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THE FORMATION AND HISTORY OF THE VERB BĒON IN OLD ENGLISH

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Abstract.

The Old English verb *bēon* significantly influenced the development of the modern English forms *be* and *been*. It was one of several athematic verbs, known for their irregular conjugation patterns due to their ancient Indo-European roots. In Old English, *bēon* conveyed the idea of a permanent or habitual state of being, while *wesan* typically referred to more temporary conditions. Over time, this distinction faded in Middle and Modern English, although traces of it remain in the Germanic languages. For instance, in contemporary German, the verb *sein* reflects aspects of both *bēon* and *wesan*, even though *bēon* no longer exists in modern German in its original form. Alongside *bēon* and *wesan*, other athematic verbs like *dōn* (to do) and *willan* (to want) were also present in Old English, exhibiting similar irregularities rooted in Indo-European languages. These verbs later evolved into their modern English equivalents, such as *to do* and *to will*, with cognates in German like *tun* and *wollen*.

Keywords:

bēon and wesān, The Old English, suppletive verbs, athematic verb, wās and wære.

INTRODUCTION

The verb *bēon* serves as an intriguing example of how historical linguistic evolution has shaped modern English grammar, particularly in the development of auxiliary verbs.

E.A. Matveeva claims that verbs created through a variety of alterations, or suppletive verbs, were the Old English language's grammatical forms. This group of verbs comprises "*bēon*" (to be), "*willan*" (to want), "*dōn*" (to do), "*ġeān*" (to go), and so on. In the present tense, the single persons are *eom*, *beo*; *eart*, *bist*; there were such as *is*, *bið*. For instance, the conjugation of the word "*bēon*" is as follows. Simultaneously, you are displayed in vain for numerous folks.

Furthermore, verbs *wās* ; *wære* ; *wās* are used for singular individuals in the past tense, whereas verbs *wæron*, and *kabe* are used for multiple persons. For present tense single (3 persons) individuals, use *Sie*, *beo*; for plural persons, use *Sien*, *beon*.

Using *Sien wæren* as an example, the singular 1/2/3 persons people had *Sie wære* in the past tense, whereas the plural (1, 2, 3) persons had | [39].

As for "*wesan/bēon*" and "*weorþan*" in Old English, according to A. Koldoshev, he formed the past tense of the adjective using passive verbs. Say, "*þǣr uaes sē Ēurfana Ēenumen*" to indicate that the flag was seized. Alternately: "*hē wearþ ofslæzen*" - he was killed, he was killed [41].

The latter years of the Old English era saw the emergence of analytical forms for the perfect, future tense, as well as passive. These forms were still regarded as free syntactic combination at this time while they were going through the grammaticalization process [62] .

The evolution of suppletive verbs

The primary characteristic of suppletive verbs, according to A. Koldoshev, is that they are constructed from many stems. The verb "to be" in Old English had two distinct infinitive forms: *bēon* and *wesan*. Moreover, a suppletive verb, "*gān*" (now "to go"), was used [18].

The primary characteristic of complementarity, based on Barkhudarov L.S. and D. A. Shtel, is that the word's many grammatical forms are derived from unrelated or distinct roots. This isn't the same as the standard affixation and inflection used to other verbs. The English verb to be, which has several root forms, is a prime illustration of this.

The verb "be" is used today; in this perspective, was, were, and been are stated. In this case, suppletiveness is only evident in past tense forms; affixation and vowel alternation are used to generate adjective forms of the II degree. The suppletive verb is defined here in a way that explains how its forms may be used to combine distinct words: the Old English verb *bēon* is the source of the forms be and been, while the verb *wesan* is the source of the forms was and were [128].

Jana Chamonikolasová notes that the distinction between thematic and athematic verbs in Old English is demonstrated in a manner similar to that of nouns. That is, it is appended to the end of theme verbs (e.g., "*ber-e-me*" is a Czech verb) and appended to the proper stem of athematic verbs (e.g., "*js-me*" is a Czech verb). The Old English verb *bēon* (or *bīon*) is the source of the forms be and been. The principal meanings of this root were presence, permanence, and general status. It is a common root among the Germanic languages, and other Germanic languages also include remnants of the ancient root.

To be exact, the verb "*sein*" (to be) in the contemporary German language also derives from this root. There were distinct roots for the forms that were and were. Old English verb *wesan* (or *wēsan*), which is also a past tense, is the source of these variants. The verb "*wesan*" in Old English denoted long-term or continuous existence. The additional verb boils down to the idea that roots from several places eventually combine to generate a single, common verb. The forms be, was, were, and actually did not originate from the same place; rather, they came together along the course of historical evolution. Athematic verbs and nouns are few in number and historically come before theme ones. The four athematic verbs in Old English were *bēon/wesan* ('to be'), *dōn* ('to do'), and *willan* ('to want') [35] .

The declensions of Old English athematic verbs beon and wesan are included in these below:

Present	Tense	(Indicative	Mood)
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For the present tense, in the indicative mood, the forms are as follows:

- 1st person singular: *eom* or *beo*
 - 2nd person singular: *eart* or *bist*
 - 3rd person singular: *is* or *biþ*
- In the plural, we see the forms: *sind*, *sint*, *sinðon*, *earon*, or *bēoþ*.

Present	Tense	(Subjunctive	Mood)
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In the subjunctive mood, for the singular, we have *siē* or *sȳ*, and *bēð*.
In the plural: *siēn* or *beōn*.

Imperative	Mood
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For commands (imperative mood):

- Singular: unspecified (-x).
- Plural: unspecified (-x), or *bēð*, *bēop*.

Past	Tense	(Indicative	Mood)
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In the past tense indicative, the forms are:

- 1st person singular: *wæs*.
 - 2nd person singular: *wêre*.
 - 3rd person singular: *wês*.
- The plural: *wēron*.

Past	Tense	(Subjunctive	Mood)
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For the past subjunctive, we have:

- Singular: *wêre*.
- Plural: *wēren*.

Participles

- Present participle: *wesende*, *beōnde*.
- Past participle: *(ġe)wesen*.

However, Chamonikolasová, Jana notes that the Old English verbs *bēon* and *wesan*, which are the four primary roots of the Indo-European language (*bheu-*, *es-*, split into *ues-*, and *or-*), are the source of the modern English verb "to be." Other Indo-European languages have them as well. Below are their details: German: *bin*, *bist/ist*, *sind/war*, *gewesen*; English: *be*, *been/is/was*, *were/are*; Indo-European languages: *bheu/es/ues/or* [36].

CONCLUSION

It is therefore possible to classify the verb "to be" as an Old English suppletive verb, meaning that it is composed of many ancient primary stems. Examples of verb relationships include "was" and "were" to the verb *wesan*, and "be" and "been" to the Old English word *bēon*. This indicates how the language has evolved historically and how it hasn't altered since prehistoric times.

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