YevchenkoVira, Ph. D.
On Some Aspects of Language Development in Anglo-Saxon England

The aim of the article is to show the development of the main social functions of the language in Anglo-Saxon England in the sociolinguistic context of the formation of the Anglo-Saxon speech communitywith the focus on the rise of the written form of the language and to define the main tendencies in the evolution of the Anglo-Saxon territorial dialects.

By general assumption the origins of English can be found in what was a historical and probably a sociolinguistic phenomenon: the invasion of Britain in the 5th–6th centuries by Germanic tribes who brought with them their culture and customs, their own languages, whereas the English language of which there is factual evidence starts with the first written records in the vernacular, that are dated by the 7th–8th centuries and that are the result and the manifestation of the development of writing in the Anglo-Saxon speech communities.

The migration of the Germanic tribes of the Angles, the Saxons, the Jutes and presumably the Frisians from the continent to Britain in the second half of the 5th century and their forcible settlement thereinitiated a long historical and sociolinguistic process of the evolvement of the English language. That migration of Germanic peoples to the island is usually admitted to have been slow and it spread over several generations. At first the newcomers arrived in small groups which had no centralized political organization, but they were socially united by strong bonds of kinship. Later Germanic settlers came in large numbers, thoughthis was not a complete, total movement of the Angles, the Saxons, the Jutes or the Frisians to Britain, as sometimes larger portions of the communities stayed behind on the continent, although the Angles, for instance, seem to have moved en masse.The new invaders who brought with them their own social organization and social habits came from different tribal groups and, though they were ethnically mixed and sometimes different in their ethnic character and in their specific social habits,they were united by the common background andby their Germanic identity, belonging to the same broad culture as southern Scandinavia, North or North-West Germany, northern France [1:55; 2:41; 3:24-25, 32]. These Germanic tribes spoke cognate Germanic tribal dialects with certain differences, though sometimes levelled by constant oral communication.

At the first stage of the settlement after many battle conflicts with the Celts and between themselves the Germanic newcomers began to form large communities. For mutual protection various tribes had to be combined to produce small kingdoms. The grouping of the tribes was not stable and permanent, since they were sometimes united by a vigorous leader only for a short period of time. [4:40].By the start of the 7th century, as a result of territorial enlargement, different types of confederation, strong ethnic admixtures, colonization movement, consolidation for military or economic expansion, several fairly stable early feudal kingdoms are thought to have been formed on the territories: East Anglia (predominantly settled by the Angles), Kent (presumably settled mostly by the Jutes), Sussex, Essex, Wessex (predominantly settled by the Saxons), Mercia and Northumbria (presumably settled mostly by the Angles). Nowhere were these historic kingdoms ethnically completely homogeneous in the time of their development on the territory of the island as they were formed there, and all the areas were marked by definite regional peculiarities[3:31-32]. At the earliest period the territory of Kent, for instance, was historically divided between two kingdoms made by at least two different Germanic peoples: Kent (Jutes) and Sussex (South Saxons), the latter of which in the 8th century came under authority of Mercia, the king of which, the powerful

leader Offa (ruled 757-796), imposed his rule over it. Thereafter the kingdom of Sussex ceased to exist in any formal sense [5:231]. In the basin of the river Humber the kingdoms of Deira and of Lindsey developed in early days, of which the former was later united with the former British kingdom of Bernica into Northumbria, and the latter was incorporated for some time into Mercia, and for some time into Northumbria [5:247, 266-269].

It is generally believed that after their coming to Britain the new settlers got exposed to a new geographical, social, political and ethnic environment. The Germanic communities in Britain faced the necessity of building up new social, political relations, the need of developing a new social structure of organization and new economic ways, the exigency of forming new types of colonization to suit their social, agrarian and economic needs.And they made new, sometimes forcible, settlements on new lands, as the primary aim of the migration was to find and cultivate new lands. With the time, sea passage and their isolated development on the island of Great Britain weakened their ethnic and social ties with the continental Germans and the Germanic tribal groups in Britain became more isolated from their continental homeland.

The Germanic incomers were mostly illiterate people with a strong oral literary epic tradition, and social functions of the language in these early social and political organizations were largely confined to oral communication.Theycontinued to speak their own tribal dialects which later, in a new environment, diverged from each other anddeveloped into Old English territorial dialects, a ratherlong and relatively isolated existence of which was encouraged by the lack of political unity. Thus, for instance, the presenceoftwo different kingdoms, Mercia and Northumbria, in the latter 7th century encouraged the existence of two different dialects on the territories settled by the Angles: Mercian and Northumbrian. The absence of a written form of language accelerated language changes, especially in the sound system and morphology[6:397]. Eventually these language changes and the period ofisolation from the continental tribal dialects of the Angles, the Saxons and the Jutesmade the territorial dialects of the new settlers more distinct from their ancestral continental forms. The four main Old English (Anglo-Saxon) dialects,which are represented by Old English written texts, thus,arose on the basis of the tribal dialects of the Germanic newcomersand were their continuation in the Germanic character, much influenced by distance, geographical location and by the time of dominance:Northumbrian, Mercian, Kentish and West-Saxon. The exact linguistic boundaries of the dialects are very difficult to set and it is not quite clear how closely they corresponded withthe political division into kingdoms and their borders.

The first sociolinguistic contacts of the Germanic settlers with other ethnic groups who lived in the island of Great Britain occurred at the very moment of their colonization of Britain as the most of the native population were Celtic-speaking people.Modern historians are inclined to admit a more complicated pattern of interrelationship between the native peoples (Britons, Picts, Irish people who came from Ireland to the west-south of Scotland) and the incomers, though the general picture of "shattered societies", the decline in thenative population in the early days of settlement, depopulation of some regions, ruin and devastation are usually admitted bythe majority of scholars[1:59; 2:40-42; 3:10, 7:26]. Almost everywhere the native population suffered the extremity of violence and hardships usually inflicted by invaders.In the early stages of the invasion many of the Britons were made slaves or subdued, slaughtered or killed in fighting; many had to flee westwards, to the mountainous parts of Wales; many fled to Brittany in Gaul; some suffered from epidemic diseases[7:26-27; 3:10; 1:57-58]. But still, there is evidence that in someparts, especially in theNorth, the population contained substantial portions of the Britons who were probably assimilated by the newcomers, or coexisted with the Germanic-speaking communities. [1:57-59]Prof.Loyn, a prominent British historian, writes in his book "Anglo-Saxon England and the Norman Conquest": But even in the most heavily Germanizedareas there are traces, at times strong, of native inhabitants who survived and came to terms, attracted valleywards by force or by superior agricultural techniques, or living possibly for generations in remote enclaves in forest, fen or hill [3:10]. In the Westand in the North, a long distance and a bad, difficult access of the new territories

to which the native inhabitants had withdrawnencouraged a relatively long political independence of the British kingdoms on the island in which Christianity survived and with it some traces of Roman culture.Still, in later centuries close political, cultural or commercial ties between the Anglo-Saxons and Celtic kingdoms were sometimes established, as, forexample,close cultural links existed between the Anglo-Saxon kingdom of Northumbria and the Irish kingdoms both in Northern Britain and in Ireland itself [2:39].

