The Origin and Analysis of English Tag Questions and Short Answers

(Diplomová práce)

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1 OLD NORSE INFLUENCE ON MIDDLE ENGLISH GRAMMAR

In this study, I would like to examine English tag questions and short answers from the synchronic as well as historical perspective. This topic is significant because it may contribute to the area of understanding the historical development of English and its consequences for Present Day English (PDE).

In order to profit from the past, I will compare PDE with Scandinavian languages because these languages were in close contact at the time before Middle English (MiE) was created. The area with the most significant influence of Scandinavian languages was called the Danelaw, which was situated in the Eastern part of England. Since tag questions and short answers are discourse phenomena, there are essentially no written works in Old English or in Old Norse which would record them, but one can go back theoretically according to what these languages have in common now, and what they do not share with other languages. The first records of tag questions come from Early Modern English, the time of Shakespeare and other playwrights, where speech presented as drama was written (see Tottie and Hoffmann 2009).

The origin of short answer forms can be also illuminated if one compares English with languages such as Irish and Welsh (Vennemann 2009, 309). There are grammar books which examine Celtic languages such as *A Grammar of Old Irish* (1946) by Rudolf Thurneysen and *A Welsh Grammar* (1913) by J. Morris Jones. Those languages could have influenced the structure of the current English short answers. Compared to tag questions, there are MiE sources which can be examined such as *The Canterbury Tales* (1387 – 1400) by Geoffrey Chaucer. *The Canterbury Tales* were written in the East Midlands dialect which was spoken by the inhabitants of the Danelaw. The centers of the East Midlands dialect were Cambridge and London, and this Middle English dialect is the main ancestor of Modern and Present Day English (Emonds and Faarlund 2014, 25).

To see the history of the English language in a broader perspective, I will briefly describe some important events connected with the language's development. In the Old English period, England was inhabited by three main Germanic tribes: Angles, Saxons and Jutes. They used a language which was similar to Old High German: this means that it was an inflectional language which used a lot of prefixes and suffixes. Due to the inflections, the sentence word order was more varied than it is today. The three Germanic tribes inhabited the area in the West of current England. That part of England, Wessex, was under the reign of the Anglo-Saxon king Alfred the Great (871 – 899). Since the early 9th century, the territory in the Eastern part of England was continually invaded by the Scandinavian tribes and by 1013, the Anglo-Saxons were fully under the control of the Danes and Norwegians in the Danelaw. It is not therefore surprising that OE changed during this time very little because there were two separate kingdoms with their own administrations and official languages.

A significant breakthrough in the development of languages can be found after 1066 when the Normans won the Battle of Hastings, and established their own administration with the official languages French and Latin. After 1066, the English language stopped being written, and it disappeared for about a century. When the language which we now call Middle English appeared again, it was completely different.

The Middle English texts show that not only 80 % of the Old English vocabulary disappeared, but also the morphosyntax became completely different and the structure resembled more Scandinavian than West Germanic languages (Emonds and Faarlund 2014, 28). The difference between OE and MiE is bigger than between MiE and Modern English (ME). It is also necessary to say that PDE is a direct descendant of MiE and ME, but the connection with OE is somewhat weaker from the morphosyntactic point of view.

It is important to state that OE dialects were spoken in both parts of England, the only difference is that in the Danelew, Old Norse was also used, but it was not recorded. Although there are more OE texts from Wessex, the Anglo-Saxon settlement area, MiE comes from the East Midland dialect in the Danelaw as was already mentioned. What is more, the peoples of both kingdoms became united under the Normans after 1066. The two different language communities ended up speaking only one language by around 1300, namely Middle English.

According to Emonds and Faarlund (2014, 44) there are two ways to see the development of English after the OE period ended. First, Middle English developed from Old English, but it changed rapidly not only in the amount of new Norse vocabulary, but also in the amount of new grammatical structures which behaved in the way of the Scandinavian grammatical structures. The second approach sees Middle English as a direct descendant of Old Norse in England, which means that there were no major grammatical changes, but Old Norse incorporated Old English vocabulary due to the language contacts with the Anglo-Saxons living in the Danelaw. This language developed into Middle English.

One of the reasons the Norse settlers kept their language was because they were colonialists and they did not think it was necessary to learn immediately the language of the defeated tribes (Emonds and Faarlund 2014, 37). Old Norse was thus a living language which was influenced by Old English especially in the area of vocabulary. There was no reason the Norse settlers should change their grammatical system.

The second approach is the one which the authors Emonds and Faarlund adhere to and it is also my intention to use this approach in studying the history of tag questions and short answers.

2   FIXED PHRASE TAGS

In this section, I will define fixed phrase tags in English as well as in other languages. I will concentrate on the formal description of fixed phrase tags, and I will compare them with typical fixed phrase tags in other European languages. Apart from the formal characteristics, I will describe semantic and pragmatic properties of fixed phrase tags.

Biber et al. define tags as "short structures which can be added at the end of the clause in conversation or in written representations of speech. They take either the form of a noun phrase or of an interrogative or declarative clause," (Biber et al. 1999, 139). Interrogative tags are the type which this work is interested in.

In other words, tags or tag questions are small questions which are added at the end of a statement. They normally occur in spoken language or in informal written language which tends to resemble the spoken language (e-mails, chatting with somebody on the internet, etc.). Tag questions are used in every language, although there are differences in the structure. They are usually formed by two or three morphemes such as the French tags *n'est-ce pas?,* and *non?*, German *nicht wahr?*, Czech *že?* or Danish *eller* and *eller hva(d).*

Huddleston and Pullum (2002, 891) differentiate between two types of tags that occur in English: interrogative tags and interrogative parentheticals as the examples (1) and (2) show respectively.

    (1) *She looks quite busy, doesn't she?*

    (2) *She looks quite busy, don't you think?*

Interrogative tag in (1) is the type which would be described as a "variable tag" further in this work, whereas interrogative parenthetical in (2) represents the type which would be called "fixed phrase tag". Both of the tags are added to a clause *She looks quite busy*, which Huddleston and Pullum (2002, 891) call the **anchor**. The anchor is usually a declarative clause, but it can also be interrogative or imperative.

2.1   Formal and semantic characteristics of fixed phrase tags

Fixed phrase tags, interrogative parentheticals or invariant tag questions (Quirk et al. 1985, 814) can be found across all languages. They have the same semantic function as variable question tags, but their structure is different. They encourage the hearer to take part in a conversation, although the hearer's answer might be non-verbal or a simple *hmm* or *yes*. Fixed phrase tags are attached to a declarative or an exclamatory clause.

According to Quirk et al. (1985, 814), invariant tag questions have the same form no matter what the polarity of the anchor is, as the example (3) clearly illustrates.

(3) a) *Mary bought the flowers, am I right?* (positive anchor)

 b) *Mary didn't buy the flowers, am I right?* (negative anchor)

Quirk et al. (1985, 814) state that invariant tag questions always take a rising tone regardless of the polarity of the anchor, so both (3) a) and b) would have a rising tone in spoken language. The falling tone, if used, would be considered as marked and it would feel more insistent.

Besides the invariant tag *am I right?*, following tags can be used as well: *don't you think?, isn't that so?, wouldn't you say?*. The comment clauses such as *you know* and *I hope* also belong to the category of invariant tags; they are not questions though (Quirk et al. 1985, 814). Huddleston and Pullum (2002, 895) state that parentheticals such as *would you say* can be used in a non-parenthetical way.

(4) a) *Would you say it is safe?*

 b) *Is it safe, would you say?*

 (Huddleston and Pullum 2002, 895)

The expression *would you say* is used in a non-parenthetical way in (4) a), only in the second sentence b), the expression is used in a parenthetical way since it can be omitted without any change of meaning. Parenthetical tags can be inserted inside a longer clause such the expression *would you say* in the example (5).

