languages, including German, but it has mysteriously lost its function in English in the nineteenth century. When such a distinction was functional in English, two forms of the second-person personal pronoun were used in the nominative singular: the informal or familiar *thou* and the formal or polite *you*, the latter being identical to the form that is used in the nominative plural (Wardhaugh 274). The informal or familiar second-person personal pronoun *thou* was also subject to declension, becoming *thee* in the dative and accusative. Finally, there were two forms of the possessive determiner based on it: *thy* and *thine*. The latter, which can alternatively function as a possessive pronoun, is visibly related to *dein*, its equivalent in contemporary German that is subject to declension in accordance with the same pattern as *mein*. Needless to say, the corresponding possessive determiner in Old English, *ðīn*, is declined in the same way as *mīn*. The equivalent of *thou* in contemporary German is *du*. The second-person personal pronoun is subject to declension in accordance with the same pattern as the one that has been exemplified in reference to the first-person personal pronoun *ich*. In Old English, the first-person personal pronoun *ic* and the second-person personal pronoun *ðū* follow the same declension pattern as well. In the plural, *gē*

represents the nominative form that becomes *ēower* in the genitive and *ēow* in the dative and accusative, with *ēowic* being the accusative form that can assume the reflexive function. There are obvious similarities between *gē* and *ye*, suggesting that the latter might have also been the nominative form at some point. Comparing and contrasting the declension pattern of *gē* with the one applied to *ihr*, its equivalent in contemporary German, yields *euer* in the genitive and *euch* in the dative and accusative. When used in the singular, *ihr* and the two inflected forms represent a traditional way of showing respect to someone, but otherwise *Sie*, a capitalized variant based on the plural form of the third-person personal pronoun, is used as the formal or polite equivalent of *du* (Brinton 107; Cassidy and Ringler 23; Kunkel-Razum and Münzberg 266-267).

Generally, it is possible to conclude that the declension patterns applied to personal pronouns in Old English and contemporary German are indeed very similar, with a significant portion of them still recognizable and productive in contemporary English as well. Furthermore, similar conclusions can be made when considering the interrogative pronouns *who* and *what*. Both *hwā* and *hwæt*, their respective equivalents in Old English, transform into *hwæs* in the genitive and *hwǣm* in the dative, with *hwone* being the accusative form of *hwā* (Cassidy and Ringler 24). The respective equivalents of *who* and *what* in contemporary German, *wer* and *was*, are inflected to *wessen* in the genitive. Even more similar to *hwæs* is *wes*, an archaic variant of *wessen*. Finally, *wem* and *wen* are the respective dative and accusative forms of *wer*, that is they are used in reference to persons. In reference to things, *was* is retained both in the dative and in the accusative. Similarly to the personal pronoun *me* in contemporary English, it must be preceded by a preposition to form a grammatically acceptable construction in the dative (Kunkel-Razum and Münzberg 305-307). Contemporary English has retained *whose* as the general possessive form and *whom* as the objective form of *who*.

Interestingly, the initial letter *h* still occurs in the written forms of the corresponding interrogative pronouns in Danish, even though it has become silent in speech. As a North Germanic language, Danish is a descendant of Old Norse, the language that led to English introducing a whole new set of third-person personal pronouns in the plural. The change occurred at the conclusion of the Old English period. The familiar, contemporary English pronouns that have their origins in it include the nominative form *they*, the objective form *them* and the possessive form *their*. Due to the fact that pronouns are closed-class words, that is they belong to a category that does not readily accept new words, this is an unexpected and unusual historical development. In Old English, the nominative and accusative form was *hī*, *hīe* or *hēo*. It was inflected to *him* or *heom* in the dative and *hira* or *heora* in the genitive. In contemporary German, it is somewhat possible to recognize the cognates of these personal pronouns, especially when considering pronunciation. The nominative and accusative form *sie* is complemented by the genitive form *ihrer* and the dative form *ihnen*. The form *sie* additionally functions as the feminine third-person personal pronoun in the nominative and accusative singular, which was at least partially the case in Old English, too (Cassidy and Ringler 23; Crystal, "Old English"; Kunkel-Razum and Münzberg 267; Quirk and Wrenn 38).

