



OLD ENGLISH THE EFFECTS OF VIKING RAIDS ON ITS DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract

English vocabulary and grammar have been changed and reshaped by several foreign influences through their contact with the English public. Different invaders caused a great difference in the northern and southern English vernacular. Because of the contact between various invaders and the natives, these dialects display differences in phonology, morphology, vocabulary and syntax. Norse invasions have impacted the English language, especially the northern part, while the southern part has been recognizably affected by German invasions. The first Viking raids started in the 7th century. Over 300 years Vikings were attacking the English territory, until the Norman invasion, which marked the finish of the Viking Age. Territories like East Anglia, Lincolnshire and Northumbria have been raided and plundered. Norse settlers didn't just transform the English territory, culture and history through war, trade and art but they also affected an observable part of the language. Archaic words used before have vanished from the vocabulary, while a small number of words have figured out how to survive by adjusting to the changes in the English language. The purpose of this paper is to distinguish and single out the Old Norse influences from other foreign influences as well as to classify historic influences from the linguistic impact and to establish how productive the Norse impact was on the English Language.

Keywords: *Old English, Viking*

Introduction

"One can't look at English in isolation; for a lot of its history the English language in England has been in a state of conjunction, or contest, or even clash with one or more other languages, and it is these tensions and connections which have shaped the language as much as any factors internal to English itself" (Townend, 2006).

One of the languages that is considered to have impacted the language is Old Norse, which was the language brought by the Vikings when they attacked Britain in the Ninth Century. *Old Norse impact had been undetected for centuries, however, however, the degree of the effect is disputable even today.*

"Traust me, þó (however) it might seem oddi at first, we er still very likligr to use the same words as the Vikings did in our everyday speech. Þeirra (their) language advanced into the modern-day Scandinavian languages, however þeir (they) also provided English with the endowment of hundreds of words."

Nevertheless, as the statement above shows us, and as will be discussed in this paper, a great impact had taken spot, particularly on the lexis of the language.

Historical Background

Old Norse was the language spoken by the Vikings who came from Denmark, Norway and Sweden with a greater strength of the Danes. The Vikings started raids on the East coast of Britain by the late of the eighth Century and by 850 their raids started to turn out to be longer and further south. In 865 there followed a full-scale invasion and on-going battles for the possession of the country (Mastin, 2011), which would proceed until 878 when a treaty between the Anglo-Saxons and the Vikings was signed, thus establishing Danelaw, a region which covered the north and east of England.

The Language

ON belongs toward the North Germanic branch of the Germanic family. Considering the way that the Anglo-Saxon (Old English – OE) had a place with the Germanic family, as indeed, not taking into account the way that it was the West Germanic branch, it can freely be conceded that ON and OE were not unreasonably dissimilar. Truth be told, this is probably one reason that make it hard to represent the origin of some words. Nevertheless, there were also such differences that, as it were, may have changed the OE language when the two languages came into contact.

Old Norse Impact on Lexis

ON was a language very close to OE, because of their hereditary relationship. Considering this, it very well might be assumed that the Scandinavian (Vikings) invaders and the Anglo-Saxons didn't have numerous difficulties understanding one another. However, the two still had some differences.

At the point when the Danes came into contact with the Anglo-Saxons, their contacts being on consistent schedule and very intense, naturally enough a ton of constituents integrated effortlessly into OE. However, truth be told, these borrowings went undetected for centuries (Dögg Friðriksdóttir, 2014), probably because of the closeness between the two languages. Indeed, even today, it is hard to determine the origin of some words, especially those of ON or OE. Nevertheless, it is thought that most of words with the [sk] cluster are of ON origin rather than OE, since the [sk] cluster change to [sh] had already occurred in OE (sixth Century). Some of the surviving pairs would be OE: shirt – ON: skirt: OE: shin – ON: skin. Furthermore, attributable to the different improvement of OE and ON [k] and [g] in certain contexts, the words egg, kid, get and give are accepted to be ON, since the OE words were eyren'eggs' and jefa'give' (Dawson, 2003)

Albeit the Vikings prevailed in the British Isles for 300 years, ON borrowings were very few in number, as one might expect, however, they certainly are the most frequently used ones (even in present day English).