(5) *Is it, would you say, the best movie Peter Jackson has ever directed?*

The parenthetical tag *would you say*, which is inserted in the middle of a statement, serves to catch the hearer's attention.

Huddleston and Pullum (2002, 896 – 897) differentiate between four combinations of the anchor and the tag: declarative anchor with a declarative parenthetical, declarative anchor with an interrogative parenthetical, interrogative anchor with an interrogative parenthetical and interrogative parenthetical with an echo-question anchor, as the example (6) illustrates respectively.

(6) a) *It is quite safe, I think.*

 b) *It is safe, don't you think?*

 c) *Is it safe, would you say?*

 d) *He's going to what, did you say?*

 (Huddleston and Pullum 2002, 896 – 897)

The type (6) a) is used to weaken the commitment of the speaker, although tags such as *I'm sure* and *I have no doubt* would serve to strengthen the statement of the anchor. The second type (6) b) is pragmatically similar to variable question tags because the speaker expects a confirmation from the hearer. The third type (6) c) might be seen as a sequence of two questions, however, the tag serves to ask the hearer's opinion about the anchor, and therefore the tag *would you say* can be replaced by the

statement *in your opinion* which would be also more formal. The tag in the last type (6) d) usually serves to clarify one part of the previous statement which could have been overheard. The hearer is expected to repeat the statement and clarify what he meant.

2.2 Fixed phrase tags in other languages

Invariant tag questions which are similar to example (3) can be found in languages such as Czech, French, German or Danish. They also seek confirmation from the hearer. There are some examples below, starting with **Czech**.

> (7) *Jana je teď v kině,*   *že?*
>
>   Jane is now in cinema,   that?
>
>   'Jane is in the cinema now, right?'

Example (7) shows that Czech tag questions are usually created by adding the particle *že* at the end of a clause which is separated from the tag by a comma. The tag *že* has a rising intonation, and it may be used with both positive and negative anchors.

There is also a stronger form *že ano* 'that yes' and its less formal form *že jo* 'that yeah' as the example (8) illustrates.

> (8) *Ona si taky musí udělat úkol,*   *že jo?*
>
>   She   also   must do   homework,   that yeah?
>
>   'She must also do her homework, right?'

The intonation of *že jo* is falling, which also suggest that the speaker wants to emphasize the fact that she must do the homework as well, not only the speaker. One should notice that *že jo* is connected to a positive anchor. For a negative anchor, the tag *že ne* 'that not' must be used. Compare the grammaticality of the examples (9) and (10).

> (9) **Ona si taky musí udělat úkol,*   *že ne?*
>
>   She   also must do   homework,   that not?
>
>   'She must also do her homework, right?'
>
> (10) *Lucie nemůže jít dnes do kina,*   *že ne?*
>
>   Lucy   can't   go today to cinema,   that not?
>
>   'Lucy can't go to the cinema today, right?'

The previous examples (9) and (10) suggest that the tags *že jo* and *že ne* reinforce the message in the anchors due to the same polarity.

In **German** like in Czech, invariant tag questions are normally used. German uses particles such as *ja* 'yes', *nicht* 'not', *oder* 'or' or a combination of a particle and an adjective such as *nicht wahr* 'not true'. In an informal conversation, the tag *stimmt's* 'is that correct' can be used (Vennemann 2009, 316). Example (11) shows possible German sentence with an invariant question tag.

(11) *Er kommt morgen   nicht, oder?*

    He comes tomorrow not,   or?

    'He won't come tomorrow, right?'

In this case, *oder* as a tag is more hesitant and can be answered by both *yes* and *no*. The speaker is not sure if he really comes tomorrow. The tags *nicht wahr* or *stimmt's* would be more confident in the statement of the anchor, and they would expect confirmation from the hearer.

    A similar way to create invariant tag questions can be observed in **Danish**, which uses several particles such as *vel* 'right', *eller* 'or' and *eller hva(d)* 'or what'. Example (12) presents a sentence with a positive tag *vel*.

(12) *Nej det har   i   ikk' v[el]*

    Nej that have you not   rig[ht]

    'No, you don't, do you?'

    (Heinemann 2005, 390)

According to the linguistic webpage Samtale Grammatik (2016)[1], *eller* is a conjunction in written language which appears as a pre- or post-modifier, but in spoken language, it is used as a tag at the end of a statement, so it creates a small question. The intonation is falling or straight in most cases. The function of the *or*-question[2] is to request a confirmation or rejection, so the person can answer with *ja* 'yes' or *nej* 'no' as the following example (13) suggests.

(13)   01 *PRE:* *[·hhh å s*å̲* (er) det s*å̲*] >s*å̲* ka du vel< f*å̲* noget*

                  "hhh and then is it then]then can you (part) get some"

   02 *THO:* *[°mmm° ↘   ]*

   03 *PRE:* *d̲eltid der*u̲*de **eller** ↘*

                  *"part time out there **or**"*

   04 *THO:* ***ja:m** det k*a̲* jeg det h*a̲*r Per sagt at je:g g*e̲*rne måtte*

                  "well that I can, Per has said that I can"

   05   *f*o̲*rtsætte der*u̲*de °indtil v*i̲*dere° ↘*

                  "continue out there until further notice"

    (Samtale Banken, Sam 2, preben_og_thomas, L1423)

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[1] The page of Samtale Grammatik is written in Danish; the English translation was delivered to me by one of the authors of the article on *eller*-questions and *eller hva(d)*-questions, Nicholas Hedegaard Mikkelsen.

[2] I decided not to use the Danish terms to talk about *eller*-question and *eller hva(d)*-questions, I will use my own labels in this paper: *or*-questions and *or-what*-questions respectively.

The example (13) shows a conversation between Preben and Thomas in which they are talking about a part time job. Preben ends the third line with an *or*-question which Thomas answers with *ja*, so in this case, Thomas confirms Preben's presumption.

An opposite answer can be seen in the following example (14) which transcribes a conversation between Mette and Tine in which they talk about illnesses.

(14)   01   *ME:*   *er det ↑leddene **elle:r** ↘=*

                 "is it the joints or"

    02   *TI:*   *=**nej** det e:r °øh° altså hun ø:h(m) hun >får det*

             "no it is ehm well she ehm she feels"

    03   *simpelthen< dårligt↗ hun kan ik om<sætte<em> ø:h> maden å*

             "simply bad she cannot transform ehm the food and"

    04   *energien å: ↘*

             "the energy and"

(Samtale Banken, Sam 3, 225 deller, L124)

It can be observed that Mette's *or*-question expresses uncertainty about the diagnose. After that, Tine answers *nej* and explains that it is not the joints, but a metabolic disorder.

It can be further observed that the Danish *or*-questions do not presume either a positive or a negative answer to appear. Example (13) demonstrated the *or*-question which was followed by a positive answer, whereas example (14) represents the opposite case where the *or*-question is followed by a negative answer. The o*r*-questions thus express uncertainty.

Besides the particle *eller*, *eller hva* or *eller hvad* can be used as a question tag. *Hva* (spoken language) and *hvad* (written language) are interrogative pronouns similar to English *what* which are used at the end of an utterance with the particle *eller* as the example (15) suggests.

(15)   01 *P:*   ***hva** var d' du sku ↑lave på den tur egentlig→*

             "what was it actually you had to do on that trip"

    02   *var det refe↑rat **eller hva**→*

          "was it a summary or what"

    03   *(0.3)*

    04 *B:*   ***nej** det noget der hedder f:eature ↘*

          "no it something that's called a feature"*

    05   *(.)*

    06 *B:*   *en en >skrivemåde der hedder< feature ↘*

          "a a way of writing that's called feature"

(AULing, DTKOK, 43 phone)

In the conversation (15) above, Pelle and Bjarne are talking about Bjarne's trip and what he should have done there. Pelle asks if it was a summary or something else by using the *or-what*-question at the end of the sentence *var der referat*. His assumption is, however, rejected when Bjarne answers *nej*. It can be seen that *eller hva* expresses uncertainty of what was uttered in the anchor *var der referat*. The function of *or*-questions and *or-what*-questions is according to previous examples very similar because they express uncertainty of the speaker, so the hearer can answer with both *yes* and *no*.

