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Linguocultural approach to the study of the Middle Ages literature as a means of understanding the discourse of the modern English language

Лінгвокультурний підхід до вивчення літератури середньовіччя як засіб розуміння дискурсу сучасної англійської мови

***Summary.** Studying Early Middle Ages literature through a linguistic and cultural approach can offer valuable insights into the evolution of the English language and its discourse. By examining the language, themes, and cultural context of texts from this period, scholars can better understand the ways in which English has developed over time. Analyzing the linguistic features of Early Middle Ages literature, such as vocabulary, grammar, and syntax, can shed light on how the language has changed and evolved. For example, studying Old English texts can reveal the origins of modern English words and structures, as well as the influences of other languages on English throughout history. Furthermore, exploring the cultural context of Early Middle Ages literature can provide a deeper understanding of the values, beliefs, and social structures of the time. By examining the themes and motifs present in these texts, researchers can gain insight into the mindset of people living during this period and how their worldview influenced the language they used. Overall, approaching the study of Early Middle Ages literature from a linguistic and cultural perspective can help us appreciate the rich history of the English language and gain a greater understanding of the discourse that has shaped modern English.*

A linguocultural approach integrates linguistic analysis with cultural studies to explore how language both reflects and shapes cultural identity, values, and social norms. This methodology is particularly effective for examining Middle Ages literature, as it allows researchers to contextualize linguistic features within the broader cultural milieu of the medieval period. By analyzing the language used in medieval texts, scholars can uncover the cultural assumptions, societal structures, and historical contexts that underpin these works.

Key words: literature, English literature of the Middle Ages, discourse, peculiarities of lexical and grammatical structures of the language, etymology of English words.

Анотація. Вивчення літератури раннього середньовіччя за допомогою лінгвістичного та культурологічного підходу може запропонувати цінне уявлення про еволюцію англійської мови та її дискурсу. Вивчаючи мову, теми та культурний контекст текстів цього періоду, науковці можуть краще зрозуміти шляхи розвитку англійської мови з часом. Аналіз мовних особливостей літератури раннього середньовіччя, таких як лексика, граматики та синтаксис, може пролити світло на те, як мова змінювалася та розвивалася. Наприклад, вивчення староанглійських текстів може виявити походження сучасних англійських слів і структур, а також вплив інших мов на англійську протягом історії. Крім того, вивчення культурного контексту літератури раннього середньовіччя може забезпечити глибше розуміння цінностей, вірувань і соціальних структур того часу. Вивчаючи теми та мотиви, присутні в цих текстах, дослідники можуть отримати уявлення про мислення людей, які жили в цей період, і про те, як їхній світогляд вплинув на мову, якою вони користувалися. Загалом, підхід до вивчення літератури раннього середньовіччя з лінгвістичної та культурної точки зору може допомогти нам оцінити багату історію англійської мови та отримати краще розуміння дискурсу, який сформував сучасну англійську мову.

Лінгвокультурологічний підхід поєднує лінгвістичний аналіз із культурологічними дослідженнями, щоб дослідити, як мова відображає та формує культурну ідентичність, цінності та соціальні норми. Ця методологія є особливо ефективною для дослідження середньовічної літератури, оскільки дозволяє дослідникам контекстуалізувати лінгвістичні особливості в ширшому культурному середовищі середньовіччя. Аналізуючи мову, яка використовується в середньовічних текстах, вчені можуть виявити культурні припущення, суспільні структури та історичні контексти, які лежать в основі цих творів.

Ключові слова: література, англійська література раннього середньовіччя, дискурс, періоди англійської літератури середньовіччя, порівняння лексичних та граматичних структур мови, етимологія слів англійської мови.

Introduction. The study of Middle Ages literature offers a rich and nuanced perspective on the historical and cultural evolution of the English language. By employing a linguocultural approach, scholars can delve into the intricate relationship between language and culture, revealing how medieval texts have shaped and continue to influence contemporary English discourse. This approach not only enhances our understanding of linguistic development but also provides valuable insights into the cultural and social dynamics that have persisted or transformed over time.

Understanding how medieval literature has influenced modern English discourse involves tracing the continuity and transformation of linguistic and cultural elements from the Middle Ages to the present. Themes of heroism, chivalry, morality, and social justice prevalent in medieval literature continue to resonate in contemporary literature, media, and everyday language. Additionally, the evolution of the English language

from its Old and Middle English forms to Modern English is marked by significant lexical, syntactical, and phonological changes that are rooted in medieval linguistic practices.