5. Articles

In both Old English and contemporary German, articles are subject to inflection in accordance with grammatical case, gender and number. In Old English, *se* is the masculine, *sēo* the feminine and *þæt* the neuter definite article in the nominative singular. While neuter nouns feature the same form of the definite article in the nominative and accusative singular, *þæt*, masculine and feminine nouns do inflect it in the accusative singular, to *þone* and *þā*, respectively. In the genitive singular, *þæs* is found with masculine and neuter nouns, and *þǣre*

with feminine nouns. The latter additionally occurs with feminine nouns in the dative and instrumental singular. Finally, *þǣm* is the dative and *þȳ* the instrumental form of the definite article that is used with masculine and neuter nouns in the singular. In the plural, the following three forms apply to all three grammatical genders: *þā* in the nominative and accusative, *þāra* in the genitive, and *þǣm* in the dative and instrumental (Quirk and Wrenn 27). In contemporary German, *der* is the masculine, *die* the feminine and *das* the neuter definite article in the nominative singular. The remaining inflectional patterns are equally similar to the ones found in Old English. Identical forms occur with masculine and neuter nouns in the genitive and dative singular, *des* and *dem*, respectively. The accusative singular turns out to be *den* with masculine nouns, but it remains identical in form to the nominative with neuter nouns, *das*, as well as with feminine nouns, *die*. Finally, feminine nouns feature *der* both in the genitive and in the dative. In the plural, as in Old English, there is just one set of three definite articles for all three grammatical genders. The nominative and accusative forms, *die*, are identical to the forms that are used with feminine nouns in the singular, which partially replicates the situation found in Old English. Unlike in Old English, however, the genitive plural, *der*, is identical to the form that is used with feminine nouns in the singular, and the dative plural, *den*, is identical to the accusative form that is used with masculine nouns in the singular (Kunkel-Razum and Münzberg 292).

6. Nouns

There are two main patterns according to which nouns are declined in Old English: the a-declension and the o-declension. Both of them are named after the respective word stems in Proto-Germanic. The a-declension is used with masculine and neuter nouns, making the o-declension applicable to feminine nouns only (Cassidy and Ringler 46, 49). In contemporary

German, on the other hand, it is generally difficult to recognize the correct grammatical gender of a noun solely on the basis of its etymological and morphological properties. There does, however, exist a number of suffixes that clearly indicate which grammatical gender is the correct one, with semantic and phonological factors also able to facilitate the deduction (Kunkel-Razum and Münzberg 152-153).

One of the German suffixes that clearly indicate the correct grammatical gender of a noun was already mentioned with *-chen*. The ending indicates a diminutive, hence necessarily a neuter noun. On the other hand, while the suffix *-er* is generally expected to indicate a masculine noun, often one that refers to a male person, it can occur in feminine and neuter nouns as well. An example of a feminine noun with this ending is *die Mutter* 'the mother', with *das Messer* 'the knife' being an example of its occurrence in a neuter noun. Assigning the masculine gender to the noun *Messer* changes its meaning to "the device that measures" or "the male person who is doing the measuring". Another noun suffix that can occur with all three grammatical genders is *-el*. As opposed to *-er*, it does not provide much information about the nature of a noun. Therefore, it is commonly singled out as a model example of a German noun suffix from which it is virtually impossible to recognize the correct grammatical gender of a noun. The Old English equivalent of *Mutter* happens to be *mōdor*. It belongs to a declension pattern other than the major two, that is to one of several minor patterns of noun declension that can be found in the language. These minor declension patterns generally seem to have been created by modifying or mixing the elements from the major two. In the case of *mōdor*, the minor declension pattern corresponds to a semantic field, which can be put under the umbrella term "human family". Thus, as exemplified by Cassidy and Ringler, it features nouns such as the aforementioned *fæder* and *brōðor*, which are masculine, as well as *sweostor* 'sister' and *dohtor* 'daughter', which are feminine. Finally, also included in it are the collective plurals *gebroðor* 'brethren' and *gesweostor* 'sisters' (53). The term *Geschwister*

remains common in contemporary German, now referring to siblings regardless of their sex. In other words, it has underwent the type of semantic change that is known as broadening or generalization. On the other hand, the term *Gebrüder*, similarly to its English equivalent *brethren*, has become obsolete.

There are four suffixes that can be regarded as the primary indicators of noun declension in contemporary German: the genitive singular suffix *-es*, the dative singular suffix *-e*, the dative plural suffix *-n* and the suffix *-en* in the oblique cases in the singular. Perhaps the most common and noticeable one is the genitive singular suffix *-es*, which occurs with masculine and neuter nouns. It is usual for this long ending to have the ability to be arbitrarily substituted for its short version *-s*, which can nowadays even be regarded as the norm. Still, there are many situations in which *-es* remains the preferred choice. Generally used to facilitate pronunciation, and thus obligatory when the voiceless alveolar fricative [s] occurs in the final position in the nominative, it additionally seems to be used more often with those masculine and neuter nouns that are considered to be part of the basic vocabulary. On the other hand, when the voiceless palato-alveolar fricative [ʃ] is found at the end of the nominative form, both *-es* and *-s* can be attached to it in the genitive, even though the former remains the preferred choice (Kunkel-Razum and Münzberg 194-197). Further examples of the choice of the genitive singular suffix being influenced by the preceding phonemes are found in those masculine and neuter nouns that feature the respective endings *-er* and *-el* in the nominative. The suffix *-er* is pronounced as a single vowel, [ɐ], with the ending *-el* being pronounced either as [əl] or a syllabic consonant. In both cases, this means that only the short suffix *-s* can be attached to the nominative form in the genitive. On the other hand, the neuter noun *Jahr* "year", which is a one-syllable word that is pronounced [jaːɐ], can arbitrarily feature both *-es* and *-s* in the genitive.