In this section, fixed phrased tags could be seen. Various languages such as Czech, German and Danish were discussed in more detail. The most neutral intonation for the English invariant tag questions is according to Quirk et al. (1985, 814) a rising one. The falling intonation is considered more insistent. The same cannot be applied to other languages though. Czech allows rising intonation only for the tag *že* 'that', which is used with both positive and negative anchors. The falling intonation with Czech invariant tags is used when the tags *že ano* 'that yes' and *že ne* 'that not' have the same polarity as the anchor. The invariant tags *že ano* and *že ne* also feel more insistent. The only invariable tags which differ in intonation from the English prototype are Danish invariant *or*-questions and *or-what*-questions which always prefer straight or falling intonation, but which can be followed by both positive and negative answer as well as preceded by a positive or a negative anchor.

Compared to English invariant tags, the usage is very similar in all languages. Invariant tags such as *don't you think?, isn't that so?, wouldn't you say?* and *am I right?* ask for confirmation. In case the speaker wants to emphasize something and show stronger his attitude, the falling tone would be used. Invariant tags will be compared with variable question tags in the following section.

3 VARIABLE QUESTION TAGS

Interrogative tags are defined similarly in various grammar books and dictionaries. A tag question is "short question added to a statement which requests assurance or confirmation regarding what is expressed in the main clause: *isn't is?* Fr. *n'est-ce pas?*" (Bussmann 2006, 1174). Huddleston and Pullum extend the definition in following way: "A tag is a short interrogative clause which may be negative or positive," (Huddleston and Pullum 2002, 892).

According to the combination of the polarity of the anchor and the tag, interrogative variable tags can be further divided into reversed or constant polarity tags (Huddleston and Pullum 2002, 892). With the combination of positive and negative anchor, there are four types of clauses with interrogative variable tags as examples (16) and (17) show.

(16) a) *Her mother is healthy, isn't she?*

b) *Her mother isn't healthy, is she?*

(17) a) *Her mother is healthy, is she?*

b) *Her mother isn't healthy, isn't she?*

Example (16) represents sentences where the anchor has a reversed polarity to the tag. The former sentence a) has positive-negative polarity, whereas the latter sentence b) has negative-positive polarity. Example (17) shows sentences with constant polarity where the anchor and the tag have the same polarity. Positive-positive polarity like the one in a) occurs much more frequently in a conversation than negative-negative polarity as the one in sentence b) (Huddleston and Pullum 2002, 892).

3.1 Formal properties of variable tag questions

Variable tag questions are formed in English in the following way: first goes a modal or an auxiliary verb which is followed by a pronominalized subject which must agree with the M/ A verb of the variable tag. This would be enough in case of a positive polarity tag. In case of a negative polarity tag, particle *not* must follow the pronominalized subject. It is also possible that contracted form *n't* appears; in that case, *n't* is attached to the M/ A verb.

(18) a) *M/ A – S$_{PRO}$ – (not)*

b) *M/ A (+ n't) – S$_{PRO}$*

Rule (18) shows two ways of creating variable question tags. The former example a) is more formal with the negation *not* at the end of the tag, whereas the latter example b) is less formal with the contracted form *n't*. In a positive tag, a) and b) would be the same. Following example (19) represents the structure in (18) in concrete examples. Both sentences represent reversed polarity structure with positive anchors and negative tags.

(19) a) *Tom always watches TV on Sunday evening, does he not?*

b) *Tom always watches TV on Sunday evening, doesn't he?*

It must be highlighted that the auxiliary or modal verb inside the question tag must be the same as the one in the anchor. Moreover, the verb in the anchor is the same one which appears in the so called tense or Ω position. The following rule (20), which was taken and adapted from Veselovská (2009, 138), illustrates the order of verbs in a predicate in a declarative clause.

(20) S – **M/ A** – (Neg.) – Aux – V(lex)

The subject is followed by a modal or auxiliary verb which stands in the Ω position. Verbs in the Ω position may be followed by a negator such as *not* and *never*. Other auxiliaries follow the negator and at the end, a lexical verb is placed. If there is only a lexical verb in the anchor, auxiliary *do* appears instead because the Ω position in the anchor remains empty, but it becomes visible again in the tag.

Although the declarative clause (anchor) can be negated by *not* and *never*, which usually follow the Ω position, it is not the same case in the tag. As the following example (21) shows, only the negator *not* can appear in the variable tag (Culicover 1992, 197).

(21)   a) *She likes sweets, doesn't she?*

          b) **She likes sweets, does she never?*

The pronominalized subject must also correspond to the subject in the anchor. Examples (22) and (23) show correct and incorrect versions of the verb in the question tag respectively.

(22) *Tom and Anna can come tonight, can't they?*

(23) **The team usually plays well, plays it not?*

Example (23) is incorrect because the tag *plays it not?* contains a lexical verb *plays* which can never appear in the Ω position. The auxiliary *does* must be used instead. It follows from the previous two examples that only a limited number of verbs may appear in a variable question tag, namely auxiliary and modal verbs.

Here, I would like to describe the conditions under which a variable tag may appear. First, tags are strongly bound in syntax to the anchor. It means that a tag copies the anchor and repeats subject and the verb as proforms. Subject and Predicate are prototypically necessary in all English declarative clauses. Predicate is, however, not repeated as it was in the anchor, there is an ellipsis which is allowed in English. It means that only the verb in the Ω position is repeated in the tag. Culicover (1992, 211) argues that it is the VP-ellipsis which allows the formation of variable tags in general, so languages which allow VP-ellipsis should be able to create variable question tags. Following rule (24) illustrates the principle of proforms and VP-ellipsis.

(24)   a) *Mary has always been able to paint such portraits, hasn't she?*

          b) **Mary has always been able to paint such portraits, hasn't she been able to?*

          c) **Mary has always been able to paint such portraits, hasn't he?*

Sentence (24) b) is ungrammatical because the rule about VP-ellipsis has been broken. Sentence c) breaks the rule about proforms which must go back to the anchor, but the pronoun *he* is not a proform of *Mary*.

A tag which would contain an adjunct would be also incorrect since tags can copy only subjects and verbs in the Ω position. In the following example (25), the time adjunct *on Tuesday* is redundant in the tag.

(25) *Mary will go to New York, won't she on Tuesday?* (Culicover 1992, 202)

Huddleston and Pullum (2002, 892) talk about two ways of formation of tags. First, the tag is created by reducing an interrogative clause which is derived from the anchor. They build the tag in three steps:

(26)   *i) your friends made a good job of it (anchor)*

   ii) your friends didn't make a good job of it (step 1: reverse polarity)

   iii) didn't your friends make a good job of it? (step 2: form interrogative)

   iv) didn't they? (step 3: reduce)

   (Huddleston and Pullum, 2002, 892)

In case we want to form a constant polarity tag, we skip step one. This first option of forming a tag is too long to be used in a conversation. A second disadvantage is that more complicated clauses would be more problematic, such as the one in (27):

(27) *Few of them liked it, did they?* (Huddleston and Pullum 2002, 892)

One has to realize that *few of them* is actually a constituent which causes sentence negation, so in case of reversed polarity, the tag must be positive. This constituent has no positive counterpart, so step one as such cannot be covered in the process.