Scholars areusually unanimous in admitting inconsiderable effects of interrelations of cultures between the Britons and the Germanicincomers. A generally accepted approach is that the relationship between the Anglo-Saxon and British cultures, between the colonists and colonized was permanently antagonistic [2:39-40]. Margaret Schlauch, a Polish scholar, writes that the culture of the invaders "developed independently, having no contact with, or stimulus from, the Romanized Celts. There is no evidence, either, that the natives and provincials made any attempt to Christianize the Anglo-Saxons" [8:6].Really, there are no evident signs of transmission of culture from the Romanized Britons, a part of which were already Christians, to the Germanic migrants who are believed to have been illiterate heathen peoples, less affected by the Roman civilization.Although the Celtic influence is well felt in places-names, especially in the river-names, amazingly, very few Celtic words of the common vocabulary entered the Old English lexis[1:59; 3:6; 9:5; 10:24;11:74; 12:18; 6:391].

Different answers to the question of an extremely slight influence of the British tongues on Old Englishare given by scholars. The most popular explanation isthatthe character of the relations between the two peoples was not such as to bring about any considerable influence on English life or on English speech, as the surviving Celts were a submerged race and they did not possess a superior culture, something valuable to give to the Anglo-Saxons [11:75; 13:32; 14:134; 15:100].Some scholars pay more attention to the lack of social motivation for "the ruling classes to learn the language of the inferior natives. It would never be fashionable for them to show an acquisition with that despised tongue by using now and then a Keltic word" writes O. Jerspersen, thedistinguished Danish scholar of English [16: 36]. This idea canpossibly be found implicit in the observation made byProf. H. R. Loyn whosays that marriages between the newcomers and women speaking a British tongue were not of widespread or frequent occurrence so that children could take to their mother's tongue [3:14].Some scholars think that not only the invaders were contemptuous towards the Britons.The Venerable Bede, the first English historian who lived in the 8th century, writesthat "it is the habit of the Britons to despise the faith and religion of the English and not to cooperate with them in anything more than with the heathen" (cited by H. Kearney) [2:39-40].A very different interpretation is that the newcomersfelt themselves not superior but *inferior* to a people who had been under Roman rule for four centuries and had been more civilized, and they wanted to havenothing to do with the Romano-Celtic heritage [10:24]. The prominent Englishscholar, Henry Sweet, finds the explanation to the problem in the level of the Romanized influence on the Celts, "Very few words came into OE, because the Britons themselves were to a great extent Romanized,especially the inhabitants of the cities, who were mainly the descendantsof the Roman legionary soldiers" [17:215].

It may also be said thatscarce language evidence of cultural, religious and diverse social contacts of the two people seems to be in itself a vivid testimony to different sociolinguistic priorities of the both peoples. The disregard and lack of interest shown by the Germanic invaders may well be accounted for not only by the difference in the social status of the colonists and the colonized, but also by the differences in their mentality: both had been accustomed to different ways and patterns of living, had their own ideologies and religious beliefs. The new settlers' interest in the early stages of the settlement was primary limited by their agrarian search for new lands to cultivate and economic needs.On the other side, "Britons who were prepared to accept the Anglo-Saxon way of life, as their forebears had accepted Roman dominion, worked warily alongside the new rulers or, if circumstances allowed, kept their distance and hoped to be left alone" [18:25].Later when the population

became ethnically mixed,the social functions of the languages changed and that made the Celtic influence on Old English still less probable. The social functioning of the Celtic tongues sharply decreased in the mixed populated areas: firstly, as a result of a sharp decrease of the British population through different causes; secondly, as a result of the Britons' movement to the West and the concentration of the Celtic-speaking inhabitants mostly in the British kingdoms which were in Wales, Cornwall and in the North; thirdly,as a result of the low intensity of communication because of the low density of the British population. On the contrary, the Germanic-speaking communities became dominant and the Germanic-speaking invaders were not eager to find their way to Celtic-speaking people, whereassound-substitution in British place-names adopted in English "was extensive and regular, enough to suggest that the natives learned Anglo-Saxon thoroughly and accurately" [3:12].Even less probable seems to have been the transmission of numerous Latin words of common vocabulary as a result of oral communication between the Britons with the knowledge of Latin and the newcomers, though some Roman place-names positively passed into the language of the Germanic-speaking settlers. Some more reasons can be added here. The majority of Britons who knew Latin or were bilingual as a result of the contacts with the Romans, were not numerous and belonged to socially limited circles.Many of those who knew Latin lived in towns and had to share the fate of those who were killed or had to leave their land. Simple peasants, who became subjugated or slaves,evidently were Celtic-speaking people and did not know much of Latin.There was definitely a decline in Latin speaking skills and habits after the Romans had withdrawn from the province and a new generation grew up. Besides, Roman Britain obliteratedbecause "the Britons themselves had changed greatly between the early fifth and mid-sixth centuries. Even if no Saxon had ever set foot in Britain, it may be that its Roman civilization would have proved too fragile to last" [1:59].

By the early seventh century when smaller Anglo-Saxon kingdoms had amalgamated or had been absorbed, there gradually arose the kingdoms of Northumbria, East Anglia, Mercia, Essex, Sussex, Wessex and Kent, out of which, as a result of the changes in the political situation, four kingdoms raised in their importance in the sequence determined by fighting vigour or political ambitions and administrative talents of their rulers: Kent, Northumbria, Mercia, Wessex. In each case of the temporary and relative political stability there was flowering of learning and literature and the writing activity was intensified [19:33].