The genitive singular suffix *-es* occurs almost universally in the Old English a-

declension. In fact, the only notable exception is the neuter noun *feoh* ‘cattle’. It is a noun that is found in the singular only and its genitive form turns out to be *fēos*. The dative singular suffix *-e*, which is additionally used in the instrumental in Old English, is equally omnipresent, with *feoh* being an exception once again, as it is inflected to *fēo* in the dative and instrumental (Cassidy and Ringler 46-47). In contemporary German, the dative singular suffix *-e* has come to be entirely optional, primarily used to facilitate pronunciation, but also more likely to occur in those words that are considered to be part of the basic vocabulary and in fixed expressions such as *im Grunde genommen* ‘essentially’. Finally, it is possible to regard the dative singular suffix *-e* as a stylistic marker that is typically employed in those literary texts that follow the rules of writing in the traditional literary language. A more or less strict rule requires the noun that takes the dative singular suffix *-e* to be preceded by a defining word, usually an article or adjective, but some fixed expressions do not follow it (Kunkel-Razum and Münzberg 206-207). The equivalent of *feoh* in contemporary German is *Vieh*, also a neuter noun that is found in the singular only. It has similar phonological and morphological characteristics as *Jahr*, which means that its declension does not diverge from the regular pattern, with the nominative and accusative form taking either *-es* or *-s* in the genitive and optionally featuring the suffix *-e* in the dative. Alternatively, the Old English word *feoh* could have been used to refer to property, a meaning that was already embedded in the Gothic equivalent *faihu*. It is equally reflected in the etymologically related word *fee* in contemporary English. The original word referred to sheep only, but its meaning was eventually generalized to include all domestic animals that could have been of use to people. The secondary meaning came as a result of the fact that, in the absence of money, such animals were commonly used as a currency (Auberle and Klosa 899; Quirk and Wrenn 23).

The loss of *h* that is observed when *feoh* is inflected to any of the three grammatical cases other than the nominative and accusative ones is comparable to the pattern applied to

mearh ‘horse’, which is a masculine noun that is inflected to *mēares* in the genitive, with *mēare* being the form that is found in the dative and instrumental. As opposed to *feoh*, *mearh* does occur in the plural, displaying the loss of *h* in all the forms therein. One more outcome that is observable in both of these two examples is the lengthening of the stem vowel that is caused precisely by the loss of *h*, with all the inflected forms except the ones that are used in the nominative and accusative singular consequently featuring *mēar-* as the base. It is a regular pattern that occurs whenever the letter *h* that is situated in the medial position is preceded by the letter *r* or *l*, and followed by an inflectional vowel. The loss of *h* in *feoh*, on the other hand, illustrates a comparable pattern of syncope that affects the consonant sound whenever, if it would be retained in an inflected form, it would find itself in an intervocalic position (Cassidy and Ringler 46-47, 56-57). Further patterns of syncope affect some of the vowels that occur in both masculine and neuter nouns. One such example can be provided in reference to the masculine noun *fugol* ‘bird’, with its base changing to *fugl-* in all the inflected forms except the ones that are used in the nominative and accusative singular. In fact, Cassidy and Ringler believe that the letter *o* was inserted into *fugol* merely to facilitate pronunciation (46). The corresponding word in contemporary German, *Vogel*, is also a masculine noun. Auberle and Klosa describe it as descending from an unknown source, but having no known cognates outside the Germanic branch of the Indo-European language family and occurring in various similar forms in virtually all the attested Germanic languages, with examples including the Gothic word *fugls*, as well as the words *fågel* and *fowl* in the contemporary forms of Swedish and English, respectively (902). Mangold gives [ˈfoːgl̩] as the standardized pronunciation of *Vogel*, meaning that the second vowel sound is omitted despite the fact that the letter *e* has been retained in the written form (823). Auberle and Klosa list *fogal* as the Old High German form that went on to be replaced by *vogel* in Middle High German (902). Back to Old English, the type of syncope that is observed in the declension of the neuter noun