The second option is the direct formation of the tag (Huddleston and Pullum 2002, 893). Several steps must be followed. Some of them were already mentioned in (18). Other steps include preserving the same tense as the one in the predicate of the anchor, agreement with the subject, polarity according to whether we want to create a tag with reversed or constant polarity, and finally the negation. Less formal is the contracted form *n't*, more formal is *not* at the end of the tag.

Of course, some verbs do not offer the contracted forms in current English, such as *may*. In this case, several things can be done. First, the more formal analytical way could be used. Second, similar modal verbs can replace the negative form of *may*. Quirk et al. (1985, 811) suggest using modal verbs such as *can't* or *mightn't*. In case we refer to the future, *won't* can be used as well. Following example (28) shows a possible solution for the negative tag with *may* in the anchor:

(28) *?They may be there next week, mightn't they?/ won't they?* (Quirk et al. 1985, 812)

As the example (28) shows, both tags *mightn't they?* and *won't they?* are possible, although the question mark at the beginning of the sentence indicates that this sentence is not that felicitous. It would be understood by a native speaker though.

A similar process could be done with the modal verb *ought to*, but in this case, *shouldn't* would be used as an alternative as in (29).

(29) *We ought to go now, shouldn't we?/ oughtn't we?* (Quirk et al. 1985, 812)

Quirk et al. do not explain why the modal verb *should* is sometimes used instead of *ought to* in the tag. The reason could possibly be that the verb *should* occurs more frequently in a conversation than *ought to*, so it is less prototypical than *should*, on the other hand, the expression *oughtn't* is completely all right because the contracted form *n't* is used with the verb *ought to*, and both verbs have the same modal meaning.

Unlike the fixed phrase tags, where the anchor can be interrogative (see example (6) b)), in case of variable tags, the anchor must be declarative. As Quirk et al. state, invariant tag questions "may be appended to statements and exclamations," (Quirk et al. 1985, 814). Culicover (1992, 204) partially admits interrogative anchors, but their tags are more like echo questions with falling intonation and constant polarity as in (30).

(30)　a) *?Are you leaving, are you?*
　　　b) *?Is John back, is he?*
　　　(Culicover 1992, 205)

Example (30) represents *yes-/ no*-questions as the anchors. If *wh*-questions would be put as anchors, sentences would be ungrammatical because the function of a tag is to request a confirmation in most cases, however, *wh*-questions ask for new information, so the "pragmatic consistency" as Culicover (1992, 2005) calls it would be broken as in (31).

(31) **What is Mary saying, is she?* (Culicover 1992, 205)

Interrogative clauses in general cannot be followed by a variable tag because the truth value of the interrogative clause is not expresses, so it cannot be questioned (Culicover 1992, 200).

Imperative clauses, on the other hand, may be followed by a question tag. It is usually *will you?* or *won't you?* for second person and *shall we?* for first person plural. Examples (32) and (33) show imperative anchors and their tags for second person and first person plural, respectively.

(32) *Close the window, will you?*
(33) *Let's go out, shall we?*

It should be noticed that the Ω position in the imperatives *close the window* and *let's go out* remains empty as well as the position of the subject. Both the Ω position and the subject must appear in the variable tags which follow the main imperative clauses.

Although the tags in imperative such as *will you?* and *won't you?* for the second person are most common, other tags may appear such as: *can't you?, won't somebody?, will somebody or other?, can one or you?, why don't you?* (Quirk et al. 1985, 813).

Exclamatory clauses can be followed by a tag *be + 3ʳᵈ person pronoun* which expects the agreement of the hearer (Quirk et al. 1985, 813). The tag may be attached even to a verbless exclamation as the example (34) b) shows. Example (34) a) shows a sentence with a finite verb *is* in the anchor.

(34)   *a) What a lovely girl she is, isn't she?*

        b) What nice weather, isn't it?

Similarly to fixed phrased tags, variable question tags can be inserted in the middle of a long statement (Quirk et al. 1985, 811). In the example (35), the tag *isn't it* is inserted between the main clause which is the anchor and subordinate subject clause.

(35) *It is true, isn't it, that your best friend runs for a mayor in this election?*

In this section, several grammatical rules for creating variable question tags in English have been discussed. It was noticed that the most important is the existence of a declarative, imperative or exclamatory clause. The variable tag copies the subject and the Ω position from the predicate which may be accompanied by a negator *not/ n't*, but nothing else is allowed to appear in the variable tag. Culicover's (1992) approach was more detailed than the one by Huddleston and Pullum (2002, 892 – 893) in the step of reduction. Culicover (1992, 211) also suggests that the existence of VP-ellipsis is necessary for languages to be able to create variable question tags. The following section will offer a semantic analysis of the variable tag questions.

3.2   Semantic properties of variable tag questions

In order to look deeper at semantic properties of variable tag questions, I will quote one definition: "The function of question tags is to appeal to the addressee for agreement," (Biber et al. 1999, 139). Biber et al. state in the quotation above that the reason question tags are used is to get a reaction to what has been said. In most cases, it is agreement. However, agreement is not the only reason question tags are used.

Tottie and Hoffmann (2006, 297 – 301) examine various types of tag questions from a semantic and pragmatic point of view. Their research is based on more sources such as *Women, Men and Politeness* (1995) by Janet Holmes. Holmes (1995, 80) distinguishes two major types of tags: epistemic modal tags which usually have rising intonation and affective tags which have falling intonation. Affective tags have further three subtypes: facilitative, softening and challenging tags. The function of affective tags is to express politeness, whereas the function of epistemic modal tags is to express uncertainty, as the example (36) illustrates.

(36) *Fay Weldon's lecture is at eight, isn't it?* (Holmes 1995, 80)

It can be seen that the speaker is not absolutely sure what time the lecture begins, and the uncertainty is magnified by rising intonation.

Facilitative tags invite the hearer politely to participate in the discourse. They serve to start a new topic in a conversation. Example (37) could be pronounced when a host asks his guest about his new job.

(37) *You've got a new job, Tom, haven't you?* (Holmes 1995, 81)

The speaker is quite sure that *Tom* has a new job; there is no uncertainty in the statement, there is only politeness, and *Tom* is invited to tell others more about the new job.

Softening tags, as the name suggests, are used to soften a criticism or an order. If they are used, the statement does not look so strict. Example (38) describes a situation when an older brother reproaches his younger brother who has just stepped into a cat's bowl and spilled the milk.

(38) *That was a really dumb thing to do, wasn't it?* (Holmes 1995, 82)

Challenging tags are more impoliteness than politeness devices because they challenge the hearer to take part in a conversation when he is obviously not going to (Homes 1995, 80 – 81). In the example (39), a superintendent is criticizing a detective constable's performance.

(39) *A: Now you er fully understand that, don't you?*
   B: Yes, sir, indeed, yeah.
  (Thomas 1989, 152)

A second important work which examines the pragmatic function of tag questions was conducted by Algeo (1990), who divides tag questions into informational, confirmatory, punctuational, peremptory and aggressive (later called antagonistic).

Algeo's informational tags correspond to Holmes' epistemic modal tags; both have rising intonation. The speaker who uses informational tags knows something about what he is asking about, but he does not know the answer (Algeo 1990, 445). There is a certain kind of uncertainty there.

Peremptory and aggressive tags with falling intonation correspond to Holmes' affective tags. Peremptory tags are preceded by anchors which contain universal truth which one cannot disagree with (Algeo 1990, 447 – 448). Aggressive tags are attached to anchors which contain information the hearer cannot know (Algeo 1190, 447).

Punctuational tags function as emphasis of what has been said and what is obvious (Algeo 1990, 446). The answer generally agrees with the anchor, as example (40) suggests.

(40) *You physicists, you haven't done Old English before, have you? I thought so.*

The last type, confirmatory tags, asks for agreement. Confirmatory tags are pronounced to expect a response from the hearer, and they may have rising or falling intonation (Algeo 1990, 445). It is the type Biber et al. (1999, 139) are talking about in their definition.

