



## OLD SCANDINAVIAN BORROWINGS IN MODERN ENGLISH

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### Abstract

Modern English is the product of a long historical development, during which it undergoes many-sided changes due to various reasons.

In the history of the English language, three periods can be distinguished according to the intensity of borrowings, the first of which falls on the Viking Age (VIII-XI centuries), which began with the attack of sea robbers from Scandinavia on the English monastery on the island of **Lindisfarne** in 793. At the end of the ninth century the English king Alfred has to give the Vikings the northeastern part of the country, called **the Danelag**. This explains the fact that a large number of geographical names, including elements of Old Norse origin in their composition, are found in the northeastern part of the island.

According to Otto Jespersen, a Danish linguist, the first appearance of an Old Norse loan word in English is reflected in a war poem written in 993. This word was the verb call from ON kalla.

According to some historians, the Scandinavian culture, in a number of, above all, material parameters, surpassed the Anglo-Saxon one, which made it possible to establish mutual influence between cultures and contributed to the influx of new words into English speech. According to John Gaipel, places where the influence of the Old Norse language is stronger are Orkney, Shetland, part of Scotland and the northern part of England (counties of Lincolnshire and Yorkshire; south of Leicestershire and East Anglia, west of Lancashire and Cumbria, north of Durham and Northumberland). It is worth mentioning that the Yorkshire dialect (ra is common in the Northern part of Britain), as well as the dialects spoken by the inhabitants of Orkney and Shetland, include many borrowings from the Old Norse language. This article attempts to classify Old Norse borrowings in modern English using the analysis of 474 lexical units (including 242 toponyms) selected by the method of continuous sampling from the electronic etymological dictionary of modern English. The most interesting classification is semantic, which determined our choice. This article presents a semantic classification of words and components of toponyms. This classification is not the most complete and exhaustive, but it helps to understand the meaning of Scandinavian borrowings in English.

### I. Semantic groups of words of Old Norse origin



1. Negative concepts (10.34% of Old Norse words): **anger** ON angr (anger), **angry** ON angr , ongurfullr (irritated), **awe** ON agi (fear), etc.
  2. Concepts denoting movement / actions (9.91% of Old Norse words): **bang** ON banga (hit), **bask** ON baask (warm up), **blunder** ON blundra (move by feel)
  3. Natural and topographic concepts (9.47% of Old Norse words): **bark** ON borkr (tree bark), **berg** ON berg (iceberg,) **fell** ON fjall (hill, mountain) etc.
  4. Names related to fauna (9.47% of Old Norse words): **lemming** ON lomundr (lemming), **loon** ON lomr (polar loon), **skua** ON skufr (seagull), etc.
  5. Personal names (7.33% of Old Norse words): **Freyja** ( feminine ) ON Freyja , **Dustin** ( masculine ) ON Þórsteinn , **Ivor** ( masculine ) ON Ívarr etc.
  6. Concepts indicating a violation of the integrity or homogeneity of an object (6.47% of Old Norse words): **Bunch** ON bunki (cluster), **clip** ON klippa (cut off, cut off), **craze** ON krasa (split), etc.
  7. Tools , building elements, clothing and household items (6% of Old Norse words): **bag** ON baggi (bag), **ball** ON bollr (ball), **gear** ON gerva (gear), etc.
  8. Concepts related to navigation and fishing (4.31% of Old Norse words): **bait** ON beita (bait, bait), **bow** ON bogr (bow of the ship), **keel** ON kjolr (keel), etc.
  9. Concepts characterizing any object/object (4.31% of Old Norse words): **big** norw . bugge ( big, large ), **flat** ON flatter (flat) , **odd** ON oddi (odd), etc.
  10. Concepts associated with (un)conscious mental activity (3.46% of Old Norse words): **seem** ON soema (seem), **skill** ON skil (skill), **want** ON vanta (want) etc.
  11. Concepts related to the economic and legal spheres (2.58% of Old Norse words): **sale** ON sala (sale), **waive** ON veifa (to refuse, not to demand something) ( legal ) , etc.
  12. Means, inventory for gardening and field work (2.58% of Old Norse words): **girth** ON giorð (girth), **muck** ON myki , mykr (manure), **plow** ON plogr (plough), etc.
  13. Concepts related to folklore (2.58% of Old Norse words): **elf** ON alfr (elf), **saga** ON saga (saga), **oaf** ON alfr (stupid person; goblin child), etc.
  14. Concepts related to military operations (2.58% of Old Norse words): **knife** ON knifr (knife), **thrall** ON þræll (slave, prisoner), **Viking** ON vikingr (viking), etc.
  15. Qualities, characteristics of a person, his emotional state (2.58% of Old Norse words): **happy** ON happ (happy), **meek** ON mjukr (soft, submissive), **sleight** ON sloegð (dexterity) etc.
  16. Man and his body (2.25% of Old Norse words): **birth** ON byrðr (birth), **calf** ON kalfi (hind leg, calf), **freckle** ON freknr ( plural ) (freckles)
  17. Days of the week (1.72% of Old Norse words): **Friday** ON friggjardagr (Friday), **Thursday** ON þorsdagr (Thursday), etc.
  - eighteen.** Food ( 0.86% of Old Norse words): **cake** ON kaka (flat or round piece of bread), **steak** ON steik (a piece of meat or fish for frying).
  19. Chemical terms ( 0.86% Old Norse words ): **litmus** ON lita ( litmus ) , **Vanadium** ON Vanadis , one of the names of the Norse beauty goddess **Freyja**
- Old Norse borrowings are found in almost all parts of speech in English. Some of these borrowings are difficult to group using semantic classification. Therefore, we decided to group these borrowings by parts of speech.
1. Nouns: **fellow** ON felagi (boyfriend), **husband** ON husbondi ( husband), **lad** ON ladd (boyfriend), etc.
  2. Verbs : **glitter** ON glitra ( shine ) , **call** ON kalla ( call ) , **gape** ON gapa (yawn).
  3. Pronouns : **both** ON baðir ( both ) , **their** ON þierra genitive of þeir \_ \_ and t . d.
  4. Prepositions: **till** ON til (until) **until** ON und (until), **upon** ON upp a (on etc.)



