

## EL2111 Historical Variation in English

### Tutorial No. 6

1. Respond to these statements by stating whether you agree with them (wholly, partially, not in the least), giving reasons for or elaborating on your position.

- (a) OE lexis was pretty basic and down-to-earth because OE speakers were boorish and illiterate.
- (b) The Scandinavians and the English lived peaceably with each other in Britain, and so there was a freer flow of lexis between them than between the English and the Celts (Britons).
- (c) The French brought by the Normans was a superior language to English then.
- (d) ME is different from OE because of the reduced inflections, and this was due to the Scandinavians and English simplifying their languages.
- (e) Shakespeare's English is closer to OE than PDE (present-day English).

2. Examine this passage from *Much Ado* (2.3) and answer the questions below. **[Note: please do not choose this passage for your project task.]**

<i>Prince.</i> It were good that Benedicke knew of it by	1	1 <b>were</b> (= would be) is in
some other, if she will not discover it.	2	the subjunctive form
<i>Clau.</i> To what end? he would but make a sport of	3	(often used for wishes
it, and torment the poore Lady worse.	4	or hypothetical
<i>Prin.</i> And he should, it were an almes to hang him,	5	situations) – we use that
shee's an excellent sweet Lady, and (out of all	6	less often in PDE.
suspition,) she is vertuous.	7	2 <b>discover</b> – reveal
<i>Claudio.</i> And she is exceeding wise.	8	
<i>Prince.</i> In euery thing, but in louing Benedicke.	9	15 <b>would</b> (as well as <i>will</i> )
<i>Leon.</i> O my Lord, wisdom and blood combating	10	can be used in the
in so tender a body, we haue ten proofes to	11	stronger sense of 'want';
one, that blood hath the victory, I am sorry for	12	here <i>would</i> could be
her, as I haue iust cause, being her Vncle, and	13	translated as <i>would</i>
her Guardian.	14	rather in PDE 15 <b>daft</b> is
<i>Prince.</i> I would shee had bestowed this dotage on	15	the pass tense form of
mee, I would haue daft all other respects, and	16	<i>daft</i> , meaning 'thrust
made her halfe my selfe: I pray you tell	17	aside'
Benedicke of it, and heare what he will say.	18	19 <b>were</b> is the
<i>Leon.</i> Were it good thinke you?	19	subjunctive form and
<i>Clau.</i> Hero thinkes surely she wil die, for she saies	20	the line could be
she will die, if hee loue her not, and shee will	21	translated, 'Would it be
die ere shee make her loue knowne, and she	22	good, do you think?'
will die if hee wooe her, rather than shee will	23	21 <b>loue</b> is in the sub-
bate one breath of her accustomed	24	junctive
crossnesse	25	
<i>Prince.</i> She doth well, if she should make tender of	26	
her loue, 'tis very possible hee'l scorne it, for	27	
the man (as you know all) hath a contemptible	28	
spirit.	29	
<i>Clau.</i> He is a very proper man.	30	
<i>Prin.</i> He hath indeed a good outward happines.	31	
<i>Clau.</i> 'Fore God, and in my minde very wise.	32	
<i>Prin.</i> He doth indeed shew some sparkes that are	33	
like wit.	34	
<i>Leon.</i> And I take him to be valiant.	35	

*Prin.* As Hector, I assure you, and in the managing 36  
of quarrels you may see hee is wise, for either 37  
hee auoydes them with great discretion, or 38  
vndertakes them with a Christian-like feare. 39

- In what sense does this passage represent English around 1600? Does it represent literary or poetic language? Does it represent conspiratorial language or informal chat or gossip?
- How consistent is the spelling and writing conventions in the passage? Are there spellings and conventions that are consistently different from present-day spellings?
- Are the inflexions used in the English in the passage similar to ours? (*Hint*: think about the verb form accompanying the second- and third-person singular.)
- Is the word order largely like that in PDE?
- Comment on the use of the second-person pronouns. How are *thou* and *you* used?
- Can the question form be different (think of 'think you?', line 19)?
- Can the way of forming negatives be different (think of 'if hee loue her not', line 21)?
- Is the lexis used largely core or non-core? (Look up the *OED* for some of their sources.) What is the effect of this selection and combination of vocabulary items?

3. Complete the yellow boxes below to show the verb forms and patterns for Early Modern English. Use only the verb *sing*.

#### PRESENT INDICATIVE (POSITIVE)

	Singular	Plural
First person	I sing	We sing
Second person	Thou	Ye/you
Third person	He/she/it or	They

#### PRESENT INDICATIVE (POSITIVE, WITH OPERATOR)

	Singular	Plural
First person	I do sing	We do sing
Second person	Thou	Ye/you
Third person	He/she/it or	They

#### PRESENT INDICATIVE (NEGATIVE)

	Without operator	With operator
3P-Sg		He does/doth not sing

#### PRESENT INTERROGATIVE

	Without operator	With operator
2P-Sg		Dost thou sing?

## IMPERATIVE

	Without operator	With operator
2P-Sg (without subject)		Do sing a song!
2P-Sg (with subject)	Sing thou a song!	

## PRESENT SUBJUNCTIVE (WITHOUT OPERATOR)

2P-Sg	If thou _____, I will be delighted.
3P-Sg	If she _____, I will be delighted.

## PRESENT SUBJUNCTIVE (OPERATOR)

2P-Sg	If thou _____, I will be delighted.
3P-Sg	If she _____, I will be delighted.