Tottie and Hoffmann (2006, 301) put the categorization together and make their own terms based on both Holmes and Algeo. For better orientation, they present a table with the various pragmatic functions of variable question tags.

Table 1, Classification of Pragmatic Functions of Tags (Tottie and Hoffmann 2006, 301)

Macro category	Holmes	Algeo	Tootie and Hoffmann
Epistemic modal	Modal	Informational	Informational
		Confirmatory	Confirmatory
Affective	Facilitative	Confirmatory	Facilitating
	Softening		
		Punctuational	Attitudinal
	Challenging	Peremptory	Peremptory
		Aggressive, antagonistic	Aggressive

There are basically two main semantic types which differ in intonation: epistemic modal tags with rising intonation and affective tags with falling intonation. Therefore, I would like to present a table with semantic types of variable tag questions based on intonation. Tootie and Hoffmann (2006, 300) do not give information on intonation since they had to rely on written corpora in most cases, so I will consider only the semantic types from Holmes and Algeo. Following Table 2 shows the difference in intonation in individual semantic types of tags.

Table 2, Semantic types of variable question tags based on intonation

Macro category	Holmes	Algeo
Epistemic modal ↗	Modal ↗	Informational ↗
Affective ↘	Facilitative ↘	Confirmatory ↘ (↗)
	Softening ↘	
		Punctuational ?
	Challenging ↘	Peremptory ↘
		Aggressive, antagonistic ↘

As Table 2 suggests, modal tags from Holmes and informational tags from Algeo are similar in function and in intonation. More controversial are confirmatory tags from Algeo because he mentions that although confirmatory tags may have rising intonation, they are predominantly falling (Algeo 1990, 445 – 446). This was the reason Tootie and Hoffmann (2006, 301) split the category in two smaller ones as was shown in Table 1. Algeo also does not mention what intonation punctuational

tags have, but it could be assumed, based on the fact that punctuational tags belong to affective macro category, that they are falling.

According to the research conducted by Tottie and Hoffmann, the most common types in two corpora COCA and BNC are confirmatory, facilitating and attitudinal tags which cover 90 % of all tags which are used in PDE, although tags as such are nine times more frequent in British English than in American English (Tottie and Hoffmann 2006, 301). It is obvious that the most frequent types are tags which belong to the macro category of affective tags which have falling intonation.

3.3   Variable question tags in other languages

Only a few languages in the world have variable question tags similar to those in English. Culicover (1992, 211 – 213) claims that English is the only language having VP ellipsis and lexical tense, and therefore it will have variable question tags with the structure described earlier in section 3.1. In fact, there are more languages with variable question tags, and they are connected historically (not necessarily in genealogy) as well as geographically.

In this section, I will compare English variable question tags with variable question tags in other languages, using examples in North Germanic languages such as Norwegian and Danish. The second part will examine Welsh, which is a Celtic language, but with a long history of contact with English. It seems that one of the most significant things the above mentioned languages have in common are variable tags.

As mentioned above in section 2.2, **Danish** has the possibility to create fixed phrase tags using *vel* 'right', *eller* 'or' and *eller hva(d)* 'or what'. However, this is not the only option Danish offers. Similarly to English, Danish allows variable question tags which have the same structure. Example (41) shows a positive anchor with a negative variable tag *var han ikk* 'was he not'.

(41) *Det var han da glad for var han ikk?*
'Surely he was happy about it, wasn't he?'
(Heinemann 2005, 395)

It can be observed that the copula *var* from the anchor is repeated in the tag. The personal pronoun *han* is also copied from the anchor to the tag. The verb *var* agrees with the subject *han* in the anchor and the tag. The negation is realized in an analytical way with the particle *ikk* unlike in English which uses the contracted form *n't* as the most common variation. It can also be observed that the tense remains the same in the anchor and the tag; there is the verb *to be* in past tense with the concrete realization *var*. All the conditions given by Huddleston and Pullum (2002, 893) and Culicover (1992) are fulfilled, so it can be said that example (41) can be considered a positive statement with a negative variable question tag.

Heinemann (2005, 395) further states that negative tags added to a positive anchor are more likely to be answered positively rather than negatively. The speaker thus expects confirmation or disconfirmation in case of a negative response. A typical example of a negative tag and a positive anchor can be seen in the following example (42). The tag consists only of a negative particle *ikk* 'not'. The answer contains a less formal particle *jo* compared to *ja* 'yes'.

(42)   *Malte: [Ja, d]et' den der junk thing der **ikk***?

'Yes, it's that junk thing, isn't it?'

Mathias: hJoh

'hYes'

(Heinemann 2005, 396)

Norwegian also offers the same structure for variable question tags as English. There must be the same auxiliary in the Ω position in the anchor and the tag. In case the Ω position remains empty, and there is only a lexical verb in the anchor, the auxiliary *gjera* 'do' appears in the tag instead. Emonds and Faarlund (2014, 125) present several sentences in Norwegian with the verb in the Ω position in both the anchor and the tag, as example (43) illustrates.

(43)   a) *John har gått heim, har han ikkje?*

'John has gone home, has he not?'

b) *Landet er eit demokrati, er det ikkje?*

'The coutry is a democracy, is it not?'

c) *Ho vil stille til val, vil ho ikkje?*

'She will stand for election, will she not?'

(Emonds and Faarlund 2014, 125)

It can be seen that the Ω position is occupied by auxiliary verbs *har* 'has' in a), *er* 'is' in b) and a modal verb *vil* 'will' in c).

The following example (44) shows a sentence with a lexical verb in the anchor.

(44)   a) *John gjekk heim, gjorde han ikkje?*

'John went home, did he not?'

b) *Ho stiller til val, gjer ho ikkje?*

'She runs for election, does she not?'

(Emonds and Faarlund 2014, 125)

Both examples a) and b) demonstrate the rule that if the Ω position is not visible in the anchor, auxiliary *do* appears in the tag. The tense of the auxiliary in the tag copies the tense from the anchor, so the rule about the same tense is also fulfilled.

The auxiliary or modal verb which occurs in the Ω position in the anchor cannot be replaced by another auxiliary such as *gjera* 'do' in the tag, as following example (45) suggests.

(45) *John har gått heim, gjorde han ikkje?

'John had gone home, did he not?'

(Emonds and Faarlund 2014, 126)

It is important to compare English, Danish and Norwegian ways of realization of variable tags with West Germanic languages such as German. As Emonds and Faarlund (2014, 125) point out, German does not create variable tags. Such variable tags would be ungrammatical, as example (46) clearly shows.

(46)   a) *Eva war gestern   nicht zu Hause, war sie?

       Eve was yesterday not at home,   was she?

       'Eve wasn't at home yesterday, was she?'

   b) *Er ist so süß, ist er nicht?

       He is so sweet, is he not?

       'He is so sweet, isn't he?'

   c) *Der Chefkoch hat das Gericht gut vorbereitet, hat er nicht?

       The chef   has the meal   well prepared, has he not?

       'The chef prepared the meal very well, didn't he?'

If Danish and Norwegian variable tags are compared with English variable tags, a lot of similarities can be observed:

- First, there is the Ω position which allows only auxiliaries or modals both in the anchor clause and the tag.

- Second, the tense of the anchor corresponds with the tense of the tag.

- Third, the pronominalized subject of the tag corresponds with the subject of the anchor.

In fact, the structure of North Germanic variable tags functions the same way as the English one. However, if variable tags are compared to German ungrammatical realization of variable tags as in example (46), one has to ask why that is. The answer seems to be evident. It is unlikely that the unique structure that variable tags represent accidentally developed in three different languages, namely Danish, Norwegian and English. One had to influence the other. As Emonds and Faarlund (2014, 44) state, settlers speaking Old Norse influenced the grammar of the original inhabitants in the Danelaw, so the structure was taken to Middle English and from Middle English, it continued to further stages in the English language development.