All historians seem to be unanimous about a definite sequence in the successful political hegemony, or in great influence by one powerful overlord over the Anglo-Saxon territory or a greater part of it. There is also a general opinion that there was no absolute continuity in the succession of authority among the kingdoms [19:33]. At the end of the 6th century Kent, under the rule of King Athelbert [Æthelberht] (ruled 580-616), asserted its political dominance, which lasted into the next century, over the kingdoms of the East and Middle Angles, Mercia and to some extent the West-Saxons [5:216]. In the 7th century Northumbria arose in its political and cultural supremacy which carried on well into the 8th century. Mercia, the peak of political expansion, successful administration and cultural authority of which was remarkably high in the 8th century, began to gain momentum already in the 7th century under King Penda (ruled 626-655) and King Wulfhere (ruled 658-675). Its ruler Offa (ruled 757-796) was one of the greatest kings of all English kings.Wessex rose to its political importance and extended its influence in the 9th century, especially when it became a stronghold of armed resistance to the Danes. Under King Alfred (ruled 871-899) who was truly the most impressive of the Saxon kings, Wessex fostered its own development of learning which resulted in an outstanding wealth of literature.

The languages spoken by theGermanic peoples when they migrated to Britain weremostly in oral circulationand theykept up their oral poetic literary tradition among the warriors as well as the peasants[8:17; 12:59].Theearly Anglo-Saxons do not seem to havehad a written form of language toput in writing pieces ofliterature[6:397; 12:204]. True enough,they brought with them their runic alphabet which was a Germanic adaptation of a Mediterranean alphabet, but

Anglo-Saxons evidently made a limited use of it since there are only some pieces of runic writing in Anglo-Saxon that have been discovered as yet.The runic writing, used mostly witha sacred or magic meaning, was superseded by writing in Latin letters through the widespread adoption of the Latin alphabet after the conversion. The introduction of Christianity into the Anglo-Saxon society wasamost important historical event that became a powerful sociolinguistic impulse to stimulate the development of the written form of the language. Christianity which was introduced by the Roman missionariesin Kent in 597and almost at the same time by the Irish missionaries in the North, and then gradually spread from there to all kingdomsturned to be a strong and decisive factor of influence which defined the development of English culture for many centuries to come. The Anglo-Saxon Church made a peculiar contribution to learning, not only in Latin but also in the vernacularand fostered the development of education the same as the development of the Anglo-Saxon literature and culture [3:233; 277].With Christianity came literacy in administrative andlegislative fields and "kings could revise and formulate tribal custom to resemble the legislation of the civilized world"[1:71]. The first code of laws was written down in 616 under the influence of the Roman missionaries in Kent. Many monasteries, which developed into centers of learning, were set up. In the very earliest days schools which trained the clergy and sometimes gave education to gifted children, whatever their means, were set up [7:49].Emphasis on schools and on school-training ledto a growth of a small but potent educated public capable of stimulating homiletic writing, even during troubled times [3:295].

The Church played a big and decisive part in shaping English society, and Christianity had become a power throughout the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms as important as the kings and their lords [3:232; 7:49].Prof. BarbaraStrangwrites thatthe English became conscious of themselves as a people identified by church organization and language already in the 8th century, but they did not yet constitute a political unity [6:317]. The first of the Anglo-Saxon kings to identify himself as king of the "*gens Anglorum*" in a charter of 746 was the king of Mercia, Athelbald (ruled 716-757). It was from that time that his subjects began to call themselves *Aenglisc* or English [5:256]. Later the Old English word "*Englisc*" and its derivatives are commonly used in the famous translations from Latin into Old English, made in the time of King Alfred the Great (b. 847-899),and in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle to denote both the people and the language: *ondðēahmonigecuðonEngliscgewritārǣdanand though many could read English writings* (The Preface to CuraPastoralis);*ÞǣrwearðofslægenLucumon, cyngesgerēfa, ond …ealramonna, FrēsiscraondEngliscra LXII, … and there was killed Lucomon, the king's reeve, and …sixty-two of all Frisian and English people*(The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, 896)[20:7, l.68; 20:40-41, ll. 190-193]).King Alfred the Great is also believed to be the first writer who used the word *Angelcynn* in the vernacularto mean the English people, or the land of the English folk, England,the word *Englaland* does not appear for another century [1:81;6:378;7:67; 20:399].

With the development of the Anglo-Saxon society, its political and social organization, with the strengthening of kingship the social importance of the written form of English grew. A powerful factor that was closely connected with the development of the kingship was the administration of royal power which was formally achieved through the transition to the written language and, thus, the royal administration was able to exercise its influence over the kingdom through the written language more effectively. The introduction of Christianity made it important and necessary to apply conscious efforts to adapt the language which earlier was used primarily for oral communication to new social purposes.The involvement of the Church in the workings of royal administration grew steadily and the educated clergy became the bureaucracy of the feudal system as they were to record the king's orders, decisions, or to witness and to record the acts of granting land and privileges, the acts of the manumitting of slaves, etc. The latter part of the 7th century saw also the recorded beginnings of a written literature in the vernacular [Loyn p. 285].The written fixation of the English language in that period shows quite well that English widened the spheres of its social functioning in

theAnglo-Saxon community. Now English was used for official purposes of state administration and legislation (laws, charters, wills, the king's grants of land,the king'swrits,etc.); for different public activities (annals (the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle), homilies, translations of Latin treatises); for literary activity (religious poems, epic poems, lyrical poetry, religious hymns and psalms). Moreover, English became the language of scholarship and education since schools were formed in monasteries to teach future monks.The functional and stylistic stratification of the written form of Old English became more complicated as the professional and social differentiation grew in the society. There appeared professionally-oriented words, such as special terms of theological treatises and religious homilies; juridical words of legislative and state documents; poetic words and archaisms used only in poetry. After the introduction of Christianity into the Anglo-Saxon society, the written form of English acquired a separate, official status that was greatly backed up by the development and progress of the political and administrative structure of the Anglo-Saxon society which had comparatively sophisticated systems of government based on established law codes; effective administrative organization and capable financial administration. As the social functions of English extended and it began to be used not only for oral communication, the writing and literacy in Old English were spread by such powerful social forces as royal administration, education, religious conversion and culture development of an advanced society [19:29].