The primary objective of this study is to investigate how a linguocultural approach to Middle Ages literature can enhance our understanding of modern English discourse. By examining the linguistic features and cultural contexts of medieval texts, this research aims to: *trace linguistic evolution* (explore the development of the English language from Old and Middle English to Modern English, highlighting key linguistic changes and their cultural implications); *analyze cultural continuity* (identify and analyze cultural themes and narratives from medieval literature that have persisted in modern English discourse); *understand societal impact* (assess how medieval cultural and social norms reflected in literature continue to influence contemporary societal values and linguistic practices).

By integrating linguistic and cultural analysis, the linguocultural approach offers a comprehensive framework for studying Middle Ages literature and its impact on modern English discourse. This approach not only enriches our understanding of the historical development of the English language but also highlights the enduring cultural and societal influences of medieval literature. Through this study, we aim to illuminate the deep connections between past and present, demonstrating the relevance of medieval texts in shaping contemporary linguistic and cultural landscapes.

Methodology / Methods. Different research methods have been applied to accomplish the intended aim. The methodology of this study predetermined the following methods to be applied. The linguocultural approach to studying Middle Ages literature focuses on examining the relationship between language and culture to understand how medieval texts contribute to contemporary English discourse.

Here are some *methodologies* to investigate this topic: *Historical Linguistics* (trace the development of the English language from the Middle Ages to the present); *Cultural Studies* (understand the cultural contexts of medieval literature and how they resonate in contemporary discourse); *Discourse Analysis* (examine how medieval texts construct meaning and how these meanings are interpreted in modern contexts). Correspondingly, *Contextual Analysis* has proven in examining the situational, cultural, and discursive factors.

Here are some *methods* to investigate this topic: *Textual Analysis* (close reading of medieval texts to identify linguistic and cultural elements. Pay attention to vocabulary, syntax, and stylistic features. Example: Analyze Chaucer's use of Middle English in "The Canterbury Tales" to understand how his language reflects contemporary society and how it has influenced

modern English); *Archival Research* (examine historical documents, manuscripts, and other archival materials to contextualize medieval literature); *Sociolinguistic Surveys* (conduct surveys to understand contemporary perceptions of medieval language and culture. Example: Investigate how modern readers interpret the moral and ethical lessons in medieval literature and their relevance to today's society).

Results and Discussion. Literature encompasses a wide range of written works that are considered to have artistic or intellectual value. It includes various forms such as *novels, short stories, poetry, plays, essays, and even non-fiction works* that are creatively written or imbued with literary merit. Literature holds significant importance for people in various ways, influencing both individuals and societies profoundly. Here are several key reasons why literature is essential, namely: *reflection of human experience, cultural heritage and identity, critical thinking and analysis, imagination and creativity, empathy and compassion, language and communication skills, social and historical insights, entertainment and escapism.*

Literature captures the essence of human emotions, experiences, and complexities. It provides a mirror to human nature, allowing readers to empathize, understand, and relate to diverse characters and situations. Through literature, people can explore different perspectives and gain insights into the human condition. Literature preserves cultural heritage by documenting traditions, beliefs, and values passed down through generations. It helps individuals connect with their roots, understand their cultural identity, and appreciate the diversity of human cultures around the world. Engaging with literature encourages critical thinking skills. Readers analyze themes, symbols, and narratives, fostering a deeper understanding of complex ideas and societal issues. Literature challenges readers to question assumptions and consider multiple viewpoints. Literature sparks imagination and creativity by presenting imaginative worlds, scenarios, and ideas. It encourages readers to envision possibilities beyond their immediate reality and stimulates creativity in writing, art, and other forms of expression. Through literature, people can step into the shoes of others and develop empathy and compassion. Stories of triumph, struggle, love, and loss evoke emotional responses that promote understanding and solidarity among individuals from diverse backgrounds. Reading literature enhances language proficiency and communication skills. Exposure to well-crafted prose or poetry improves vocabulary, grammar, and writing style. It also cultivates the ability to articulate thoughts and ideas effectively. Literature provides insights into different historical periods and societal contexts. It documents the social norms, political climates, and cultural movements of its time, offering valuable

perspectives on the evolution of societies and civilizations. Literature entertains and provides a means of escapism from everyday life. Whether through suspenseful thrillers, romantic dramas, or fantastical adventures, literature offers readers a chance to unwind, relax, and experience a range of emotions.