tungol ‘star’, which has its base changed to *tungl-* in all the inflectional cases other than the nominative and accusative ones, can be regarded as the exact same one, even though the non-syncopated form *tungol* occurs in the nominative and accusative plural, too (Cassidy and Ringler 47). The word *tungol* does not have any direct descendants in the contemporary West Germanic languages, but both *fugol* and *tungol* can be compared and contrasted with the corresponding Icelandic words *fugl* and *tungl*, respectively. Since the Icelandic language of the present time is mutually intelligible with Old Norse, many of its words, including these two, are exactly the same as in the oldest attested predecessor of all the contemporary North Germanic languages. Neither *fugl* nor *tungl* feature the second vowel. Finally, the nature of the Old English noun suffix *-ol* could prove to be a good starting point in trying to explain the aforementioned irregularities in assigning grammatical gender to those nouns in contemporary German that end in *-el*.

Regarding the plural suffixes of the Old English a-declension, the situation is quite universal. Masculine nouns feature *-as* in the nominative and accusative, *-a* in the genitive, and *-um* in the dative and instrumental. Neuter nouns have *-u* in the nominative and accusative, but the other two endings remain the same. There do, however, exist some exceptions to the rule as far as the nominative and accusative plural forms of neuter nouns are concerned. In addition to *tungol*, an example of the kind is *word*, which is used as the universal singular and plural form in the nominative and accusative. The reason why it does not add *-u* to the base is the presence of a long root syllable (Cassidy and Ringler 46-47). The equivalent of *word* in contemporary German, *Wort*, is also a neuter noun. Interestingly, it has two plural forms that differ from each other semantically. The form *Wörter* is used in general reference to words. The form *Worte*, on the other hand, is preferred when referring to the words that someone had uttered in a particular context, that is when quoting someone. Apart from *-er* and *-e*, contemporary German employs the suffixes *-en*, *-n* and *-s* in the nominative

and accusative plural forms.

The fronting of a back vowel, as the one exhibited in *Wörter*, is a common occurrence in Old English, too. An example can be found in the fact that the nominative and accusative singular form *dæg* 'day' finds itself changed to *dagas* in the plural. The other three grammatical cases follow suit, with *dæg-* being the base in the singular and *dag-* being the base in the plural. The change is believed to have originated in the prehistoric period. At the time, there might have been a general tendency to front a back vowel, but some of the surrounding sounds would occasionally prevent this from occurring. In this particular case, the singular forms feature [æ], the fronted variant, but the plural forms keep the original sound, which was probably the open back unrounded vowel [ɑ], because there is another back vowel in the following syllable (Cassidy and Ringler 22, 46). Furthermore, Old English features a distinct minor pattern of noun declension that is characterized precisely by the fronting of a back vowel in the root. It can be applied to nouns belonging to any of the three grammatical genders. Examples of masculine nouns that follow the pattern include *monn* 'man', *fōt* 'foot' and *tōð* 'tooth'. With their root vowels fronted, they appear as *menn*, *fēt* and *tēð*, respectively, in the dative and instrumental singular. These latter forms are then simply transferred to the nominative and accusative plural (Cassidy and Ringler 54). In contemporary English, all of the three nouns have irregular plural forms: *men*, *feet* and *teeth*, respectively. The relevant similarities are immediately noticeable, especially when comparing and contrasting the Old English long vowels with the now doubled letters *o* and *e*, respectively. In contemporary German, such "umlaut plurals" remain common. An example is *Vögel* 'birds'. It is also possible to combine any of the language's three umlauts with its regular plural suffixes *-e* and *-er*, respectively, which creates an additional plural pattern that was already seen in *Wörter*. This same combined plural pattern is universally applied to the respective equivalents of *men*, *feet* and *teeth*, with the nominative and accusative singular forms *Mann*,

