

**MIDDLE ENGLISH MORPHOLOGY****Tojiyeva Shahnoza Xudoyberdi Qizi***Termiz davlat pedagogika Instituti*[\*pssoklo80@gmail.com\*](mailto:pssoklo80@gmail.com)**Ilmiy rahbar: Xudoyberdiyeva Oyjamol**[\*Teacheroyjamol@gmail.com\*](mailto:Teacheroyjamol@gmail.com)**ABSTRACT**

The Middle English period (1100–1500) marks a crucial stage in the historical development of English morphology. During this time, the language moved away from the complex inflectional system of Old English and gradually adopted a more analytic structure. Several important social and linguistic factors contributed to this transformation. The influence of French after the Norman Conquest encouraged the reduction of many traditional endings and introduced clearer grammatical patterns. In the northern regions, contact with Scandinavian speakers supported the loss of case markers and helped spread new pronoun forms, especially they, their, and them. Sound changes, particularly the reduction of unstressed vowels, also played a major role in weakening earlier morphological contrasts. As a result, nouns, adjectives, pronouns, and verbs all became simpler and more regular in form. At the same time, the rise of periphrastic constructions and the growing use of auxiliary verbs demonstrated a shift toward the structure that characterizes Modern English. By the end of the Middle English period, most fundamental features of contemporary English morphology had already taken shape, making this era one of the most influential phases in the evolution of the language.

**Key words:** *Middle English morphology, inflectional loss, analytic structure, phonological reduction, Scandinavian influence, Norman Conquest, grammatical simplification, morphological development*

**O'RTA INGLIZ TILI MORFOLOGIYASI****ANNOTATSIYA**

O'rta ingliz tili davri (1100–1500) ingliz tili morfologiyasining shakllanishida juda muhim bosqich bo'lib, bu davrda til murakkab qadimgi ingliz qo'shimchalar tizimidan asta-sekin analitik tuzilishga o'ta boshladi. Ushbu jarayonga ijtimoiy va tilshunoslik omillari katta ta'sir ko'rsatdi. Norman bosqinidan so'ng fransuz tilining

hukmron mavqei ko‘plab an’anaviy grammatik qo‘shimchalarning qisqarishiga va yanada tushunarli morfologik modellarning paydo bo‘lishiga olib keldi. Shimoliy hududlardagi skandinaviyaliklar bilan aloqa esa kelishik ko‘rsatkichlarining yo‘qolishiga va *they, their, them* kabi olmoshlarning keng tarqalishiga sabab bo‘ldi. Fonetik o‘zgarishlar, xususan urg‘usiz unilarning qisqarishi, eski morfologik farqlarni sezilarli darajada kuchsizlantirdi. Natijada otlar, sifatlar, olmoshlar va fe‘l shakllari soddalashib, ko‘proq muntazam tus oldi. Shu bilan birga yordamchi fe‘llar va perifrastik konstruktsiyalarning kengayishi zamonaviy ingliz tilining asosiy sintaktik tuzilmalari shakllanayotganidan dalolat beradi. O‘rta ingliz tili davri yakuniga kelib, hozirgi ingliz tiliga xos ko‘plab morfologik xususiyatlar allaqachon shakllangan bo‘lib, ushbu davr til tarixidagi eng ta’sirli bosqichlardan biri hisoblanadi.

**Kalit so‘zlar:** *o‘rta ingliz tili morfologiyasi, fleksiya yo‘qolishi, analitik tuzilma, fonologik reduksiya, skandinav ta’siri, Norman bosqini, grammatik soddalashuv, morfologik rivojlanish.*

## МОРФОЛОГИЯ СРЕДНЕАНГЛИЙСКОГО ЯЗЫКА

### АННОТАЦИЯ

Период среднеанглийского языка (1100–1500 гг.) представляет собой важный этап в развитии английской морфологии, когда язык постепенно переходил от сложной древнеанглийской системы к более аналитической структуре. Социальные изменения и языковые контакты существенно ускорили этот процесс. После нормандского завоевания французский язык стал языком власти и культуры, что привело не только к заимствованиям, но и к упрощению традиционных грамматических окончаний, способствовало развитию более прозрачных моделей словоизменения. В северных регионах интенсивный контакт со скандинавскими носителями ускорил утрату падежных показателей и закрепил новые местоименные формы, такие как *they, their, them*. Существенную роль сыграли и фонетические изменения, особенно редукция безударных гласных, которая уменьшила различия между ранними формами слов. В результате существительные, прилагательные, местоимения и глаголы стали проще и регулярнее. Одновременно распространились перифрастические конструкции и вспомогательные глаголы, что отражает переход к структуре современного английского. К концу периода большинство ключевых

морфологических особенностей современного английского уже сформировалось, что делает данную эпоху одним из наиболее значимых этапов в эволюции языка.