In essence, literature serves as a timeless reservoir of knowledge, wisdom, and creativity that enriches individuals and societies alike. Its enduring relevance lies in its ability to inspire, educate, and connect people across time and cultures.

The intricate relationship between culture and literature has long fascinated scholars, as literature not only reflects cultural values, norms, and experiences but also shapes and influences them. The study of how culture impacts literature provides insights into the ways in which societies construct meaning, express identity, and navigate historical and social changes. This dynamic interplay is particularly evident in the study of Middle Ages literature, where the cultural context profoundly shapes the themes, narratives, and linguistic choices of the period. Understanding the influence of culture on literature from the Middle Ages is essential for comprehending the evolution of the English language and its modern discourse.

In our opinion, especially interesting and significant for our research are the scientific studies of Ukrainian and foreign scientists, which reveal the historical relationship between the stages of the formation of the English language and contribute to the understanding of linguistic realities, namely: *Robinson, Bonnie J., Getty, Laura J.* (British literature. Middle Ages to the Eighteenth Century and Neoclassicism) [15]; *Drabble, M.* (The Oxford companion to English literature) [9]; *Mackenzie, A. S.* (History of English Literature) [13]; *William Henry Hudson* (An outline history of English Literature); *Okhrimenko O. S.* (Life of the cities of England in the 11th-13th centuries) [6].

In the process of analyzing the vocabulary of literary works of the period of the English Middle Ages, Weakley's Etymological Dictionary of the Modern English Language, Kleins Comprehensive Etymological Dictionary of the English Language, Oxford English Dictionary (second edition), Barnhart's Etymological Dictionary, Etymological Dictionary of the English Language, Dictionary of American Slang" by Kipfer and Chapman were used [5].

During the Middle Ages in England, there were several interesting cultural peculiarities, hat found their reflection in famous examples of English literature of that period (Table 1).

These cultural peculiarities offer insights into the dynamics of life in medieval England and help us to understand the values that shaped society during that time. For example, speaking about the role of the Middle English literature, it should be noted that it played a crucial role in shaping Modern English in several fundamental ways, namely:

1. *Language Evolution*: During the Early Middle English period (approximately 1100–1350), English underwent significant changes due to influences from Norman French after the Norman Conquest of England in 1066. Early Middle English literature reflects this transition, incorporating vocabulary, grammar, and syntax from both Old English (Anglo-Saxon) and Norman French. This blending of linguistic elements laid the groundwork for the development of Modern English.

2. *Standardization and Grammar*: Early Middle English texts contributed to the standardization of English grammar and spelling conventions. Writers began to adopt more uniform rules for syntax and word order, gradually moving away from the inflectional system of Old English towards a more analytic structure.

3. *Literary Forms and Genres*: Early Middle English literature introduced new literary forms and genres that continue to influence

Table 1

Historical factors in England during the Middle Ages that had an impact on the country's culture and literature

Historical factors	Impact on the country's life
Feudalism	The society was organized under a feudal system where land was owned by the king or nobles who granted it to vassals in exchange for loyalty and military service
Chivalry	The code of chivalry emphasized virtues such as honor, bravery, loyalty, and courtesy among the nobility and knights
Gothic Architecture	The construction of cathedrals and castles in the Gothic style characterized the architectural achievements of the era, with towering spires and intricate stonework
Plague	The Black Death, a devastating pandemic that swept through Europe in the 14th century, had a profound impact on society, leading to widespread death and social upheaval
Guilds	Craftsmen and merchants organized themselves into guilds to protect their interests, regulate trade, and ensure quality production
Medieval Fairs	Markets and fairs were important social and economic events, where people gathered to buy and sell goods, as well as to socialize and entertain themselves

modern literary traditions. This period saw the emergence of romances, allegories, religious literature, and secular poetry, which provided models for later English writers.

4. *Cultural and Historical Context*: Literature from this period reflects the social, political, and religious changes in England and Europe. Works such as “The Canterbury Tales” by Geoffrey Chaucer and religious texts like the Wycliffe Bible contributed to the dissemination of English language and culture, fostering a sense of national identity.

5. *Vocabulary Enrichment*: Early Middle English literature expanded the vocabulary of the English language through borrowings from French, Latin, and other languages. Many words and expressions introduced during this period are still in use today, contributing to the richness and flexibility of Modern English.