But in the Anglo-Saxon speech communitythe functions of the written form of English were still socially restricted. The written form of the language was used predominantly by the educated clergy, by some people at the royal courtand at the centers of learning, i.e. by those people who were usually specially trained in their profession. The Anglo-Saxon freemen, ceorls, were mostly illiterate.Furthermore, the usage of the written form of Old English was also restrictedin itsliterary functions.Not only religious poetry, but also rich literature in prose, as for instance, the famous "HistoriaEcclesiasticaGentisAnglorum [*The Ecclesiastical History of the English People*] by the Venerable Bede, the first Anglo-Saxon historian, was composed in Latin. With the Latin language in use as the language of religion and of scholarship, the functional spheres of Old English were limited. So, in the Anglo-Saxon society of the later period the sociolinguistic situation was characterized by two languagesin use: Latin and the vernacular. Anglo-Saxon (Old English), in the form of territorialdialects, was used primarily in oral communication and less in writing, but there was a tendency to a more educated, literate society. Quite the opposite, Latin was primarily usedin writing, whereas oral communication in Latin was mainly confined to religious circles.

In Anglo-Saxon England the writing activity in the vernacular was conducted in Old English territorial dialects which were equal in their functional status in the earlier period, as the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms were separate entities because of the political disunitythat existed for some centuries. The Old Englishterritorial dialects began to develop in the time of the political formation of the kingdoms as political, administrative units, and were spoken on the definite territory in definite localities. The earliest Old English texts do not show regular spelling and arefull of variation of forms. Such variety ofspelling and grammatical forms is typical of territorial dialects at the outset of the development of their written form andon the start of writing activity in them. Old English territorial dialects were also marked by regional variability and were subjected to local change and variation which made them diverge from each other, though modern scholars comment on a certain degree of influence of one Old Englishdialect over the other.

Our research about the Anglo-Saxon territorial dialects spoken in the English-speaking communities of those days is constrained by lack of sufficient evidence. The available texts do not show the permanent development of the separate Old English dialects in continuance but give a somewhat patchwork picture of their development. The surviving written texts give neither enough information as for the level of variation inside each of the dialects, nor dothey show any peculiarities of spoken communication.Theydo not represent a wide scope of the territorial dialects used in discourse in the Anglo-Saxon times, andtheydo not definitely show

the exact boundaries between the dialectal areas.On the whole, the undestroyed, remainingwritten material testifies to the existence of four main dialects which arose in their importance as a result of the political, cultural dominion exercised by the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms: the Kentish dialect, the Northumbrian dialect, the Mercian dialect, the West-Saxon dialect. Each of the dialects experienced, sometimes a short, sometimes a long period of influence over the other dialects which was occasioned by the rise in the political and cultural authority of a certain kingdom. The traces of that influence can clearly be seen in a mixed character of some official documents, for example, charters. Alongside West Saxon charters, Kentish charters, Mercian charters and one charter in the dialect of Surrey, a number of charters can be markedas Mercian-Kentish, WestSaxon-Kentish or WestSaxon-Mercian [21:429-432, 453-454; 22:60]. These four principal dialects are thought to have never been homogeneous in character. For example, Northumbrian can be subdivided into South Northumbrian and North Northumbrian whereas Mercian falls into East Mercian and West Mercian [22:51]. However, there is not enough reliable textual evidence as for that early stage of the development of the Old English territorial dialects because of the losses that happened in troubled times of fighting, early Scandinavian incursions, various other calamities and natural disasters.

The character of interrelationship between the territorial dialects, that is, the extent and the levelof influence that the speakers of one dialect were subjected to from the speakers of otherdialectsthrough oral and written channels of communication in their everyday activities, is stilla problem in dispute among scholars of the history of English[23:17;24:31;19:44].It is natural to assume that the influence ofOld English dialects upon eachother, which canbe seen in the transmission of peculiar dialectal features from one dialect to other dialects, or in the dispersion of certain dialectal features, is, in itself,convincing evidence of different sociallinks and of diversepersonal, economic and other contacts between their speakers living in neighbouring areas.The dialectal admixtures through personal ties, such as through intermarriages, seem to have been a rather common thing, as, for example, the wife of Alfred, king of Wessex,Ealhswith, was the daughter of a Mercian nobleman and through her mother descended from the Mercian royal line, so that Alfred's sons could claim the royal blood of both Wessex and Mercia. Alfred'seldest daughter, Athelflæd, married the Mercian ealdorman Athelred and became "Lady of the Mercians".King Edwin of Northumbria married firstCwenburh, the daughter of Ceorl of Mercia, when he was in Mercia in exile and befriended there Ceorlof Mercia. His second marriage was with Athelburh, the daughter of Athelbert, king of Kent. The king of Mercia, Athelred, was a friend of the much exiled bishop Wilfred, and gave him sanctuary at Leicester when Wilfred was expelled from Northumbria in 691 [5:250, 255, 263, 277,321].The interaction between the Old English dialects may also be the result of changing supremacy and dominion in political power by the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms [19:42]. Some scholars attach more importance to the uncertain and probably movable character of boundaries between the dialects which,thus, could occasion an introduction of otherdialectal forms[14:61]. The introduction ofdifferent dialectal forms can also beexplained by the writing activity of several generationsof scribes speaking different dialects as the greater amountof Old English texts hascome down to our times in later West-Saxon copies.In this connection one more problem that is worth mentioning here is the functional status of the West-Saxon dialect in the 9th– 11thcenturies.

The WestSaxon dialect in its written form of the 9th-11th century is the most represented Anglo-Saxon dialect, as a great part of the surviving documented evidence about Old Englishthat can be analyzed comes from the texts written in the West Saxon dialect. This may equally well be accounted for by two main reasons.Firstly, by political and cultural predominance of the WestSaxon kingdom in the latter part of the Old English period and consequently by the rise in the prestige of the literary WestSaxon written form, the functional status of which was raised not only officially but also as a result of the scholarly and literary activity ofprominent religious or political figures of the time.Secondly, by the fact thatmuch

of the Anglo-Saxon written heritage, especially writtendocuments in the Northumbrian and Mercian dialects, was destroyed or lostas an outcome of various historical events of the later centuries (for instance, Scandinavian incursions),the cultural and social consequences of which were damage and ruin.Thus,theoretically, it seems possible to believe that there existed local literary patterns of poetry or literary prose which later faded into insignificance because of various reasons or have come down to our time in later WestSaxon copies. As, for example,the dialectally homogeneous language of the glosses in the *Vespasian Psalter and Hymns* and its orthography allow some scholars to admit the existence of the Mercian literary standard[22:60].In this connection some authors state: The language of the Vespasian Psalter represents a standard written variety that can be associated geographically with the west midlands of England, politically with the Mercian kings, and chronologically with the ninth century [19:44].