Fuß and *Zahn* transformed into *Männer*, *Füße* and *Zähne* in the plural. Furthermore, as in Old English, all three of them are masculine nouns. As far as pronunciation is concerned, it has to be mentioned, though, that *Mann* already has a front vowel, [a], with the long variant of the same front vowel, [aː], occurring in *Zahn*. It is safe to assume, however, that there was a back vowel that had to be fronted in the past. As a note, *monn* is just one of a total of four possible forms of the word *man* in Old English. Cassidy and Ringler list *mann* and *mon* as the remaining two (451). Considering all the four forms together, it is possible to conclude that the spoken word featured the open back unrounded vowel [ɑ]. An interesting example from this same Old English pattern of noun declension is the feminine noun *bōc* 'book', which has the plural form *bēc*. While its equivalent in contemporary German, *Buch*, is a neuter noun with the combined plural form *Bücher,* there does exist the feminine noun *Buche* 'beech', which has a regular plural form, *Buchen*. The Old English word that corresponds to *Buche* happens to be *bēce*. It is commonly noted that *book* and *beech* are etymologically related, mainly due to the fact that the early Germanic inscriptions were typically carved into beechwood tablets. The two words are indeed very similar in form in virtually all the attested Germanic languages. Some of the Germanic languages even use a single word for both meanings. Since the sound represented by the Old English letter *c* was palatalized in the vicinity of a front vowel in a way that is comparable to the aforementioned case involving the letter *g*, it can be concluded that the plosive [k] in *bōc* happened to be substituted for the affricate [tʃ] in *bēce*. In other words, the final consonant sound was the exact same one as in the familiar words *book* and *beech*, respectively.

The Old English o-declension, which is applied to feminine nouns only, employs the suffix *-e* in the oblique cases in the singular. The only exception are those nouns that end in *-ung*, since they commonly feature *-a* in the same situation. Thus, *costung* 'temptation' can be found both as *costunga* and *costunge* in the oblique cases in the singular. The length of the

root syllable should also be taken into consideration. When this syllable is a short one, the suffix *-u* is attached to the base in the nominative singular, as in *giefu* 'gift'. When it is a long one, the middle vowel is syncopated, which is why *frōfor* 'consolation' has its base reduced to *frōfr-* in the oblique cases in the singular, as well as throughout the plural. The nominative and accusative plural forms take either *-a* or *-e* as the inflectional ending. In the remaining three grammatical cases, the suffixes from the a-declension are retained, although *-ena* is sometimes preferred over *-a* in the genitive, especially with a short root syllable (Cassidy and Ringler 49; Quirk and Wrenn 25).

Considering the nature and omnipresence of the Old English dative and instrumental plural suffix *-um*, it is possible to conclude that the contemporary German dative plural suffix *-n*, one of the language's four primary indicators of noun declension, is probably etymologically related to it. The final of these four indicators, the suffix *-en* in the oblique cases in the singular, has the exact functional equivalent in Old English, namely *-an*. This particular pattern of noun declension is known as the weak declension in both languages, due to the fact that it reduces the number of inflectional suffixes to a minimum. Cassidy and Ringler give the masculine noun *noma* 'name', the feminine noun *tunge* 'tongue' and the neuter noun *ēage* 'eye' as examples of Old English nouns that are subject to the weak declension. The neuter noun *ēage* has a long stem, consequently featuring the exact same form in the accusative. Otherwise, it is possible to notice that *-an* is attached to the respective bases *nom-*, *tung-* and *ēag-* (51). Kunkel-Razum and Münzberg provide the masculine nouns *Prinz* 'prince' and *Zeuge* 'witness' to illustrate the weak declension in contemporary German. Since *Zeuge* already has the letter *e* in the final position in the nominative, the usual weak-declension suffix is shortened to *-n* when it is applied to the word (194). It is worth noting that *Prinz* is one of meanwhile numerous examples of etymologically non-Germanic nouns that have been incorporated into the weak declension in German. According to Auberle and Klosa,

it was borrowed from Latin via French in the thirteenth century, that is during the Middle High German period (630). In contemporary German, the respective equivalents of the aforementioned three Old English nouns turn out to be *Name, Zunge* and *Auge*. It is obvious that all three of them come from the same source as their counterparts in both Old English and its contemporary descendant. Furthermore, each of them has the exact same respective grammatical gender as in Old English. However, only the masculine noun *Name* is a weak one, even though it features the suffix *-ens* in the genitive. It should not be surprising, then, that the weak declension is only applied to masculine nouns in contemporary German. There is one exception, though. The neuter noun *Herz* 'heart' features the suffixes *-ens* in the genitive and *-en* in the dative, respectively. In fact, *Herz* is just like *ēage*, retaining the same form in the accusative as in the nominative due to its long stem. Quirk and Wrenn mention *ēage* and *ēare* 'ear' as the only two neuter nouns in the Old English weak declension. *Heorte*, on the other hand, is a feminine weak noun, appearing as *heortan* in the oblique cases in the singular (27). The respective plural forms of *Name, Zunge* and *Auge* have been simplified to the level of complete uniformity. Regardless of which of the three nouns is considered, the suffix *-n* is added to its nominative singular form in all four inflectional cases in the plural. Cassidy and Ringler posit that the suffix *-ena* was generally attached to the base to form the genitive plural in the Old English weak declension, but they also add that it was possible for it to occur as *-ana*, *-ona* and *-una*, as well as to be reduced to *-na* and even *-a*, that is the usual genitive plural suffix in the major two patterns of noun declension in Old English. The dative and instrumental plural forms more or less universally kept their specific ending *-um* in the Old English weak declension (51).

