University of Gdańsk

Subject card

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| Subject name and code | Historical Linguistics, PG_00137865 | | |
| Field of study | English Studies | | |
| Date of commencement of studies | October 2025 | Academic year of realisation of subject | 2025/2026 |
| Education level | Master's studies | Subject group | Obligatory subject group in the field of study<br>Optional subject group<br>Subject group related to scientific research in the field of study |
| Mode of study | full-time studies | Mode of delivery | at the university |
| Year of study | 1 | Language of instruction | English<br>English |
| Semester of study | 2 | ECTS credits | 2.0 |
| Learning profile | academic | Assessment form | credit |
| Conducting unit | Institute of English and American Studies -> Faculty of Languages -> Rector | | |
| Name and surname of lecturer (lecturers) | Subject supervisor | Adriana Wacewicz-Chorosz | |
| | Teachers | dr hab. Mikołaj Rychło, prof. UG | |

| Lesson types | | | | | | | |
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| | Lesson type | Lecture | Tutorial | Laboratory | Project | Seminar | SUM |
| | Number of study hours | 30.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 30 |
| | E-learning hours included: 0.0 | | | | | | |

| Learning activity and number of study hours | | | | | |
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| | Learning activity | Participation in didactic classes included in study plan | Participation in consultation hours | Self-study | SUM |
| | Number of study hours | 30 | 2.0 | 18.0 | 50 |

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| Subject objectives | Familiarizing students with issues related to language development, with a particular focus on changes occurring over time, and enhancing their skills in understanding and translating Old English texts. Language changes are discussed and analyzed using examples from Indo-European languages, particularly English, Polish, German, French, Latin, and their reconstructed ancestors: Proto-Indo-European, Proto-Germanic, and Proto-Slavic. |

## Learning outcomes

| Course outcome | Subject outcome | Method of verification |
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| [FAMU2_W05] Knows and understands advanced terminology in the field of linguistics, in particular those used in English language studies. | The student knows and understands advanced terminology in the field of historical English linguistics at an in-depth level. | [SW4] test/exam - oral or written<br>[SW1] oral statement/ conversation/discussion<br>[SW2] presentation/project/paper/ report |
| [FAMU2_K02] Is prepared to recognise the importance of knowledge and skills in English Studies in solving cognitive and practical problems and to seek the advice of a supervisor in their chosen place of work in the event of difficulty in solving problems on their own. | The student is prepared to recognize the importance of knowledge and skills in the field of historical English linguistics when solving problems related to language development, and to seek the opinion of an academic supervisor in case of difficulties with independently resolving issues. | [SK1] oral statement/conversation/ discussion<br>[SK2] presentation/project/paper/ report |
| [FAMU2_U06] Can communicate in speech and writing in English and Polish with diverse audiences on specialized topics in the field of linguistics and literature, also using advanced specialized terminology. | The student is able to communicate with diverse audiences on topics related to the history, development, and changes of language, using advanced specialized terminology. | [SU1] oral statement/conversation/ discussion<br>[SU2] presentation/project/paper/ report |
| [FAMU2_W07] Knows and understands to an in-depth extent selected issues constituting advanced detailed knowledge in the field of linguistics, including, in particular, research into the English language. | The student knows and understands selected issues representing advanced detailed knowledge in the field of historical English linguistics at an in-depth level. | [SW4] test/exam - oral or written<br>[SW1] oral statement/ conversation/discussion<br>[SW2] presentation/project/paper/ report |
| [FAMU2_W03] Knows and understands in depth advanced research methodologies and theories in the field of English linguistics. | The student knows and understands advanced research methodologies and theories in the field of historical English linguistics at an in-depth level. | [SW1] oral statement/ conversation/discussion<br>[SW2] presentation/project/paper/ report |
| [FAMU2_K01] Is ready to critically evaluate the extent of their knowledge and skills, in particular in the field of English-language linguistics and literature and English. | The student is prepared to critically assess the scope of their own knowledge and skills in the field of historical English linguistics. | [SK1] oral statement/conversation/ discussion<br>[SK2] presentation/project/paper/ report |

## Subject contents

Introduction to the basic principles of language change. Translation of Old English texts. Polish-English cognates and the changes associated with them. English-German cognates and the changes associated with them. Overview of the Old English language. Phonological, morphological, syntactic, and semantic changes. Lexicalization. Grammaticalization. Modern irregularities as traces of formerly regular systems. Sources and causes of language change. Sound laws. Ablaut. The role of analogy and analogical leveling in the phonological and morphological development of languages. Irregular phonetic changes caused by frequency. Etymologies of selected words. The phenomenon of language relatedness. Selected aspects of Proto-Indo-European and their development, as well as their remnants in modern languages. Theories concerning the Proto-Indo-European homeland (its location and time). Loanwords vs. cognates.