6. *Literary Legacy*: Writers like Chaucer and Langland established literary traditions and conventions that shaped subsequent English literature. Their works not only influenced later authors but also contributed to the development of English as a literary language capable of expressing complex ideas and emotions.

Some well-known philologists who have investigated early Middle English literature include John Ronald Reuel Tolkien, George Kane, and Peter S. Baker.

Scientist J. R. R. Tolkien who investigated early Middle English literature was a professional philologist, a scholar of comparative and historical linguistics. He was especially familiar with Old English and related languages. As a philologist, J.R.R. Tolkien was deeply interested in the languages and literature of medieval England, and his study of Old and Middle English texts influenced his creation of the languages and history of Middle-earth in his famous works such as *The Lord of the Rings*. Tolkien's academic research also delved into topics such as *Beowulf*, *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, and the Alliterative Revival in Middle English poetry [12, pp. 47-61]. George Kane is known for his scholarship on medieval English drama, while Peter S. Baker has contributed to the study of Middle English romance literature.

In summary, the Early Middle English literature played a pivotal role in the evolution of the English language from its Old English roots to the foundation of Modern English. It provided a bridge between linguistic traditions, enriched vocabulary, standardized grammar, and established literary forms that continue to resonate in English literature and language today and had an impact on the functioning of the discourse of the modern English language.

Discourse (from the Latin *discursus*) is a subject of communicative linguistics. As a term, it was introduced into scientific circulation by

the German philosopher Y. Habermas as “a form of communication determined by argumentation, a form in which claims of significance, which have become problematic, become the topic of discussion” [2, p. 47]. According to Ukrainian scientists O. M. Kravchenko, V. S. Lukianets, L. V. Ozadovska it is the unity of speech practice (dialogue, polylogue, interaction between its participants) and the context (environment, place, topos) of its deployment, meeting and interaction of its participants. Analyzing this phenomenon, we come to the conclusion that “within the framework of discourse analysis, any discourse is both a linguistic and a socio-cultural phenomenon. Such a discourse arises and evolves in society, culture, the life world of a person; it is able not only to feel the influence of the socio-cultural environment on itself, but also to exert a reverse active influence on it. This influence of discourse on society can be both positive and negative, and even harmful for society itself” [3, p. 26].

Discourse generally refers to a form of communication that involves extended verbal or written expression on a particular topic. It's not just about talking or writing but about the structured way people create meaning through language in specific contexts. In essence, discourse is a fundamental aspect of human communication that encompasses both the linguistic and social dimensions of language use. It's about how we use language to create, negotiate, and convey meaning within specific contexts and social frameworks.

The Middle Ages English literature, despite its linguistic differences from Modern English, played a fundamental role in the development of the language we use today. It can be broadly divided into several periods, each characterized by distinct literary developments and cultural influences. Here are the main periods:

1. OLD ENGLISH (ANGLO-SAXON) PERIOD (c. 450-1066)

Key Characteristics: Literature from this period was written in Old English and is heavily influenced by the oral tradition, with strong themes of heroism, fate, and the supernatural. The literature often reflects the harsh and turbulent life of the time. *Notable Works:* “Beowulf,” “The Wanderer,” “The Seafarer,” “The Dream of the Rood,” “The Battle of Maldon.”

2. ANGLO-NORMAN PERIOD (1066-1154)

Key Characteristics: Following the Norman Conquest, English literature was heavily influenced by French culture and language. This period saw the introduction of chivalric romance and the development of courtly literature. *Notable Works:* “The Owl and the Nightingale,” works by Marie de France (though she wrote in French, her influence was significant).

3. MIDDLE ENGLISH PERIOD (1154-1485)

Key Characteristics: During this period, Middle English emerged as the dominant literary language. There was a diversification of genres, including romance, allegory, dream vision, and religious and moral treatises. Literature became more accessible, reflecting a broader range of social and personal themes.

Notable Works:

Early Middle English (1154-1300): “Ormulum,” “Ancrene Wisse.”

High Middle English (1300-1400): Works of the Pearl Poet (“Sir Gawain and the Green Knight,” “Pearl”), “The Vision of Piers Plowman” by William Langland.

Late Middle English (1400-1485): “The Canterbury Tales” by Geoffrey Chaucer, “Le Morte d’Arthur” by Thomas Malory, “The Book of Margery Kempe,” “Everyman” (morality play).