There are further two minor patterns of noun declension in Old English that deserve to be mentioned. The first one is the i-declension, which is basically a subcategory of the a-declension that can additionally be applied to feminine nouns. Within the scope of this paper,

perhaps the most interesting noun that is subject to the i-declension happens to be *frēondscipe*. It is yet another typically Germanic word that can be found in various similar forms in virtually all the members of the linguistic branch, including as *friendship* in English and *Freundschaft* in German. However, *frēondscipe* and *Freundschaft* differ from each other when grammatical gender and number are considered. The former is a masculine noun that occurs in the singular only. The latter, on the other hand, is a regular feminine noun. The difference in grammatical gender applies to every other noun that is formed using the respective suffixes *-scipe* and *-schaft* (Cassidy and Ringler 50; Kunkel-Razum and Münzberg 165; Quirk and Wrenn 114). The second minor declension pattern to be mentioned is the nd-declension. Cassidy and Ringler give *frēond* 'friend' and *hettend* 'enemy' as examples, adding that such nouns are masculine and derived from present participles (53). It is possible to do this in contemporary German, too. For example, the present participle *hassend* can be converted into the masculine noun *Hassender* 'hater'. In fact, the derivational pattern probably originated in Proto-Germanic. Auberle and Klosa use the Gothic cognate of the contemporary German and English words *Freund* and *friend*, respectively, to illustrate it. The infinitive *frijōn* meant the same as *love* in contemporary English. The noun *frijōnds* was derived by the means of "solidifying" the present participle, which was identical in form (236).

7. Adjectives

Both Old English and contemporary German employ a twofold classification of adjectives, distinguishing them as the weak or definite ones and the strong or indefinite ones. It is a system that is characteristic of the Germanic languages, but it has not been in use in the English language since the Middle English period. The term "weak", as in reference to the

weak declension of nouns, describes the tendency to minimize the number of inflectional suffixes. The term "strong", on the other hand, means that inflectional endings, more or less, change from one grammatical case to another (Cassidy and Ringler 35, 42; Kunkel-Razum and Münzberg 363).

It has already been mentioned that, both in Old English and contemporary German, possessive determiners are declined as if they were strong adjectives. When such a declension pattern is applied to Old English masculine adjectives in the singular, the following suffixes are attached to the nominative forms: *-es* in the genitive, *-um* in the dative, *-ne* in the accusative and *-e* in the instrumental. These endings remain the same with neuter adjectives, except for the fact that neuter adjectives keep the same form in the accusative as in the nominative. Feminine adjectives, on the other hand, are formed by attaching the following suffixes to the nominative singular forms of their masculine and neuter counterparts: *-u* or *-o* in the nominative, *-e* in the accusative and *-re* in the remaining three inflectional cases. The nominative and accusative plural forms are formed in accordance with each of the three grammatical genders, attaching the following endings to the masculine and neuter nominative singular forms: masculine *-e*, feminine *-a* or *-e*, and neuter *-u*, *-o* or zero. The genitive plural suffix is always *-ra*, with the dative and instrumental plural universally featuring the familiar suffix *-um* once again. It is worth noting that the dative ending *-um* is employed here both in the singular and in the plural. Some slight diversions from the regular pattern may occur, though, mainly in the form of syncope and assimilation. A notable one affects the wa-stemmed adjectives. Its defining characteristic is the insertion of the letter *w* between the base and the inflectional ending. For example, the masculine and neuter nominative singular form *gearu* 'ready' changes to *gearwes* in the genitive singular and *gearwum* in the dative singular, the latter also occurring in the dative and instrumental plural. A "parasitic vowel" is occasionally inserted between the base and the letter *w*. In this particular case, it can be

exemplified using the genitive singular variants *gearowes* and *gearewes* (Cassidy and Ringler 35-36; Quirk and Wrenn 31).