5. Adverbs: **aloft** ON a lopti (above, on top), **fro** ON fra (back), **thwart** ON þvert (through)  
6. Adjective: **muggy** ON mugga ( damp and warm (about the weather))

This classification is separated into a separate semantic group, which is called **additional concepts** . It makes up 10.34% of the words examined.

## II. Semantic groups of Old Norse toponyms in Great Britain

1. Components denoting the geological features of the area (23.53% of the total number of Old Norse components of toponyms):

**Berg- berg** — “stony soil/rock” ( Longa Berg ), **bratta - brattr** - “cliff/steep” ( Bratta Stack ), **breck - brekka** - “slope / slope” ( Brattabreck ), etc.

2. Components denoting some kind of body of water, a landscape close to the body of water, features of the sea and river routes (21.57% of the total number of Old Norse components of toponyms) :

**Back , bakka - bakki** - “river bank, down to the river” ( Backarass ), **firth - fjörðr** - “fjord, bay, mouth of the river” ( Sellafirth ), **ham , hamna - höfn** - “harbour, port” ( Hamister ), etc.

3. Components denoting human-made settlements, buildings and other landscape objects (18.63% of the total number of Old Norse components of toponyms) :

**By , bie - bær , býr** - “estate” ( Grimsby ), **bister - bólstaðr** - “living place, house” ( Kirkabister ), **burra - borg** - “fortification” ( West Burra ) etc.

4. Components nominating representatives of the flora or fauna (12.75% of the total number of Old Norse components of toponyms) :

**Fair, far - fær** - “ sheep ” ( Fair Isle), **fiska , fiski - fiskr** - “ fish ” ( North Fiski Geo), **foul - fugl** - “ bird , game ” ( Foula ).

5. Components describing different characteristics of the area (11.76% of the total number of Old Norse components of toponyms):

**Brei- \_ breiðr** - “wide” ( Brei Geo ), **ha , haa , ho - hár** - “high, upper” ( Ha Banks ), **lang - langr** - “long” ( Langa Skeo ) etc.

6. Components denoting landmarks, non-geological features of the place (8.82% of the total number of Old Norse components of toponyms) :

**Heog- \_ haugr** - “mound, cairn” ( Heog ), **howe - haugr** - “mound, cairn” ( Maes Howe ), **mire - mýrr** - “bog/marshy moorland/bog” ( Hesta Mires ) etc.

Thus, having studied the semantic classifications of Old Norse borrowings that function in modern English, we came to the conclusion that this group of borrowings made a significant contribution to the development of the English language, as well as to English culture , which can confirm words Danish linguist Otto Jespersen : “An Englishman cannot thrive or be ill or die without Scandinavian words; they are to the language what bread and eggs are to the daily fare ”.

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