Early Modern English: Morphology & Syntax

History of the English Language
H. Littlefield, Ph.D.

EME Morphosyntax
(Inflection, Lexical Categories)

EME Inflection: Nouns

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Case</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Singular</td>
<td>Genitive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plural</td>
<td>Non-genitive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Note: 's' versus 'n'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Note: possessive 's'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Note: 'his' interpretation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: 's' versus 'n'
EME Inflection: Adjectives

Comparative, Superlative

- Same as ME
- Still no rigid rule (until Lowth, 1762)
  - *violentest*
  - *certainer*
  - *more bold*
  - *the most brave*
  - *the most stillest night*

EME Declension of Personal Pronouns

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case</th>
<th>1st</th>
<th>3rd (Masc)</th>
<th>3rd (Fem)</th>
<th>3rd (Neut)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>her, a</td>
<td>she</td>
<td>it, hit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>me</td>
<td>him</td>
<td>her</td>
<td>it, hit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>we</td>
<td>his</td>
<td>her, hers</td>
<td>th, hit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>we</td>
<td>they</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>us</td>
<td>them, thm</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>us, ours</td>
<td>their, theirs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2nd person Pronouns: Two tribunes, Falvius and Murellus, and “certaine Commoners ouer the Stage” [Julius Caesar]

1. Falvius: Hence: home idle Creatures, get home: Is this a holiday? What know not (Being Mechanicall) ought not walke Upon a laboring day, without the signe Of profession? Speake, what Trade art

2. 1st man: Why, Sir, a Carpenter.


4. 2nd man: Thrap Sir, in respect of a fine Workman, I am but as would say, a Cobbler.

5. Murellus: But what trade art Answer me directly.

6. 2nd man: A trade, sir, that I hope I may use with a safe conscience; which is, indeed, sir, a mender of bad soles.
**2nd person Pronouns:** Two men are sent to murder the Duke of Clarence, who is in prison. [Richard III]

2. 2nd man: You shall have wine enough my Lord anon.
3. Duke: If God's name, what are you?
4. 1st man: A man, as you are.

[a few moments later in the same conversation]

5. Duke: Erroneous Vassals, the great King of Kings Hath in the Table of his Law commanded that you do no murder...
6. 2nd man: And if the same Vengeance doth he hurl on you for false Forswearing, and for murder too: If you did not receive the Sacrament, to fight in quarrel of the House of Lancaster.
7. 1st man: And like a Traitor to the name of God, Didst break that Vow, and with thy treacherous blade, Vamp'st the Bows of Sou'r Righteous Sonne.

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**2nd person Pronouns:** Sir Toby Belch is urging Sir Andrew Aguecheek to write a letter to the disguised Viola. [Twelfth Night]

1. Sir Toby Belch: Go, write it in a martial hand;
2. be curt and briefe;
3. it is no matter how wittie,
4. so it bee elegant and full of invention;
5. taunt him with the license of Iinke:
6. if thou se'se him some thrice,
7. it shall not be amisse.

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**EME Inflection of Verbs**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Person</th>
<th>Mood</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Tense</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First</td>
<td>Indicative [DECLINING]</td>
<td>Singular</td>
<td>Past</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second</td>
<td>Subjunctive</td>
<td>Plural</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third</td>
<td>Imperative</td>
<td></td>
<td>Present</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
EME Inflection: Verbs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tense</th>
<th>Strong</th>
<th>Weak</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Infinitive</td>
<td>'to drink'</td>
<td>'to hope'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Present</td>
<td>1 Sg</td>
<td>drink</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2 Sg</td>
<td>drank, drankst</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3 Sg</td>
<td>dranketh, drinks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pl</td>
<td>drank</td>
<td>hoped</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Past</td>
<td>Participle</td>
<td>drinking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1, 3 Sg</td>
<td>drank</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2 Sg</td>
<td>drank, drankst</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pl</td>
<td>drank</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Participle</td>
<td>drunken</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

EME: Uninflected Categories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prepositions</th>
<th>Conjunctions</th>
<th>Adverbs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Meanings differ…</td>
<td>and or through if that</td>
<td>-ly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have no power upon you</td>
<td>But not always</td>
<td>But not always</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We were dead of sleep</td>
<td>This day grows</td>
<td>This day grows</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>without the seven mile line</td>
<td>wonders hot</td>
<td>wonders hot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the highway against</td>
<td>to be absolute dead</td>
<td>to be absolute dead</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Whipples house</td>
<td>(it is) exceeding</td>
<td>(it is) exceeding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>much worn</td>
<td>much worn</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

EME Syntax

(Word order)
EME Word Order: Sentences

SVO  We shall be maligned

OSV  These conjectures did they cast in their heads

SOV  As the law should them direct

VOS  Still have I borne it with a patient shrug

EME Word Order

Noun Phrases

Adj  N
a good conscience
uncharitable imputations

N  Adj
faith invincible
the line royal

Modifiers

(Adverbs, PPs)

AUX  Modifier  V
is again come together
he is happily arrived

and was by them examined
which he behind him left

EME Word Order: Verb Phrases

Auxiliary Verbs

Development of compound verb phrases

Perfect + progressive
We have been watching you

Passive + progressive
You are being watched

Development of complex modals
be going to
have to
be about to
EGE Word Order: Verb Phrases

**Negation**

Verb + not

- I doubt it not
- It belongs not to you

Aux + not

- I do not doubt it
- A team of horse shall not pluck that from me

Multiple Negation (until Lowth, 1762)

- they are not bound to stand to no determination
- nor that she never was married

**Impersonal verbs and Dummy “it”**

Impersonal verbs

- It yearns me not if men my garments wear
- I’ll do’, but it dislikes me
- His countenance likes me not

**EME Word Order: Interrogatives**

**Yes-No**

Inversion of Auxiliary verb

- Do you love me?
- Dost thou know who speaks?
- Canst thou catch any fishes then?
- Can you talk skillfully of Mrs. Siddons?

Inversion of verb

- Came he home?
- Is not this my house?

**WH-Questions**

Inversion of Auxiliary verb

- Why do you look on me?
- What do you see?
- How hast thou offended?
- How should I your true love know?

Inversion of verb

- Why lookest thou upon me?
- What sayde he?