In contemporary German, the strong declension of adjectives is similar to the inflectional patterns that are applied to articles, determiners and demonstratives. In fact, it is largely identical to the inflectional pattern that is used with demonstratives, such as *dieser*, which is the masculine nominative singular form that can be used to mean both *this* and *that*. The only notable difference between the two inflectional patterns is the adjectival usage of the suffix *-en*, instead of *-es*, in the formation of the masculine and neuter genitive singular forms. Thus, when it is used with a masculine noun in the singular, the adjective *kalt* 'cold' has the following strong forms: *kalter* in the nominative, *kalten* in the genitive and accusative, and *kaltem* in the dative. With feminine nouns, it can only have two forms. The first one is *kalte*, which is used in the nominative and accusative. The second one is the genitive and dative form *kalter*, which is identical to the masculine nominative singular form. With neuter nouns, the form *kaltes* is found in the nominative and accusative, but the respective genitive and dative forms remain the same as with masculine nouns. The plural forms, which are universally applied to all three grammatical genders, are identical to the feminine singular forms, with the only exception being the dative form *kalten*, which is identical to the masculine accusative singular form. In other words, the plural "borrows" from the singular in accordance with the same pattern that has already been discussed in reference to definite articles (Kunkel-Razum and Münzberg 363).

The following two endings occur in the weak declension of adjectives in contemporary German: *-en* and *-e*. The language employs the weak declension whenever an adjective is preceded by an inflected article, determiner or demonstrative. Demonstratives before adjectives were the primary initiator of the usage of the weak declension in Old English, too. The Old English equivalent of the contemporary German suffix *-en*, as in the weak declension

of nouns, happens to be *-an*. In contemporary German, as far as the singular is concerned, the masculine grammatical gender employs the ending *-en* in all three oblique cases. The remaining two grammatical genders, on the other hand, only use it with the genitive and dative cases, keeping the omnipresent nominative singular suffix *-e* in the accusative as well. In Old English, the same ending, *-e*, had the same function only in the neuter grammatical gender. It was additionally attached to the basic, positive form of an adjective to create its feminine nominative singular form in the weak declension, but it found itself substituted for *-a* in the creation of the corresponding masculine form. In contemporary German, the suffix *-en* is omnipresent in the plural. Old English, on the other hand, used a single set of plural suffixes that were nevertheless applicable to all three grammatical genders: *-an* in the nominative and accusative, *-ena* and *-ra* in the genitive, and *-um* in the dative and instrumental, with some additional variations occasionally occurring in the latter three grammatical cases (Cassidy and Ringler 42; Kunkel-Razum and Münzberg 363-364; Quirk and Wrenn 33).

In their list of the characteristics that define the Germanic languages, Emonds and Faarlund also mention the adjectival inflections *-r* and *-st* for the comparative and the superlative, respectively (19). The comparative *-er* and the superlative *-est* are the only adjectival inflections that have remained part of the English language to the present day. Kunkel-Razum and Münzberg mention the same two suffixes as having the same two functions in contemporary German, with the superlative ending sometimes reduced to *-st* (367). Old English most commonly used *-ra* in the comparative and *-ost* in the superlative, with the latter finding itself substituted for *-est* in a limited number of adjectives, which also had their base vowels umlauted. An example is *hēah* ‘high’, which has the comparative *hīehra* and the superlative *hīehest*, that is the place of the vowel *ē* in the positive is taken by the vowel *ī* in both the comparative and the superlative. Also attested are the comparative

hīerra and the superlative *hīehst*. Comparing and contrasting the adjective with its equivalent in contemporary German yields the positive *hoch*, the comparative *höher* and the superlative *höchste*. As in Old English, both the comparative and the superlative are umlauted. Additionally, the omission of the middle consonant sound [x] can be observed in both *hīerra* and *höher*. On the other hand, the aforementioned German adjective *kalt* is umlauted in the comparative *kälter* and the superlative *kälteste*, but its Old English equivalent, *ceald*, has the comparative *cealdra* and the superlative *cealdost*, that is it follows the primary, regular pattern. Still, umlauting only affects a relatively small number of adjectives in contemporary German, all of them having one-syllable positive forms. In fact, a contrastive comparison of the available lists of such adjectives in Old English and contemporary German reveals many corresponding vocabulary items. In addition to the respective equivalents of *high*, both lists feature the respective equivalents and cognates of *old*, *young*, *great*, *long*, *short* and *strong*. Finally, both languages feature a small number of etymologically related adjectives that have different bases for the comparative and superlative forms. Furthermore, these adjectives have mostly retained both their etymology and irregular comparisons in the English language to the present day. An example is the positive *good*, which has the comparative *better* and the superlative *best*. The Old English equivalents of the adjective turn out to be *gōd*, *betra* and *betst*. In contemporary German, they happen to be *gut*, *besser* and *beste*, with the comparative affected by the High German consonant shift. There was an additional, alternative comparison of the adjective *gōd* in Old English, featuring *sēlra* as the comparative and *sēlest* as the superlative. It was derived from the adverb *sēl* 'better'. The existence of these two Old English forms is somewhat comparable to the difference between *good* and *well* or *gut* and *wohl* in the current forms English and German, respectively (Cassidy and Ringler 43-44; Kunkel-Razum and Münzberg 367-368; Quirk and Wrenn 34-35).