Another significant thing that has to be considered is that **Welsh**, despite being a Celtic language, but not a North-Germanic one, has the same structure of variable tag questions as Danish, Norwegian and also English. One of the reasons is geographical. English and Welsh are contiguous, so it is likely that due to language contact, the structure of tag questions was influenced. Was it English which influenced Welsh or the other way around?

I would like answer this question by comparing English variable tags with **Welsh** variable tags. Welsh is a Celtic Britannic language whose speakers were in close contact with Anglo-Saxons and later with English on the British Islands. It is still spoken in Wales today, although Welsh speakers are bilingual and they can also speak English. The following part will follow rather closely the article "Tag questions in Welsh" by Rottet and Sprouse (2008).

We can divide present day Welsh into two varieties: Formal Welsh (FW) which is the "high variety" and Modern Colloquial Welsh (MCW) which is the "low variety" (Rottet and Sprouse 2008, 22). MCW can be further divided into various dialects, the most important being South Walian and North Walian. Similarly to English, South Walian tag questions are formed on the basis of reversed polarity, whereas North Walian tag questions primarily create tags with constant polarity. All the different varieties go back to Early Modern Welsh (op.cit., 22).

Formal or Literary Welsh is used in formal writing and speech. The grammar of FW is united across the whole Wales and its main characteristics is, that it is a null-subject language compared to MCW (op.cit., 23).

FW distinguishes two types of anchors (op.cit., 28). First, emphatic anchors which allow only non-verbal invariable question tags which contain an interrogative or interrogative negative particle and a pronoun such as *ai e* 'interrogative particle + he/ it' and *onid e* 'interrogative negative particle + he/ it'. What is more, the combination of a negative emphatic anchor with a negative tag is not possible, as example (47) shows.

(47) **Nid math o siocled   yw   hwn, onid   e?*
      NEG kind of chocolate be.3SG.EMPH this   Q. NEG he/it"
      "This isn't a kind of chocolate, isn't it?"
       (op.cit., 28)

The second type of anchor is a declarative clause with traditional Welsh VSO word order in which V stands for the finite verb. Those anchors are typically null-subject clauses. Only those kind of anchors in FW allow variable verbal tags.

However, there is a further restriction on what kind of polarities can be combined. The only option is the combination of a positive anchor and a negative tag, as example (48) illustrates.

(48) *Yr ydym   yn cytuno, onid ydym?* (Thomas 1996, 532)
      PRT be.1PL PRT agree,   Q.NEG be.1PL
      "We agree, don't we?
      (Rottet and Sprouse 2008, 29)

In the above example, PRT stands for a particle. Both anchor and the tag use the auxiliary *be* in 1st person singular. It can be noticed that there is no subject in the anchor and the tag, there are only the

particles *yr*, *yn* and *onid* and the finite verb *ydym* which expresses tense, mood, person and number, similarly to other pro-drop languages such as Czech.

It was also observed that variable tags in FW use only a limited set of verbs: auxiliaries, modals and the dummy *gwneud* 'to do, make' which replaces the lexical verb from the anchor (Rottet and Sprouse 2008, 29). Lexical verbs could appear in responsives in Middle Welsh, so it is presumed that variable tags could also use lexical verbs in Middle Welsh, although there were no variable tags to be found in available Middle Welsh texts (Evans 1989, 176).

To sum up, there are two types of tags in FW. Tags attached to emphatic clauses are invariant, and can be added to a positive or a negative clause with the exception of the combination of a negative anchor and a negative tag. The second type are clauses with traditional null-subject V(S)O word order which allow variable verbal tags. According to current research, only negative tags which are attached to positive anchors are possible. It is therefore again the reversed polarity which is used for variable tags as well as in English. According to Evans (1989, 176), tag questions are very rare in Welsh literature, and their first records come from mid- 19th century literature, because they are predominantly a feature of spoken and informal language and their use was much more limited than in the English literature. Earlier tracks of variable tag questions in Middle Welsh were not yet found.

Now, I would like to describe tag questions in Modern Colloquial Welsh. First, I will examine the word order in MCW which Rottet and Sprouse (2008, 23) define in following way:

(49) *(Wh-) – V$_{FINITE}$ – S – V$_{NON\text{-}FINITE}$ – O$_{DIRECT}$*

As the rule (49) clearly states, the normal word order in MCW begins with a finite verb which is followed by a subject. The subject is followed by non-finite verb which precedes direct object. This word order is used for both declarative clauses as well as *yes-/no-*questions. In case a *wh-* interrogative clause is made, we put the *wh-* element in front of the finite verb. In fact, the word order for interrogative clauses of both types is the same one as in English.

It is also important to distinguish between two types of anchors: positively conductive and negatively conductive. Positively conductive are such anchors which "assume an affirmative answer on the part of the hearer" (op.cit., 21). It means that the polarity of such an anchor is positive because as was said before, tags expect a confirmation of what is said in the anchor. Negatively conductive anchors, on the other hand, expect a negative answer from the hearer, and their polarity is negative.

Positively conductive anchors in South Walian (SW) are accompanied by the tag in the form of *ond* + finite verb + subject pronoun (op.cit., 32). *Ond* in the tag does not change, but the finite verb varies according to person, number and mood. South Walian like English uses visible subjects, so the subject from the anchor is repeated as a pronominalized subject in the tag. Following example (50) illustrates anchors in the present tense.

(50) a) *Rwy   i 'n cytuno, ond ydw   i?*

     be.1$_{SG.AFF}$ I PRT agree   OND be.1$_{SG.INT}$ I

     "I agree, don't I?"

    b) *Rwyt   ti 'n cytuno, ond wyt   ti?*

     be.2$_{SG.AFF}$ you PRT agree   OND be.2$_{SG.INT}$ you

     "You agree, don't you?

   (op.cit., 32)

The example (50) a) shows a clause which has *i* as a pronoun. This pronoun is repeated in the anchor. The auxiliary verb *be* in Welsh takes different forms: *rwy* in the affirmative mood in the anchor and *ydw* in the interrogative mood in the tag. This is a difference if SW is compared to FW or English which do not have separate mood forms for declarative and interrogative forms of subjects. The latter example b) shows the same phenomenon with the verbs *rwyt* in the anchor and *wyt* in the tag. The pronoun *ti* is repeated from the anchor in the tag. The particle *ond* remains the same in both question tags.

    The difference in mood in the auxiliary is not the only one. The finite verbs also differ in tense. Example (51) shows positive anchors with their negative tags in past (imperfect) and future tense respectively.

(51) a) *Roedden   ni 'n cytuno, ond oedden   ni?*

     be.1$_{PL.AFF.IMPF}$ we PRT agree   OND be.1$_{PL.INT.IMPF}$ we

     "We agreed, didn't we?"

    b) *Byddwn   ni 'n cytuno, on' fyddwn   ni?*

     be.1$_{PL.AFF.FUT}$ we PRT agree   OND be.1$_{PL.INT.FUT}$ we

     "We will agree, won't we?"

   (op.cit., 33)

It can be noticed that although the finite verb changes the form according to tense, mood, person and number as in a) *roedden* in the anchor and *oedden* in the tag, and in b) *byddwn* in the anchor and *fyddwn* in the tag, the lexical verb *cytuno* 'agree' remains unchanged in both sentences since it is non-finite.

    The only exception which could be applied to all tags in MCW in general are tags in preterite tense. They are frozen in form, so they do not reflect the pronominalized subject of the anchor, but they always use the pronoun *fe* 'he'. They also do not reflect the finite verb of the anchor, but they use the dummy particle *do* which might be preceded by another negative particle *ond*, as example (52) shows.