By a long-standing tradition,it has been usual to admit a dominant position of West Saxon among the rest of the Old English dialects on the account of historical significance of Wessex in the latter Old English period and of philological and historical importance of the surviving West Saxon written records.The West Saxon dialect is usually regarded only as one of the territorial dialects, if dominant, that existed in the Old English period when the English nationality was being formed, or when there was no unified literary pattern in use [15:30;24:22].The Austrian linguist Karl Brunner in his book "Die EnglischeSprache. IhreGeshichtlicheEntwicklung" [*The English Language. Its Historical Development*] speaks about West Saxon as one of the dialects of Old English saying that the written form of it was often used for official documents of importance even in the remote parts of England [13:80-81].But more opinions have begun to differ and sometimes conflicting views have been expressed about the social and functional status of WestSaxonin the Anglo-Saxon community of the 9-11th centuries.The prevailing view,probably supported nowadays by the majority of modern scholars, seems to be the one that looks as a further elaboration and development of the idea formulated by H. Sweet that West-Saxon became the official and, to a great extent, the literary language all over England [17:214].As, for example, Prof. Henry Royston Loyn writes: "Indeed the dominance of West Saxon, from the reign of Alfred right through the early Norman period, as a literary language is a social fact of great significance"[3:293].A contemporary point of view on the functional status of the WestSaxon dialect of the 9th-10th centuriesappears to be its recognition as "a regular standardizedliterary language" that was the result of the development of learning, education and scholarship, a written product of already well-established traditions in the period of political stability under the West Saxons [19:33; 23:32; 25:426, 518]. Yet, more scholars prefer to speak about "the WestSaxon written standard" or that "the West Saxondialect attained something of the position of a literary standard"[6:323; 11:52].Some linguistselaborate theirarguments and express the opinion that the West Saxon dialect, which had to some extent a mixed character with dialectal admixtures and the written form of which developed into a literary standard, can be thought to be a type of the literary *koine* (Greek κοινῇ) common for all England. And, thus,the language of Old English literature was being formed on the basis of West Saxon with dialectal variations but was not the same as the West dialect itself that was used in oral communication [23:75, 86,99].

Yet, the functional status of West Saxon in the 9th-11th centuries still remains a matter of a theoretical and hypothetical assumption and deduction primarily based on the study of the preserved Old English writings. Today's lack of knowledge about the oral form of dialectal varieties in Anglo-Saxon communities and the insufficient textual evidence, which can be explained by the historical changing fortunes, do not give firm grounds to suppose that West Saxon had become distinguished from the other Old English dialects as a literary standard already before the 10th century. The existence of some dialectal versions of the earliest pieces of poetic writing in the vernacular, as, for instance, the famous Cædmon's Hymn, which existed in the original Northumbrian form and in later West Saxon copies, can't be regarded

here as an argument in favour of a dominant position of the West Saxon literary standard in the earlier period, for these manuscripts are at a certain chronological distance. This fact could rather be considered in the support of the assumption about a rather independent and isolated functioning of old English territorial dialects. On the other hand the indirect evidence for the expansion of the social function of the West Saxon dialect in Anglo-Saxon England in the 10th – 11th centuries and for the development of its mixed character, can possibly be found in the fact that the writing activity, which covered the most important social public domains in the Anglo-Saxon speech community, was mostly conducted in the form of the West Saxon dialect that was characterized by different dialectal admixtures. This form of the West Saxon dialect with admixtures from different dialects can be found not only in the language of poetry pieces, but also in the language of prose writings [23:75].

One possible way to find a plausible solution to the problem of the functional status of the West Saxon dialect in the Anglo-Saxon times seems to recognize that there were stages in the development of the West Saxon dialect: the Early West Saxon dialect of the 9th century, or the West Saxon dialect of the Alfredian times, and the Late West Saxon dialectof the 10th -11th centuries, the written form of which was used in writing in the times of Aelfric and Wulfstan ("Winchester standard")[14:63; 23:32].Evidently enough, the West Saxon written form of the later periodcan be regarded as a literary pattern that was in the making on the basis of the following reasoning.There were two forms of the West Saxon dialect in use in the West Saxon speaking speechcommunity: spoken and written, and the written form of the West Saxon dialect started to deviate from its oral form.The social and official functional spheres of the written form of the West Saxon dialect in the speech community widened and became specialized.A tendency to selection of forms and standardization began to develop as, for example, copies of Ælfric's works are remarkable in consistency of spelling forms.A less intensivevariation of grammar or spelling forms and a relatively homogeneous corpus of linguistic forms can be found in the form of the West Saxon dialect used in writing for original, authentic works and translations from Latin in the 10th-11th centuries.Genre variety in prose and poetry was established and there were clear language distinctions between prosaic and poetic literature.Thereexisted written works in different functional styles which shared basic linguistic features.Stylistically coloured and professionally oriented words appeared in writing.The individual styles of some authors developed (Cædmon, Cynewulf, Ælfric, Wulfstan).A mixed character of the vocabulary and grammar forms with dialectal admixtures can be seen in the written form of West Saxon,for instance, in the language of some charters, or in the text of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle.The tradition of literary writing was established at the centers of culture, literacy and learning, as for example in Winchester, Durham and Canterbury.

However, it isnot yet clear whether the written form of West Saxon was widely accepted as the only literary standardwritten form of Old English outside the West Saxon area of dominion even in the later period because of the lack of sufficient textual evidence about the level of writing activityin other Old English dialects. It is difficult to say whether the widespread usage of the West Saxon written form was the result of the rise in its prestige or it was the logical consequence of the spread of the political, administrative and military dominion of Wessex. And it is not quite certain whether to accept the textual written fixation of West Saxon to be something similar to the interlanguage that is revealed in writing of non-West Saxon (usually Mercian) scribes as the indication of their natural speech behavour habits with probably an insufficient knowledge of the literary West Saxon dialect; or to accept the written form of the West Saxon dialect to be a literary *koine* formed on the basis of the West Saxon dialect with dialectal admixturesand limited by social spheres of functioning; or to accept a mixed character of the West Saxon dialect with the preservation of local dialectal variations in writing by both West Saxon and non-West Saxon scribes as a testimony to the initial stage of development of the literary language in the formative period, the language which was used in writing by people who spoke different dialects butgot used to

understandable dialectal forms and became tolerant ofregional dialectal variation as they perceived themselves as a whole ethnic unity [25:426]. This literary form of the West Saxon dialect could have developed into a unified literary form of language, but did not because of the Norman Conquest.Moreover, some moreconsiderationsmay be regarded in this aspect.