The Nature of the Borrowings

ON loans refer to normal everyday events and objects, such as spot names, personal names, names of days, war and brutality terms, creature names, terms related to culture and those related to landscape.

Moreover, with ON, the vocabulary of English would extend much more because the Norse were ready to produce synonyms for some Anglo-Saxon words (Anglo-Saxon: wish – Old Norse: need; craft – skill; sick – sick). Curiously, however, the new synonyms tracked down their position in the vocabulary with useful difference insignificance, despite the way that the usual reason for borrowings is the lack of a particular word for something certain.

Then again, some synonyms from ON figured out how to restrict the significance of the OE word or shift its semantic altogether. For instance, the word began 'kick the bucket' which is considered to have its roots in ON deyja restricted the importance of OE word Stefan to Modern English starve and the other OE word sultan got a semantic shift and must be found in the phrase sweltering hotness (University of Duisburg and Essen, 2012). Another model is the word 'egg' of ON which came to replace 'ey' of OE, perhaps because of the closeness of æg [æj] 'eye'.

Words related to landscape

Since most part of the Danelaw lay on swamps and alluvial plains, words related to dirt couldn't resist without tracking down their direction into the language dirt – drit (excrement); dregs – dregg (sediment); mire – myrr (marsh); muck – myki (cow fertilizer); rotten – rotinn (Jordan).

More Norse Words

- Nouns: pivot tree, band, bank, birth, stall, calf (of leg), crook, dirt, egg, individual, freckle, hole, guess, husband, kid, leg, link, credit, race, root, scales, score, scrap, seat, sister, skill, skin, skirt, sky, stack, thrift, tidings, trust, need, window, and so on
- Adjectives: awkward, level, sick, loose, low, moist, odd, rugged, sly, close, weak, and so on
- Verbs: snare, cast, cut, crave, crawl, bite the dust, gasp, get, give, glitter, hit, lift, bother, raise, rake, rid, rive, scare, scowl, take, thrive, and so on (UK Essays, 2013).

Old Norse Influence on Morphology

The close contact between the Vikings and the Anglo-Saxons should be visible especially in the ON effect on the morphology.

The forms of the third person plural pronouns, they, their and them, have been borrowed from ON thus replacing the OE hie, her, him. This might have come as a result of the confusion caused by the same forms for the third person singular pronouns in OE which also started with h-(he/heo). Support for this view comes from the way that the form of the female third person singular fostered an underlying [ʃ] in the course of the Middle English to distinguish it from the masculine form with which it either had become homophonous or was threatening to do as such (University of Duisburg and Essen, 2012).

Other morphological words that can be traced back to ON are prepositions such as to, by, with, till, and fro (a form of from used in the expression 'forward and backward'). The words both and same and furthermore however and consequently have their origin in ON.

Another very important advance is the plural form of the verb 'to be' (are) which in OE (West Saxon tongue) was syndon/sindon. There are also assumptions that ON affected the 's' suffix on third-person singular verbs (Pardo, 2009) (Crystal).

Possible Influence on Syntax

As far as syntax is concerned there are different theories as how much the ON affected OE. Numerous linguists share the possibility of Otto Jespersen, according to whom the omission of the relative pronoun in relative clauses was a feature of ON rarely found in OE. Another Scandinavian syntactic impact is seen in the use of shall and will (in Middle English) which is similar to Scandinavian yet different from other Germanic languages (Noman, 2013).

Further still, there are beliefs that ON had a great effect in changing the syntactical OE into scientific English. OE was an intricate language where nouns and articles had three genders that could be bent for up to five cases. The verbs were separated into two groups: strong (7 classes) and weak (3) and their endings changed for number, tense, state of mind and person. Word order was very adaptable since there were inflections that carried the sense. The Scandinavian factor is said to have been responsible for the loss of the inflections of nouns by introducing the prepositions to, by and with to carry out the significance thus also establishing a stricter word order. The loss of grammatical gender is also attributed to ON.