(52) a) *Fe gytunon   no, ond do fe?*

     PRT agree.1$_{PL.PRET}$ we OND DO he

25

"We agreed, didn't we?"

(op.cit., 33)

So far, only the auxiliary *be* in various forms was used in the anchor and the tag with the exception of the preterite tense. In case there is a modal verb in the anchor, it is repeated in the tag. Welsh predicates seem to create analytical forms in all tenses. However, in case a synthetic verb appears in the anchor, it is replaced by the auxiliary *gwneud* 'to do, make' (op.cit., 35) in the anchor, as in (53).

(53) *Fe ffoniwn   ni, ond gwnawn   ni?*

PRT phone.1PL.AFF.FUT we OND do.1PL.INT.FUT we

"We will phone, won't we?"

(op.cit., 35)

Rottet and Sprouse (op.cit., 35) further admit that some verbs such as *cael* 'to get' are possible to repeat in the tag since they lost their semantic meaning.[3]

Positively conductive tags in North Walian (NW) are similar to those in SW. There are, however, three differences which show a further development of MCW (op.cit., 35):

- the particle *ond/ onid* in SW developed into *yn* in NW.
- NW is like FW a null-subject language, so there is no pronominalized subject to be repeated from the anchor in the tag.
- the auxiliary *bod* 'to be' gets a prefix *t-/ d-* which is normally spelled together with the finite verb; examples below use the separated form for better illustration.

(54)   a) *Dyn   ni 'n cytuno, yn t- ydyn?*

be.1PL.AFF we PRT agree   YN /t/ be.1PL.INT

"We agree, don't we?"

b) *Byddwn   ni 'n   cytuno, yn byddwn?*

be.1PL.AFF.FUT we PRT agree   YN be.1PL.INT.FUT

"We will agree, won't we?"

(op.cit., 35)

The above example (54) shows the realization of variable positively conductive question tags in NW. The former example a) is in the present tense, the latter example b) is in the future tense. Both tags contain the particle *yn* followed by the finite verb *bod* 'to be' in appropriate mood, tense, person and number.

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[3] In German, such verbs are called "Funktionsverben" and they occur in verbo-nominal phrases which are used in formal language.

Variable tags in NW can be realized without the particle *yn* (op.cit., 36), as example (55) shows. The former example a) is in the present tense, whereas the latter example b) is in the future tense.

(55) a) *Dyn   ni 'n cytuno, t- ydyn?*
        be.1$_{PL.AFF}$ we PRT agree   /t/ be.1$_{PL.INT}$
        "We agree, don't we?"

    b) *Byddwn   ni 'n   cytuno, byddwn?*
        be.1$_{PL.AFF.FUT}$ we PRT agree   be.1$_{PL.INT.FUT}$
        "We will agree, won't we?"
        (op.cit., 36)

As the example (55) suggests, reversed polarity changes to constant polarity in the NW examples. The tags thus contain just the finite verb *to be*. Compared to SW and English which prefer reverse polarity in most cases, NW suggests to be a further development concerning the form and the polarity.

Negatively conductive tags in SW can be realized in two ways (op.cit., 37). First, a positive tag is attached to a negative anchor. This is also the most frequent type. The positive tag contains a finite (auxiliary/ modal) verb and a pronominalized subject, as in example (56).

(56) a) *Dyn   ni ddim yn cytuno, ydyn   ni?*
        be.1$_{PL.NEG}$ we NEG PRT agree   be.1$_{PL.INT}$ we
        "We don't agree, do we?"

    b) *Fyddwn   ni ddim yn cytuno, fyddwn   ni?*
        be.1$_{PL.NEG.FUT}$ we NEG PRT agree   be.1$_{PL.INT.FUT}$ we
        "We won't agree, will we?"
        (op.cit., 37)

The tags in the above example (56) are similar to the tags in NW in the example (55). The only difference is the pronominalized subject *ni* 'we' in SW which does not occur in NW.

The seconds type of pattern is a negative anchor accompanied by a negative tag which contains the negative element *nac/ na* followed by a finite verb and a subject pronoun. This type is less frequent than the negative-positive type. Following example (57) shows the negative-negative type in present, future and preterite tense respectively.

(57) a) *Dyn   ni ddim yn cytuno, nac ydyn   ni?*
        be.1$_{PL.NEG}$ we NEG   PRT agree   NEG be.1$_{PL.INT}$ we
        "We don't agree, do we?"

    b) *Fyddwn   ni ddim yn cytuno, na fydden   ni?*
        be.1$_{PL.NEG.FUT}$ we NEG PRT agree   NEG be.1$_{PL.INT.FUT}$ we
        "We won't agree, will we?"

27

c) *Chytunon   ni ddim, naddo fe?*

agree.1PL.NEG.PRET we NEG   NEG.DO he

"We didn't agree, did we?"

(op.cit., 38)

The tags in (57) a) and b) are created regularly according to the rules of grammar. The negator *na/nac* is followed by the finite verb and a pronominalized subject. The third example c) is in preterite tense, so the negator *na* is attached to the dummy element *do* as *naddo*, followed by the pronoun *fe* 'he', as in every tag in preterite.

As was mentioned above, the negative-negative type in SW is much less frequent than the negative-positive type as in (56). The SW type of creating tag questions again proved to be similar to the English way.

The last polarity type to be examined are tags which carry negative conduciveness in North Walian. Compared to SW negatively conductive tags, where the negative-positive type was predominant, the negative-negative type is considered to be the most significant and the most frequent in NW (op.cit., 39).

Like in SW, there are two variants for negative tags. The first possibility is that the tag contains negative element *na(c)* which is followed by a finite verb as in example (58) below.

(58) *Dyn   ni ddim yn cytuno, nac ydyn?*

be.1PL.NEG we NEG PRT agree   NEG be.1PL.INT

"We don't agree, do we?"

(op.cit., 39)

The NW tag *nac ydyn* is similar to the negatively conductive tag *nac ydyn ni* in SW with the difference that there is no subject pronoun in NW. Similarly to SW, this kind of tag is less frequent than the other option.

The second possibility how to create a negatively conductive tag in NW is that the particle *yn* is put in front of the tag *nac ydyn*. This realization is also much more frequent than the first one. Example (59) illustrates the main variation of a negatively conductive tag in NW.

(59) *Dyn   ni ddim yn cytuno, yn nac ydyn?*

be.1PL.NEG we NEG PRT agree   YN NEG be.1PL.INT

"We don't agree, do we?"

(op.cit., 39)

Example (59) shows a negatively conductive tag *yn nac ydyn* which is attached to a negative anchor in the present tense.

So far, two systems of polarities were presented: a reversed polarity system for Formal Welsh and South Walian and a constant polarity system for North Walian. The question is how those two systems are related to English.

If we go back to the theory mentioned at the beginning of the section on Welsh variable tags, which asks whether English influenced Welsh or whether Welsh influenced English, there are two possible scenarios:

(60)　a) Scandinavian conquerors influenced Middle English which much later influenced Early Modern Welsh.

b) Scandinavian conquerors at first influenced Welsh and later, Welsh influenced Early Modern English.

The variable tag questions in the Middle period of both languages has not been found yet, but further analysis will consider only one of the two scenarios to be more likely. At first, we must look closer at the Welsh polarity systems.