Firstly, in the Old English period there was no notion of the unified literary standard and, consequently, no consciously accepted criteria of the choice of forms were established. The language of themanuscripts madein theage of Alfred theGreat (ruled 871-899) and Edward the Elder (ruled 899-924) was not a uniform written standard [26:527]. Even the known works made in the time of King Alfred the Great show dialectal admixtures and variations of tradition as is seen in the translation of Boethius's *De ConsolationePhilosophiae*to which many scholars usuallyrefer [23:75; 25:518]. And though there is some information about the school of translators at King Alfred's court and about scribes of later centuries who attempted at selection of language forms in their work, on the whole, there was only the written tradition to follow.Generally it can be assumed that the process of standardization was underway already in the times of the first translations from Latin, even though the early writers in the vernacular probably were not much concerned with the problem of standardization [25:518].

Secondly, it isalmost universally accepted that there were, at least,two literary forms of West Saxon used in writing in Anglo-Saxon England. The form of the language employed in poetry is widely believed to differ much from that in prose. The literary standard of late West Saxon was not quite homogeneous because, on the one hand, the written form of late West Saxon used in prose was based, to some extent, on Latin written tradition with Anglo-Saxon innovations whereas, on the other hand, the written form of late WestSaxon used in poetry was mainly formed on an oral Germanic literary tradition and was more archaic andconservative.Moreover, in this aspect, of special significance is the problem of the so-called "poetic *koine*", the admission of which becomes popular with modern linguists: "The bulk of Anglo-Saxon poetry, although it survives in late West Saxon copies, was composed in Mercian times. The poetic *koine* has a distinctly Mercian substratum" [19:41]. The acceptance of the existence of two types of literary *koine*, or two different forms of literary standard in the frame of the same language in the speech community which was not apolitical or national unity, though the speakers of it were conscious of their ethnic identity, can be evident enough to admit that there were no unified rules in literary language use in writing.

Thirdly, there are no indications in existence as for the relations between the oral and written forms of English. It still remains uncertain to what extent, if at all, the spoken form of West Saxon was different from or close to its recorded written form. And almost next to nothing is known about social variation of language in the Anglo-Saxon speech community.

Fourthly, the form of the West Saxon dialect used for oral communication was apparently limited geographically by the territory of Wessex. More to that, some scholars believe that only "in the far north, notably in Northumberland, do writings of the late OE period escape the influence of WS standard" [6:323].

Fifthly, West Saxon had distinct dialectal features of its own and did not seem to have absorbedmany features of other different dialectal areas. The language of the Alfredian prose was more likely the dialect spoken in the vicinity of Winchester, the capital of England under Alfred, and Wilton, the residence of the West Saxon kings[23:68].Theappearance of dialectal admixtures, mainly from Anglian dialects (Mercian and Northumbrian) may be explained by different reasons. Traditionally, scholars aremostly often inclined to speak either about inadequate knowledge of West Saxon by scribes or about the introduction of the words by scribes who lived in later centuries, as many Old English texts have come to our times in later copies; or about the Mercian or Northumbrian substratum in poetic works and the preservation of the local elements in Old English texts when there were copied down by scribes.The written form of West Saxon used in literary prose or in official documents do not seemto have become structurally isolated from its dialectal basis but showed only the initial phase of the process[27:24].

Sixthly,Latin was used in writing activities and with the centuries to come the social functions of Latin became more specified and widened.

So, on the basis of the textual fixation of the English language in the Old English period the assumption can be made that West Saxon was one of the Old English dialects the written form of which began to be used for official and literary activities in the speech community by the speakers who began to feel themselves as one and the same people. It seems perhaps more convenient to speak about a special position acquired by a written form of West Saxon because of the social functions that it was employed to perform in the Anglo-Saxon community and, before all,because of its use as an official medium for administrative purposes and as a literary pattern for literary activity. This led the written form of English to a kind of selection, to a "cultivated" form, on theonehand, and, on the other hand, to the development of a mixed character of the West Saxon dialect.An introduction of dialectal elements from other dialects can be explained by the fact that sometimes the educated clergy, scribes, or writers wrote in West Saxon though their native dialects used by them in oral communication may have had some distinctions. Thiscan to some extent indicate to the process of the interaction of the Old English dialects, their influence on each other. Thatinterrelationshipwas much encouraged by the existence of large dialectal variation within the Old English dialects so that the rising literary written form was readily understandable and easily comprehensibleto the educated majority of the Old English speaking community. These language and functional characteristics of the West-Saxon dialect of the latter period can probably show the initial stage of the formation of a pre-national unified literary form of language.

Another historical event of great sociolinguistic consequence in Anglo-Saxon England was settlement of Scandinavians in Britain. This new ethnic group of newcomers appeared in the island in the late 8th century. Their coming first was in the form of inroads into the coastal areas on the settlements and monasteries of Anglo-Saxons in the North and the North-East of the island with the purpose of military loot. In later centuries they arrived in great numbers and made overwhelming permanent settlement in the North, the North-East, in the territory of the Danelaw, (the Danes) and in the North-West (the Norwegians). The contacts between the Anglo-Saxons and the Scandinavians, starting as early as the 8th century, mostly of military character at first, continued well into later centuries on larger scale and transformed into closer social and personal intercommunication.

In spite of the long mutual contact, later in the form of uneasy or peaceful coexistence, there were not so many Scandinavian borrowings in the language of the Anglo-Saxons as can be expected judging by the scope of the Danish settlement in the 9th -10th centuries. The Old English vocabulary bears almost no evidence to that."Even Late Northumbrian (of about 970) is entirely free from Scandinavian influence," writes Henry Sweet. [p.216]. Only a small amount of words of Scandinavian origin, registered in Old Englishwriting, can testify to that sociolinguistic connection. On the contrary, the inflow of Scandinavian place names into Old English, especially belonging to the time of the first settlement in the Danelaw, was impressive.Modern linguists suggest the following interpretations that can bemost likely to explain the scarcity of theScandinavian borrowings in Old English before the 12th century. Firstly, late Old English texts were compiled in the South, South-West, where the Scandinavian influence was not strong [9:21; 13:122]. Secondly,the West Saxon dialect, in its literary written form, was resistant to the large infiltration of new words and forms [9:21; 13:123]. Thirdly, the early relations of the invaders with the Anglo-Saxons, as the American historians of English Albert Baugh and Thomas Cable write, were too hostile to lead to much natural intercommunication, and a certain amount oftime had to be needed for such words as the Anglo-Saxons learned from their enemies to find their way into literature[11:98].