Moreover, there are also some linguists that accept that Modern English is Scandinavian and not West Germanic. In their defense, they bring up the word order or the arrangement of the item after the verb, the possibility of using the preposition toward the finish of the sentence, the capacity to split the infinitive (I promise to never rehash it), and the group genitive (The Queen of England's cap), which are all features of both English and Scandinavian (Nickelsen, 2012).

Then again, there are also a serious group of linguists who don't consider ON as one of the languages that might have had that profound of an effect in the English language for example any syntactical impact. According to this group the syntactic changes had already started to occur before the arrival of the Vikings (Dawson, 2003). However, however, they don't try to diminish the role that ON might have had on accelerating these changes.

Contrast between old English and Old Norse

Old Norse and Old English, as previously referenced, had a place before their separation to the same group of languages. Regarding the way that they came from the same ancestor language, it is legitimate to assume that they share similarities in vocabulary, phonetics, grammar, and syntax. According to Freeborn, all things considered "the two languages were similar enough in vocabulary for OE speakers to understand normal ON words, as well as the other way around, so that the English and Norsemen could convey" (1992: 52). Whether these two languages were in truth commonly clear is yet to be proven. Old Norse and Old English are different and similar in numerous other aspects in vocabulary, grammar and

syntax. Just the most important similarities and differences will be referenced. The biggest similarity these two languages share is the way that both originated from the Germanic language. Old Norse and Old English share strong and weak verbs. Strong verb forms are on account of these two languages characterized by vowel gradation, while the weak verb forms are formed by suffixes. The two languages share two tenses, viz. the present and the past. Personal pronouns consist of the first and second person in ON and OE and incorporate the double number. The double number "is specifically for talking about groups of two things, for instance "we two" or "both of you" or "they two". The first and second person of pronouns and the double number added to the pronoun is shown in the picture 1. beneath.

First person			
Case	Singular	Plural	Dual
Nominative	ic, ĩc	ƿē	ƿit
Accusative	mec, mē	ūsic, ūs	uncit, unc
Genitive	mīn	ūre	uncer
Dative	mē	ūs	unc

Second person			
Case	Singular	Plural	Dual
Nominative	þū	gē	git
Accusative	þec, þē	ēopic, ēop	incit, inc
Genitive	þīn	ēoper	incer
Dative	þē	ēop	inc

Picture 1

According to Gay "a couple of vocalic variations seem to separate the two systems, which are given in the list (2) beneath, and no differences exist in their consonant inventories, which have remained everything except parallel since the hour of Common Germanic" (2014: 19).

(2)	<u>Old English</u>	<u>Old Norse</u>
	<i>æ</i> - <i>dæg</i> 'day'	<i>a</i> - <i>dagr</i> 'day'
	<i>ǣ</i> - <i>rǣd</i> 'advice, counsel'	<i>á</i> - <i>ráð</i> 'advice, counsel'
	<i>ā</i> - <i>bān</i> 'bone'	<i>ei</i> - <i>bein</i> 'bone'
	<i>ēa</i> - <i>hlēapan</i> 'to leap'	<i>au</i> - <i>hlaupa</i> 'to leap'
	<i>ēo</i> - <i>fēower</i> 'four'	<i>jó</i> - <i>fjórir</i> 'four' ⁸

Picture 2 (from Gay 2014: 20)

Old Norse differs from Old English with just one case of infinitive, while Old English has two infinitives for every verb. The OE infinitive is shown in the case of 'to sing', whose infinitives are *singan* and

tōsingenne. Unlike the ON, OE has fostered the dynamic voice and a passive voice, which was still not progressed around then.

Conclusion

Throughout its history, the English language has encountered contacts with various languages, most of which affected the advancement of the language. However, the most important influences came from four languages, one of them being the Old Norse which, most probably because of the hereditary relations considering that the two of them were descendents of the Germanic family, had a great deal of similarities to English.

English borrowed a considerable amount of words from ON, a large number of which have not survived yet most of the ones that survived are some of the most well-known words used even today.

Despite the fact that there are still some controversial opinions about the degree of the impact of ON, especially as far as syntax is concerned, one can't easily deny the way that the impact of ON was not restricted to the borrowings just yet contacted, at any rate, the morphology as all things considered, thus making ON as one of the most profound factors on the improvement of the English language.

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