4. TRANSITION TO THE RENAISSANCE (late 15th century)

Key Characteristics: This transitional period saw the influence of the Renaissance beginning to take hold, marked by a revival of classical learning and humanism. The printing press’s invention in 1476 by William Caxton significantly impacted literature, making texts more widely available and standardizing the English language. *Notable Works:* Continued popularity and production of works like “Le Morte d’Arthur,” early printed editions of Middle English literature by William Caxton.

These periods reflect the evolution of the English language and literary forms, influenced by historical events such as the Norman Conquest and the introduction of the printing press, as well as cultural and social changes in medieval England.

Here are several key ways in which English literature contributed to the evolution of Modern English: *preservation of language roots* (Old English, also known as Anglo-Saxon, preserved the linguistic roots of English. It was heavily influenced by Germanic languages and Anglo-Saxon culture. The texts, such as “Beowulf” and the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, provide insights into vocabulary, grammar, and syntax that form the foundation of the English language); *vocabulary enrichment* (Old English literature introduced a wealth of vocabulary that remains in use today. Words related to everyday life, nature, kinship, and societal structures were documented in these texts, contributing to the richness and versatility of the English lexicon); *grammar and syntax* (Old English texts helped establish grammatical rules and syntactic patterns that laid the groundwork for Modern English. While Old English had a more complex inflectional system (e.g., noun declensions, verb conjugations), these gradually simplified over time, influenced by Norman French and Latin, leading to the grammatical structures we recognize today); *literary*

forms and genres (Old English literature introduced various literary forms and genres that shaped later English literature. For instance, “Beowulf” is an epic poem that set standards for heroic storytelling and themes of honor, fate, and loyalty that resonate in later literary works); *cultural and historical insights* (Old English literature provides valuable insights into the culture, society, beliefs, and worldview of early Anglo-Saxon England. These texts document historical events, religious practices (such as in Bede’s “Ecclesiastical History of the English People”), and societal norms, enriching our understanding of medieval English life); *literary legacy* (Many Old English texts were preserved and copied by monks and scholars, ensuring their survival through centuries of political and cultural change. This continuity allowed later generations to study and draw inspiration from these foundational works, influencing the development of English literature and language).

In summary, Old English literature played a crucial role in shaping the development of Modern English by preserving linguistic roots, enriching vocabulary, establishing grammatical norms, introducing literary forms, and providing cultural and historical insights. It represents a foundational phase in the evolution of English language and literature, bridging the gap between its Germanic origins and its later Renaissance and contemporary forms. There are a few common words you will likely encounter in various Middle English texts (Table 2) [4].

The early Middle Ages, also known as the Dark Ages or the Early Medieval period, spans from the 5th to the late 10th century. This period saw the production of several important works of English literature, many of which have had a lasting impact on the literary canon. Here are some of the most significant works (Table 3).

These works represent the rich tapestry of early English literature, combining elements of heroism, history, religion, and poetry. They

Table 2

Basic Middle English Words list with their meanings in Modern English

Middle English word	Modern English word	Middle English word	Modern English word
Al be that	Although	Ich	I
Anon	At once	Lite	Little
Bet	Better	Moot	Must; ought to;
Can	Be able	Nat	Not
Coy	Quiet	Rede	Advise; read
Echo	Each one	Shaltow	You shall
Everich	Every; every one	Thilke	This; that
Han	Have	Ynogh	Enough