In the way of summing up, it may be said that from the sociolinguistic perspective, the English language of the Anglo-Saxon period developed different types of languagesocial differentiation: language differentiation which is seen in the territorial dialects;differentiation

through social functions of the language in the English-speaking community which reflected social activities of the speakers (law, administration, education, scholarship, literary activity, etc.); differentiation in thelanguage forms in use: oral and written; probably, social languagedifferentiation between the sections of the society.

Summary

The suggested article is targeted at the consideration of some aspects of language development in Anglo-Saxon England in the context of the main dimensions of the socio-linguistic situation. Such sociolinguistic factors of influence as ethnic contacts, the formation of state organization, the use of the written form of the language and the development of the social functions of the language that worked in shaping up the main directions of the development of English in Anglo-Saxon times are analyzed. Themain approaches to the problem of the functional status of the West-Saxon dialect in Anglo-Saxon England are viewed from the sociolinguistic perspective.

The development of English appears to have begun the moment the Germanic newcomers set their foot on the soil of the British Isles and the language evolved in the form of the territorial dialects through the centuries to come in the sociolinguistic context of newly formed speech communities that were not ethnically homogeneous and were exposed to a new geographical, social, political and ethnic environment. The first sociolinguistic contacts of the Germanic settlers with other ethnic groups were occasioned by their relations with Celtic-speaking people. In the framework of the sociolinguistic context that had emerged the British tongues had but an extremely slight influence on the language of the Germanic settlers that can probably be explained by a peculiar character of the sociolinguistic situation which arose in the early days of the Germanic settlement.

The appearance of early feudal states, the formation of the state organization and the introduction of Christianity into the Anglo-Saxon society were most influential sociolinguistic factors to stimulate the development of the written form of the language. With the development of the Anglo-Saxon society, its political and social organization, with the strengthening of kingship the social importance of the written form of English grew.The introduction of Christianity made it important and necessary to apply conscious efforts to adapt the language which earlier was used primarily for oral communication to new social purposes. The written form of English acquired a separate, official status that was greatly backed up by the development and progress of the political and administrative structure of the Anglo-Saxon society which had comparatively sophisticated systems of government based on established law codes; effective administrative organization and capable financial administration. As the social functions of English extended it began to be used not only for oral communication.The written fixation of the English language in that period shows that English widened the spheres of its social functioning in the Anglo-Saxon community. English was used for official purposes of state administration and legislation, for literary activity and it became the language of scholarship and education. The functional and stylistic stratification of the written form of Old English became more complicated as the professional and social differentiation grew in the society. There appeared professionally-oriented words, such as special terms of theological treatises and religious homilies; juridical words of legislative and state documents; poetic words and archaisms used only in poetry.But in the Anglo-Saxon speech community the functions of the written form of English were still socially restricted. The written form of the language was used predominantly by the educated clergy, by some people at the royal court and at the centers of learning. The Anglo-Saxon freemen were mostly illiterate. Furthermore, the usage of the written form of Old English was also restricted in its literary functions.With the Latin language in use as the language of religion and of scholarship, the functional spheres of Old English were limited. The sociolinguistic

situationin the Anglo-Saxon society of the later period was characterized by two languages in use: Latin and the vernacular. Anglo-Saxon (Old English), in the form of territorial dialects, was used primarily in oral communication and less in writing, but there was a tendency to a more educated, literate society. Quite the opposite, Latin was primarily used in writing, whereas oral communication in Latin was mainly confined to religious circles.

In Anglo-Saxon England the writing activity in the vernacular was conducted in Old English territorial dialects which were equal in their functional status in the earlier period, as the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms were separateentities. Andthe Old English territorial dialects, that began to develop in the time of the formation of the kingdoms as political and administrative units, were spoken on the definite territory in definite localities.

The West Saxon dialect in its written form of the 9th-11th century is the most represented Anglo-Saxon dialect, as a great part of the surviving documented evidence about Old English that can be analyzed comes from the texts written in the West Saxon dialect. Different views have been expressed on the functional status of the West-Saxon dialect in Anglo-Saxon England. On the basis of the textual fixation of the English language in the Old English period the assumption can be made that West Saxon was one of the Old English dialects the written form of which began to be used for official and literary activities in the speech community by the speakers who began to feel themselves as one and the same people. A written form of West Saxon acquired a special position because of the social functions that it was employed to perform in the Anglo-Saxon community and, before all, because of its use as an official medium for administrative purposes and as a literary pattern for literary activity. This led the written form of English to a kind of selection, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, to the development of a mixed character of the West Saxon dialect withan introduction of dialectal elements from other dialects. This can indicate to the process of the interaction of the Old English dialects,much encouraged by the existence of large dialectal variation within them. The rising literary written form was readily understandable and easily comprehensible to the educated majority of the Old English speaking community. These language and functional characteristics of the West-Saxon dialect of the latter period can probably show the initial stage of the formation of a pre-national unified literary form of language.

In the framework of the sociolinguistic perspective, the English language of the Anglo-Saxon period developed different types of language social differentiation: language differentiation which is seen in the territorial dialects; differentiation through social functions of the language in the English-speaking community; differentiation in the language forms in use: oral and written; probably, social language differentiation between the sections of the society.

References

1. The Oxford History of English: / [Ed. by Lynda Mugglestone]. ― Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006. ― 485 p.
2. Kearney H. The British Isles: a history of four nations / Hugh Kearney. ― Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995. ― 324 p.
3. Loyn H.R. Anglo-Saxon England and the Norman Conquest / Henry Royston Loyn. ― [2nd ed.] ― London and New York: Longman, 1991. ― 433 p. ― (Social and economic history of England).
4. Brook G. L. A History of the English Language / G. L. Brook. ― London: Andre Deutsch, 1968. ― 224 p. (The Language Library).
5. AshleyM. BritishKings&Queens. TheCompleteEncyclopediaoftheKings&QueensofGreatBritain / MikeAshley. ― NewYork: Barnes&Nobles Books, 2000. ― 824 p.