8. Conclusion

Generally, it is possible to conclude that the paper confirmed the initial expectation. There are, in fact, many identifiable grammatical similarities between the earliest form of the English language and the current form of the German language. A number of inflectional suffixes can be related to the common origin of these two languages. The declension systems of Old English and contemporary German are only slightly different from each other. The most notable differences include the absence of the instrumental case from contemporary German and the overall simplification of the language's plural forms. The Old English dative and instrumental cases were largely distinguished in the declensions of articles and determiners, as well as in the strong declension of adjectives. When it comes to the declension of nouns, however, it seems that they had already started to coalesce into a single inflectional category at the time. Furthermore, Old English personal pronouns had no distinctive instrumental forms. In reference to the disappearance of the instrumental case from the declension of nouns in contemporary German, it has been exemplified how combining a preposition with the dative readily compensates for the lack of the instrumental. The contemporary German plural forms unite all of the language's three grammatical genders, even in closed-class words. In the Old English plural, except in reference to articles and the weak declension of adjectives, there was a significantly higher level of distinction between the masculine, feminine and neuter forms. When it comes to nouns, their plural forms were also simplified in contemporary German, especially in the weak declension, where there is only one form that is used in all four grammatical cases. In addition to the main aim of the paper, many of the grammatical features that were found when comparing and contrasting Old English with contemporary German, particularly those related to some of the most basic vocabulary items, could have been attested in contemporary English as well, confirming that,

despite all the changes that the language has gone through over the past thousand years, its core is still a typically Germanic one.

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Summary

OLD ENGLISH DECLENSIONS IN REFERENCE TO CONTEMPORARY GERMAN DECLENSIONS

The starting point for the paper is the assumption that Old English and contemporary German share many grammatical similarities. English and German are historically closely related, which is reflected in the fact that both languages are classified into the West Germanic group of the Germanic branch of the Indo-European language family. The main aim of the paper is to find and describe the similarities and differences between these two languages, that is between the two phases in their respective historical development. A combination of the diachronic, comparative and contrastive methods is used to do so. The paper compares and contrasts pronouns, articles, nouns and adjectives, that is their properties that are typical of both Old English and contemporary German. The introductory chapter describes some of the phonological changes that are necessary for understanding the similarities and differences in pronunciation. It has been included in the paper based on the conclusion that there is a significant level of correlation between certain phonemes and the choice of inflectional suffixes in both languages. Due to the vast temporal gap between the two phases in the respective historical development of English and German, the paper ignores the influence of the Norman Conquest of 1066 on the historical development of the English language, except for the fact that it does attempt to describe which of the typically Germanic, or West Germanic, grammatical features it lacks in its contemporary form.

Key words: Old English language, English language, German language, Germanic languages, historical linguistics, grammar, declension, comparison

Sažetak

STAROENGLESKA SKLONIDBA U ODNOSU NA SUVREMENU NJEMAČKU SKLONIDBU

Ovaj rad polazi od pretpostavke da su staroengleski i suvremeni njemački jezik gramatički vrlo slični. Engleski i njemački jezik povijesno su usko povezani, što se očituje i u činjenici da ih se zajedno svrstava u zapadnu skupinu germanskih jezika unutar indoeuropske jezične porodice. Glavni je cilj ovoga rada uporabom kombinacije dijakronijske, komparativne i kontrastivne metode pronaći i opisati sličnosti i razlike u padežnim sustavima tih dvaju jezika, odnosno tih dviju faza u povijesnome razvoju engleskoga i njemačkoga jezika. U sklopu rada uspoređuju se zamjenice, članovi, imenice i pridjevi, to jest njihova svojstva koja su tipična za staroengleski i suvremeni njemački jezik. Uvodno poglavlje opisuje fonološke promjene koje su neophodne za razumijevanje sličnosti i razlika u izgovoru, a uklopljeno je u rad na temelju zaključka da u uspoređenim fazama razvoja engleskoga i njemačkoga jezika postoji značajna korelacija između pojedinih fonema i odabira padežnih sufikasa. Zbog značajnoga vremenskoga razmaka između uspoređivanih varijanata dotičnih jezika rad se ne bavi utjecajem normanskoga osvajanja Engleske u Bitci kod Hastingsa 1066. godine na povijesni razvoj engleskoga jezika, osim što nastoji opisati koja tipično germanska odnosno zapadnogermanska gramatička svojstva nisu vidljiva u njegovu sadašnjem obliku.

Ključne riječi: staroengleski jezik, engleski jezik, njemački jezik, germanski jezici, povijest jezika, gramatika, sklonidba, usporedba