

A Historical Study of the English Language Based on Jeremy Smith's *Essentials of Early English*

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My Master's degree thesis focuses on Jeremy Smith's *Essentials of Early English*. I translated four chapters of this book into Japanese.

This book is designed as a practical handbook for students beginning the study of earlier stages of the English language. This book is divided into three parts: Part I, consisting of descriptive material; Part II, consisting of illustrative texts with brief accompanying notes; Part III, consisting of an Annotated Bibliography, an Old English Glossary and a Thematic Index.

The main topics of my study are Chapter 3, Chapter 4 and Chapter 5. They are respectively entitled Old English, Middle English and Early Modern English. These three periods of English are described as Early English in this book.

Each of these three Chapters is divided into five parts: Part I, pronunciation and spelling; Part II, syntax; Part III, paradigm; Part IV, lexicon; Part V, appendix.

The characteristics of each period's pronunciation and spelling are referred to as letters, vowels and consonants. In Old English, there are three letters that do not exist during Middle and Early Modern English; they are ash, thorn and edh. Vowels refers to short and long, monophthong and diphthong. The consonants are almost the same as in Present-Day English.

Syntax refers to noun phrases, verb phrases and sentence construction. The noun phrases of Old English involve number, case, agreement and gender. The gender disappeared during Middle English. Verb phrases involve many points. They are agreement, finiteness, simple verb phrase, complex verb phrase, person, tense, mood, aspect, voice, transitive and negation. And the impersonal construction and phrasal verbs appeared during Middle English.

Sentence structure involves word-order and clause. Generally speaking, there are three types of word-order: a. S P; b. S...P; c. P S. Clause is divided into coordinate clause and subjunctive clause; coordinate clause uses and, but; subordinate clause *if*, *because* to link two or more sentences. Besides, the

subordinate clause is also divided into noun clause, comparative clause and relative clause.

Paradigms refer to the inflexion of noun, pronoun, determiner, adjective, adverb, verb and numeral. Smith uses some typical words to illustrate the characteristics of the paradigms in each period.

Lexicon consists of borrowing and word-formation. The main loan-words borrowed into English are Latin, French and Old Norse. Word-formation involves two main means, they are compound incorporation

The last part is illustrative texts. Considering my future studies, I chose Milton's *Areopagitica* and the Preface to Spenser's *Sheapherd's Calender*. I translated the former into Japanese, and the latter into Present-Day English and Japanese.