6. Strang B. M. H. A History of English / Barbara M. H. Strang. — London : Methuen & Co LTD, 1970. — 453 p.

7. Fraser R. The Story of Britain. From the Romans to the Present: A Narrative History / Rebecca Fraser. — New York, London: W. W. Norton& Company, 2006. — 829 p.

8. Schlauch M/ English Medieval Literature and its Social Foundations / Margaret Schlauch. — Warszawa: PaństwoweWydawnictwoNaukowe, 1956. — 366 p.

9. Bragg M. The Adventure of English. 500 AD. to 2000. The Biography of a Language / Melvyn Bragg. — London: Sceptre, Hodder and Soughton, 2004. — 354 p.

10. Gooden Ph. The Story of English. How the English Language Conquered the World / Philip Gooden. — London: Quercus, 2011. — 297 p.

11. Baugh A. C. and Thomas Cable. A History of the English Language / Albert C. Baugh. — London, Henley and Boston: Routledge&Kegan Paul, 1978. — 438 p.

12. Whitelock D. The Beginnings of English Society / Dorothy Whitelock. —Harmondsworth, Middlesex, England: Penguin Books, 1972. — 256 p. — (The Pelican History of England).

13. BrunnerK.Istoriiaangliiskogoyazyka [A History of the English Language]: [in 2 vol.] /KarlBrunner[translatedfromGermanby С. Х. Васильевой. Ed. andtheprefacebyprof. B. A. Iliysh]. — M.: Izdatel'stvoinostrannyoiliteratury [ForeignLiteraturePublishingHouse], 1955. — Vol. 1. — 1955. — 323 s. — (in Russian).

14. Rastorgueva T. A. A History ofEnglish/ T. A.Rastorgueva. — M.:Higher School Publishing House ["Vysšajaškola"], 1983. — 347 s. — (In English).

15. ArakinV.D.Istoriiaangliiskogoyazyka [AHistoryoftheEnglishLanguage]/ [A History of the English Language]: V. D. Arakin. — M.: «Prosv'ayatseniye», 1985. — 254 s. — (in Russian).

16. JespersenO. GrowthandStructureoftheEnglishLanguage / OttoJespersen. — [NinthEdition.] —Oxford: BasilBlackwell, 1967. — 244 p.

17. Sweet H. A. New English Grammar. Logical and Historical: Part One. Introduction, Phonology, and Accidence / Henry Sweet. — Oxford : At the Clarendon Press, 1968. — 499 p.

18. Burke J. An Illustrated History of England: [Foreword by Sir Arthur Bryant]. / John Burke. — London: Guild Publishing, 1989. — 382 p.

19. English in Its Social Contexts: [Essays in Historical Sociolinguistics / Ed. by Tim William Machan, Charles T. Scott]. — New York, Oxford : Oxford University Press, 1992. — 268 p.

20. Sweet's Anglo-Saxon Reader in Prose and Verse: [Revised throughout by Dorothy Whitelock]. — Oxford: At the Clarendon Press. — 1970. — 404 p.

21. The Oldest English Texts / [Ed. with Introductions and a Glossary by Henry Sweet, M. A.]. — London: Published for the Early English Text Society, by Trübner& Co., 1885. — 668 p.

22. Steponavičius A. English Historical Phonology / AlbertasYuozovichSteponavičius. — Moscow: Higher School Publishing House ["Vysšajaškola"], 1987. — 208 p. — (in English).

23. Yartseva V. N. Istoriiaangliiskogoliteraturnogoyazyka IX-XV vekov [History of the English Literary Language of the IX – XV centuries] / V. N. Yartseva. — Moscow: Nauka, 1985. — 247 s. — (in Russian).

24. Smirtnitskii A. I. Drevneangliiskiiyazyk [The Old English Language] — / Prof. A. I.Smirtnitskii. — Moscow,Izdatel'stvolitiraturynainostranychyazykakh, (Bibliliotekafilologa) [Foreign Languages Publishing House, (The Library of the Philologist)] , 1955. —318 s.— (in Russian).

25. The Cambridge History of the English Language: in 5 volumes / Vol. I. The Beginnings to 1066 [edited by Richard M. Hogg]. — Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005. — 589 p.

26. Galloway A. Dream-Theory in *The Dream Of the Rood* and *The Wanderer* / Andrew Galloway // The Review of English Studies: A Quarterly Journal of English Literature and the English Language / [Ed. by R. E. Alton]. — 1994. — Volume XLV, Number 180. — P. 475- 485.

27. Guchman M. M. K tipologiigermanskikhliteraturnychyazykovdonatsional'nogoperioda [About Typology of Germanic Literary Languages of the Pre-national Period] / M.M. Guchman // Tipologiiagermanskikhliteraturnychyazykov. [Typology of Germanic Literary Languages]. — Moscow: Nauka, 1976. — 249 s. — (Akademiianauk SSSR. Institutyazykoznaniia [Academy of Sciences of the USSR. Institute of Linguistics]). — p. 5-29. — (in Russian).

Евченко В.В. Некоторые аспекты развития языка в Англосаксонской Англии

В статье рассматривается процесс развития английского языка в контекстеосновных параметров социолингвистической ситуации, которая сложилась в Англосаксонской Англии в период образования ранних феодальных государств. Анализируются такие главные факторы воздействия, которые определили основные направления развития языка, как этнические контакты, формирование государственности, введение ХристианствавАнглосаксонской Англии, развитие социальных функций языка, становление письменной формы языка. Описываются основные способы определения функционального статуса уэссекского диалекта.

Євченко В.В. Деякі аспекти розвитку мови в Англосаксонській Англії

У статті розглянуто процес розвитку англійської мови в контексті основних параметрів соціолінгвістичної ситуації, яка склалася в Англосаксонській Англії у період формування ранніх феодальних держав. Аналізуються такі важливі соціолінгвістичні фактори впливу, які детермінували основні напрямки розвитку мови, як етнічні контакти, формування державності,християнізаціяАнглосаксонського суспільства,розвиток соціальних функцій мови, становлення письмової форми мови.Описуються основні підходи до визначення функціональногостатусу уессекського діалекту.

.