Table 3

Notable Works	Key Characteristics
Beowulf	Date: Between the 8th and early 11th centuries Description: This Old English epic poem is one of the most important works of Anglo-Saxon literature. It tells the story of the hero Beowulf, who battles the monster Grendel, Grendel's mother, and a dragon. The poem explores themes of heroism, fate, and the struggle between good and evil.
The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle	Date: Late 9th century onwards Description: A collection of annals chronicling the history of the Anglo-Saxons. It was originally compiled on the orders of King Alfred the Great and continued for several centuries. The Chronicle is a valuable source of information on early English history and provides insights into the culture and events of the time.
The Venerable Bede's "Ecclesiastical History of the English People"	Date: Completed in 731 Description: Written in Latin, this work by Bede, a monk at the Northumbrian monastery of Saint Peter, provides a comprehensive history of the Christianization of England. It is one of the most important sources for early English history and has been crucial in shaping our understanding of the period.
"The Dream of the Rood"	Date: Likely composed in the 8th century Description: An Old English Christian poem, "The Dream of the Rood" is one of the earliest dream poems in English literature. It presents a vision of the cross on which Christ was crucified, personified and speaking to the dreamer. The poem is notable for its blend of Christian and heroic imagery.
"Caedmon's Hymn"	Date: Composed between 658 and 680 Description: Attributed to Caedmon, a lay brother at the monastery of Whitby, this is the oldest surviving example of Old English poetry. It is a short hymn of praise to God, reflecting the influence of Christianity on early English literature.
"The Wanderer" and "The Seafarer"	Date: 10th century (preserved in the Exeter Book, but possibly composed earlier) Description: These are elegiac poems that reflect on themes of loss, exile, and the human condition. Both are considered masterpieces of Old English poetry, capturing the melancholy and introspective spirit of the time.
"The Battle of Maldon"	Date: 10th century Description: This Old English poem recounts the Battle of Maldon of 991, where Anglo-Saxon forces fought against Viking invaders. The poem is notable for its depiction of heroism and loyalty in the face of defeat.

provide valuable insights into the culture, values, and beliefs of the early medieval period in England.

The Middle Ages in English literature span roughly from the 11th to the 15th century, and this period is marked by a variety of influential works that have shaped English literary tradition. Here are some of the most important works from this era:

Notable Works	Key Characteristics
Geoffrey Chaucer's "The Canterbury Tales"	Date: Late 14th century Description: A collection of stories told by a group of pilgrims traveling to Canterbury. The tales are written in Middle English and cover a wide range of genres and themes, from romance and chivalry to satire and morality. Chaucer's work is celebrated for its vivid characters, social commentary, and innovative use of the English vernacular.
William Langland's "Piers Plowman"	Date: Late 14th century Description: An allegorical narrative poem that explores themes of religion, morality, and social justice. It follows the protagonist, Piers, in a series of dream visions that critique contemporary society and the Church.
Sir Gawain and the Green Knight	Date: Late 14th century Description: An Arthurian romance written in Middle English alliterative verse. The poem tells the story of Sir Gawain, a knight of King Arthur's Round Table, and his quest to uphold his honor by facing the mysterious Green Knight.
The Pearl Poet's Works	Date: Late 14th century Description: This anonymous poet is credited with four significant Middle English poems: "Pearl," "Cleanness," "Patience," and "Sir Gawain and the Green Knight." These works are notable for their rich use of allegory and symbolism.
Thomas Malory's "Le Morte d'Arthur"	Date: 1485 Description: A prose compilation of the legends of King Arthur and his knights. Malory's work is one of the most famous and comprehensive accounts of Arthurian legend and has been a significant influence on later interpretations of the myth.
"The Owl and the Nightingale"	Date: Late 12th or early 13th century Description: A Middle English debate poem that features a lively argument between an owl and a nightingale. The poem explores themes of aesthetics, morality, and the nature of poetry.
"The Ancrene Wisse"	Date: Early 13th century Description: A spiritual guide for anchoresses, women who chose to live a solitary life of religious devotion. Written in Middle English prose, it provides insights into the spiritual practices and daily life of the medieval anchorite.
"The Vision of Piers Plowman" by William Langland	Date: Late 14th century Description: An allegorical narrative poem that explores the quest for a true Christian life. It critiques the corruption of the Church and society and is notable for its vivid dream visions.
"The Book of Margery Kempe"	Date: Early 15th century Description: Considered the first autobiography in English, this work recounts the spiritual journey and mystical experiences of Margery Kempe, a medieval English mystic. It offers a unique perspective on medieval spirituality and the role of women in religious life.
"Everyman"	Date: Late 15th century Description: A morality play that allegorizes the journey of Everyman, who represents humanity, as he seeks salvation. It explores themes of death, judgment, and the necessity of good deeds for salvation.

These works reflect the diverse and rich literary output of the Middle Ages in England, encompassing a range of genres, themes, and styles. They provide valuable insights into the culture, beliefs, and social issues of medieval society.