## Prerequisites and co-requisites

Knowledge of basic linguistic terminology. Proficiency in English at the C1 level.

## Assessment methods and criteria

| Subject passing criteria | Passing threshold | Percentage of the final grade |
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| test/exam – oral/written | 51.0% | 60.0% |
| presentation/project/paper/report | 51.0% | 20.0% |
| oral statement/conversation/ discussion | 51.0% | 20.0% |

## Recommended reading

Basic literature


Lass, R. (1994). *Old English: A historical linguistic companion*. Cambridge University Press.

Mallory, J. P., & Adams, D. Q. (2006). *The Oxford introduction to Proto-Indo-European and the Proto-Indo-European world*. Oxford University Press.

Mitchell, B., & Robinson, F. C. (2007). *A guide to Old English*. Blackwell Publishing.

Rychło, M. (2019). *Contrasting cognates in modern languages from a diachronic perspective*. Gdańsk University Press.

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| | Supplementary literature | Campbell, L. (1998). *Historical linguistics: An introduction*. Edinburgh University Press.<br><br>Frawley, W. J. (Ed.). (2003). *International encyclopedia of linguistics* (2nd ed.). Oxford University Press.<br><br>Gussmann, E. (2002). *Phonology: Analysis and theory*. Cambridge University Press.<br><br>Hoad, T. F. (Ed.). (1993). *The concise Oxford dictionary of English etymology*. Oxford University Press.<br><br>Millar, R. M. (2007). *Trasks historical linguistics* (2nd ed.). Arnold. (Revised edition of Trask, 1996)<br><br>Polański, K. (Ed.). (1999). *Encyklopedia językoznawstwa ogólnego*. Ossolineum.<br><br>Radford, A. (2009). *Analysing English sentences: A minimalist approach* . Cambridge University Press.<br><br>Reszkiewicz, A. (1996). *A diachronic grammar of Old English*. Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN.<br><br>Reszkiewicz, A. (1998). *Synchronic essentials of Old English*. Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN.<br><br>Ringe, D. (2008). *From Proto-Indo-European to Proto-Germanic* (A linguistic history of English: Volume I). Oxford University Press.<br><br>Rychło, M. (2012). An etymological comparison of English *fist* and Polish *pięść*: How they both descended from the PIE root for five. *Linguistica Silesiana*, 33, 1938.<br><br>Rychło, M. (2013). English *herd* and Polish *trzoda*: How the two words developed from one Proto-Indo-European root. *Acta Neophilologica*, 15(1), 155166.<br><br>Rychło, M. (2014a). Ślady prawa Grimma w angielszczyźnie w zestawieniu z polskimi wyrazami pokrewnymi: pie. *p > pgerm. f. Język Polski*, 94(3), 200211.<br><br>Rychło, M. (2014c). Przejście pie. *p w pgerm. f* utrwalone w polsko-angielskich wyrazach pokrewnych: praformy różniące się budową słowotwórczą oraz późniejsze zmiany modyfikujące skutki prawa Grimma. *Język Polski*, 94(5), 452462.<br><br>The Oxford English Dictionary. (n.d.). In J. A. Simpson (Ed.), *OED Online* (3rd ed., ongoing). Retrieved from https://www.oed.com<br><br>Trask, R. L. (2000). *The dictionary of historical and comparative linguistics*. Edinburgh University Press.<br><br>Watkins, C. (Ed.). (2000). *The American Heritage Dictionary of Indo-European roots* (2nd ed.). Houghton Mifflin Company. |
| | eResources addresses | |

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| Example issues/ example questions/ tasks being completed | Discuss the main types of language changes using selected Polish-English and English-German cognates as examples.<br><br>What phonological, morphological, and semantic processes occur during these changes?<br><br>In your answer, refer to the concepts of lexicalization, grammaticalization, and the role of analogy in language development. |
| Work placement | Not applicable |

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