**Ключевые слова:** *среднеанглийская морфология, утрата флексий, аналитическая структура, фонологическая редукция, скандинавское влияние, нормандское завоевание, грамматическое упрощение, морфологическое развитие.*

## INTRODUCTION

Middle English morphology provides essential insight into how the English language underwent one of the most substantial transformations in its history. Whereas Old English expressed many grammatical relationships through inflectional endings, Middle English gradually abandoned much of this system and adopted a structure that depended more on word order and function words such as prepositions and auxiliary verbs. This transition reshaped the language at every grammatical level and laid the groundwork for the more standardized and accessible patterns of Modern English. The purpose of this paper is to examine the key factors that contributed to morphological change during the Middle English period and to describe the major structural developments affecting nouns, adjectives, pronouns, and verbs. By analyzing these features, we gain a clearer understanding of how Middle English served as a bridge between the earlier Germanic system and the later standardized form of English.

## HISTORICAL AND LINGUISTIC BACKGROUND

1. Norman Conquest and French Influence. The impact of the Norman Conquest on English structure cannot be overstated. French became the language of administration and prestige, while English persisted mainly as the language of the common population. This bilingual environment caused many speakers to adopt simpler grammatical forms to facilitate communication. French, with its relatively limited inflectional system compared to Old English, indirectly encouraged the erosion of complex case endings and contributed to the rise of more transparent morphological patterns.

2. Scandinavian Contact. Prior Scandinavian settlement and the continued influence of Old Norse strongly shaped northern Middle English dialects. Because Old Norse and Old English shared similar vocabulary but differed in grammatical endings, speakers often simplified inflectional forms to make interaction easier. Scandinavian elements

played a key role in the replacement of native pronouns with they, their, them, and contributed significantly to the development of more regular verb endings.

3. Phonological Reduction. Sound changes during this period further accelerated morphological loss. The reduction of unstressed vowels to a neutral schwa (written as e) caused many distinct endings to sound alike. Once formerly different endings became phonetically identical, they no longer marked grammatical distinctions, resulting in their gradual disappearance.

4. Dialect Diversity and the Role of English Literature. The Middle English period was characterized by large dialectal variation, as there was no national standard. The East Midlands dialect eventually became more influential because it was used in trade, administration, and literature. Writers such as Geoffrey Chaucer contributed to spreading this dialect and helped shape future standard English morphology.

## MAJOR FEATURES OF MIDDLE ENGLISH MORPHOLOGY

1. Middle English nouns underwent dramatic simplification. Old English had four cases and several declensional classes; Middle English reduced this system to mainly two forms: common case and genitive case.

Key developments include: Loss of grammatical gender. Adoption of -es as the dominant plural ending. Development of the possessive -es, later becoming the modern apostrophe form. Increased use of prepositions instead of case endings. While some irregular forms such as oxen and children survived, the general trend was toward much greater regularity[1, 135-138].

2. Adjectives lost nearly all their Old English inflectional endings. Agreement based on case, gender, and number disappeared:

One main adjective form was used in most contexts. Strong and weak adjective forms were no longer distinguished. Comparative and superlative forms remained but became more regular. By late Middle English, adjectives behaved similarly to those in Modern English[2, 157-164].

3. The pronoun system changed more radically than almost any other part of English grammar:

Dual forms disappeared completely. Scandinavian forms replaced Old English third-person plural pronouns. New possessive forms appeared and became standardized. Increasing clarity between singular and plural pronouns helped regularize the system.

These developments improved grammatical clarity and supported communication in multilingual environments[3, 570-579].

4. Verb morphology simplified through several important changes:

Reduction of present-tense endings to a smaller set of regular patterns. Plural forms often ended in -en or -es, depending on the region. Many strong verbs shifted to weak patterns, increasing the overall regularity. Auxiliary verbs began to play a larger role in creating tenses and aspects. These changes marked the beginning of the modern system of tense, aspect, and modal constructions[4, 57-63].

5. As inflectional endings disappeared, English relied increasingly on multi-word grammatical constructions:

Early progressive forms (I am writing) became more common. The perfect aspect developed more fully. Modal verbs such as shall, will, may, and must expanded in usage. Prepositions replaced many role markers previously conveyed by case endings. These constructions form the backbone of modern English grammar[5, 159-168].

## CONCLUSION

The Middle English period represents one of the most transformative eras in the history of the English language. Over several centuries, English shifted away from an inflected Germanic system toward a highly analytic and structurally transparent grammar. Noun, adjective, pronoun, and verb systems all became more regular, while periphrastic constructions developed into essential elements of expression. By the end of the fifteenth century, most core features of Modern English morphology were already well established. This transformation not only simplified the language but also made it more flexible, adaptable, and accessible to a wider population.

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