Scientist J. Betts comprehensively analyzed the vocabulary of literary works of the Middle Ages [7]. “The Canterbury Tales” by Geoffrey Chaucer is a collection of stories written in Middle English, completed around 1400. The main plot revolves around a group of pilgrims who are traveling together from Southwark to the shrine of Saint Thomas Becket at Canterbury Cathedral. They agree to participate in a storytelling contest to pass the time during their journey, with each pilgrim telling two tales on the way to Canterbury and two more on the way back. The frame narrative of “The Canterbury Tales” sets up the pilgrimage as a backdrop for the diverse group of pilgrims to share stories that reflect their individual personalities, social status, and worldview. Chaucer provides vivid descriptions of each pilgrim, ranging from noblemen and clergy to commoners and professionals, creating a microcosm of medieval English society. The tales themselves vary widely in genre, style, and theme, showcasing Chaucer’s skill in adapting different literary traditions and narrative voices. They include *romances*, *fabliaux (humorous tales)*, *allegories*, *moral tales*, and even a few *prose tales*. Each tale offers insights into the characters telling them and often comments on broader societal issues or moral dilemmas of the time. The Canterbury Tales uses verse and prose to describe the journey of pilgrims to the Canterbury Cathedral. There are 24 stories in all, including “The Knight’s Tale” and “The Wife of Bath’s Tale.” Scientist J. Betts emphasizes that before diving into “The Canterbury Tales” and “Sir Gawain and the Green Knight,” it is necessary to review a few Middle English vocabulary words you might come across (Table 4) [4].

Table 4

The Middle English Words taken from “The Canterbury Tales” and their meanings in Modern English

Middle English word	Modern English word	Middle English word	Modern English word
Array	Arrangement	Gentle	Noble
Bane	Destruction	Leaf	Dear
Boote	Remedy	Met	Food
Certeyn	Certain	Ny	Near
Deel	Part	Routh	Pity
Devyse	Device	Siker	Trusty
Fetis	Well made	Verray	True

“The transformation of the English language had some very distinct leaps. Coming into existence in about the 5th century, Old English came from the West Germanic language, varied by region and used different letters. In Middle English, beginning around the 12th century, you start to see the formation of modern English. While spelling was not standardized, word order starts to take place in the writing [4].”

It should be especially noted that the grammar of Middle English, which was spoken during the Middle Ages, differs significantly from modern English grammar too. However, some features of Middle English grammar have carried over into modern English. Some examples of Middle English grammar that have persisted in modern language include:

- *Verb conjugation*: Middle English had a more complex system of verb endings to indicate tense, person, and number. While modern English has simplified this system, some remnants such as "be" (am, are, is) and "do" (does, did) remain.

- *Pronouns*: Middle English had distinct pronouns for singular and plural use, including "thou" (singular informal), "ye" (plural informal), and "you" (formal plural). Though "thou" has largely fallen out of use, its influence can still be seen in some dialects.

- *Word order*: Middle English had a more flexible word order compared to modern English, which follows a more fixed subject-verb-object structure. This flexibility is evident in phrases like "She loved he dear" (Middle English) compared to "She loved him dearly" (Modern English).

- *Case marking*: Middle English featured more noun and pronoun inflections to indicate grammatical case (*nominative, accusative, genitive, dative*). Modern English has largely lost these distinctions, except for pronouns like "he/him" and "she/her."

- *Negation*: Middle English used double negatives for emphasis, a feature that is considered incorrect in standard modern English but remains in non-standard varieties like African American English ("I don't need none").

While these examples show some remnants of Middle English grammar in modern language, overall, the grammar of Middle English has evolved significantly to become the simplified and standardized form of English spoken today. Overall, while the grammar of Middle English may seem complex and different compared to modern English, there are some similarities and influences that can still be observed in the way we use language today.

Conclusions. To conclude, the linguistic and cultural approach to studying The Middle Ages literature offers a unique and enriching pathway to understanding the discourse of the modern English language.

By examining the texts, linguistic structures, and cultural contexts of that period, we gain insights into the evolution of the language and the enduring influence of early literary traditions on contemporary discourse. This approach highlights the continuity and transformation of linguistic features over centuries, illustrating how foundational elements of early English have persisted or adapted in modern usage. It also reveals the deep cultural and historical roots of many contemporary English expressions, idioms, and rhetorical styles, providing a richer appreciation of the language's complexity and diversity.

Furthermore, the interplay between language and culture in early medieval texts helps to contextualize modern English within a broader historical framework. Understanding the socio-political and cultural milieu of the Early Middle Ages allows us to better grasp the underlying themes and values that continue to resonate in modern literature and communication.

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