The South Walian system is derived from Early Modern Welsh which survives nowadays as Formal Welsh (op.cit., 41). According to Rottet and Sprouse (op.cit., 43 – 44), it is likely that this kind of making variable tag questions with reverse polarity was taken from English which also prefers reverse polarity. The rules for variable tags are similar to those in English: there must always be a finite verb in the Ω position and a pronominalized subject, both resembling the anchor. The verb in the Welsh tag is usually the auxiliary *be* in most cases or a modal verb which reflects the auxiliary/ modal from the anchor. In case there is no finite auxiliary in the anchor, dummy *do* is used instead in the tag. The only option for using other verbs is the semi-auxiliary *get* which lost a lot of its meaning, and in many languages including Welsh, English and German, it became a functional verb. Welsh does not use contracted forms for negation with finite modal/ auxiliary verbs in the anchor. The negators *onid* and *na(c)* are always spelled separately. It thus follows from the formal properties of SW way of creating tag questions as well as the reverse polarity that the first scenario (60) a) would be true.

The North Walian system is completely different because it developed into a constant polarity system. Rottet and Sprouse (op.cit., 42) are of the opinion that one possible reason is the reinterpretation of the negative South Walian particle *onid*, which developed into *yn* in North Walian. In the historical process, the particle *onid* got grammaticalized (op.cit., 42). A typical consequence of grammaticalization is represented by the use of *yn* as a marker of predicate adjectives, adverbialized adjectives, present participles and resultatives. Example (61) shows *yn* in various contexts.

(61)　a) *Mae　　　Mair yn　falch.*

be.3SG.AFF　Mair　PRT proud

"Mair is proud."

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b) *Mae   Mair yn   gweithio.*

be.3SG.AFF Mair PRT work

"Mair is working."

(op.cit., 44)

The particle *yn* in the example (61) a) premodifies an adjective predicate, and in the example b) *yn* stands before the verb *gweithio* in the present participle. In both cases, the particle has only grammatical meaning.

In case of *yn* as part of a negative tag in NW, *yn* lost its negative meaning, in fact, it does not have any polarity at all, but its usage was extended, so it is now a marker of negative polarity tags (op.cit., 46). These considerations further show that the "contact relation" between Welsh and English concerns South Walian and not North Walian, and that properties of English tag questions are related to earlier Welsh, in particular Early Modern Welsh.

Another reason why the NW system operates with constant polarity is due to the symmetry with responses (Rottet and Sprouse 2008, 48). If there is a negative question tag in a negatively conductive anchor, the answer only copies the tag as in (62).

(62) *Dydy   Iwan ddim yn   dal, nag ydy?   Nag ydy.*

NEG.be.3SG Iwan NEG PRED tall NEG be.3SG   NEG be.3SG

"John isn't tall, is he?" "No."

(op.cit., 47)

In the example (62), the negative tag *nag ydy* is identical with the response *nag ydy*. Rottet and Sprouse (2008, 47) also argue that the responsives which correspond to the tags were modified due to the constant polarity which was first, or it could have been the other way around that the form of the responsives influenced the kind of polarity of variable tags in NW[4]. Either way, the system developed from reversed polarity to constant polarity.

To answer my question which way the English language was influenced, I will repeat four main arguments:

- Current Welsh speakers are bilingual, using English as one of the languages. The situation is similar to bilingualism in the Danelaw in the Middle English period.
- The two different varieties of MCW go back to Early Modern Welsh, a reverse polarity type
- Lexical verbs were used in responsives in earlier periods, so there is the likelihood that also lexical verbs were used in tag questions

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[4] For further explanation, see section 5.3.3.

- Nowadays, tag questions are rare to be found in the Welsh literature; no question tags appeared in Middle Welsh texts.

In this section, Danish, Norwegian and Welsh variable tag questions were described. All those three languages share a lot of similarities rather than differences in creating variable tag questions. The syntax of variable tags is based on copying proforms from the anchor. All languages have the Ω position which is used in the tag. If there is no modal/ auxiliary verb in the Ω position in the anchor, the auxiliaries *to do* or *to get* are used instead of a lexical verb. It seems to be likely that once a language possesses a separable Ω position, variable tag questions follow. This is the reason why e.g. German which also uses auxiliaries and semi-auxiliaries such as *get*, is not able to create grammatical variable tag questions (Vennemann 2009, 313).

Like in English, the polarity of Danish and Norwegian variable tags is reversed as well as tags in Formal Welsh and South Walian dialect of Welsh. The Welsh system is probably based on English which was taken from Scandinavian languages, namely Old Norse which developed into various languages such as Norwegian and Danish. The North Walian system is also based on the English system, but due to language development, reversed polarity changed to constant polarity. The explanation can be that there is always a symmetry between tag questions and short answers, though these ideas about Welsh are not the main point of this chapter.

4 HISTORICAL SOURCES OF ENGLISH TAG QUESTIONS

This section will examine the historical sources of English tag questions. I will describe the methodology of getting the data, and then I will present the results of my research on both fixed phrase tags as well as variable tags, and I will compare my results with the research carried out by Tottie and Hoffmann (2009).

4.1 Methodology

The aim of this research was to find fixed phrase tags as well as variable tags in texts which are older than from the year 1500. The presumption is that if there are no fixed phrase tags in the Middle English texts, it is unlikely that there will be any variable tags in the same texts. The reason is that question tags are usually used in spoken language, but the texts are of course written. In my research, I also covered texts from the 16th century, although this period already belongs to Early Modern English, but the drama texts were much more frequent in this period than in previous years, so this would furnish a good comparison.

In order to get some data, I was at first thinking about using a corpora of Middle English. The English department at Palacky University has the opportunity to use *The Penn Parsed Corpora of Historical English* (second edition), in which *Penn-Helsinki Parsed Corpus of Middle English* is included. Another advantage is that the corpus is syntactically parsed, so it enables more precise searching. Since it is distributed on a CD-ROM, everyone who is interested in historical English may use it. The only disadvantage was that for my research, I could not use the syntactic annotations because it would be too demanding to even find the proper queries, and since I wanted to find positive and negative variable tags with all possible personal pronouns, I realized that this is not the way to procede.

I therefore searched in *The Oxford Text Archive* in which one can search online and does not need any special equipment or knowledge of using the corpora. I went to the section "Catalogue" in which various texts can be found. I arranged the catalogue according to date, and went through all texts which were written in English. Figure 1 shows the texts which are arranged according to date on the webpage.
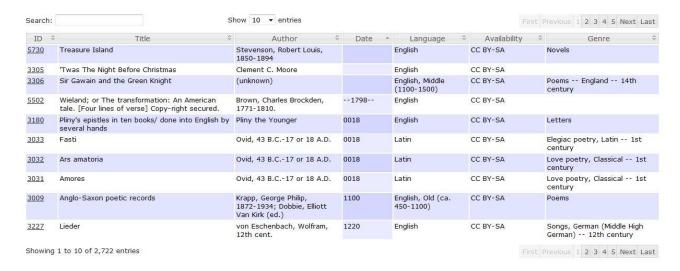
Figure 1, Texts in the catalogue of *The Oxford Text Archive* arranged according to date.

The web page in Figure 1 shows various criteria which determine every text. From left to right one can see ID, title, author, date, language, availability and genre. It helps to decide whether to examine the text or not, e.g. the three books by Ovid written in Latin did not interest me. I also did not examine *Lider* by Wolfram von Eschenbach because he is a German author and the text is written in medieval German. On the following two web pages, there were only four texts dated before 1500, one of which I did not use because it was not adapted into PDE, so it was unreadable for me; another fourteen sources were from the 16th century. Table 3 shows the texts I examined.

Table 3, List of all texts used for the research of question tags.

	Title	Author	Date	Language	Genre
1	Pliny's epistles in ten books/ done into English by several hands	Pliny the Younger	18 AD/ tr. 1724	OE	letters
2	The vision of Piers Plowman: a critical edition of the B-text	Langland, William, 1330?-1400?, Schmidt, A.V.C. (Aubrey Vincent Carlyle) (ed.)	1387/ ed. 1978	English	English literature
3	Everyman	Anonymous	1485/ ed. 1910	English	morality plays
4	The boke named The gouernour	Elyot, Thomas, Sir, 1490?-1546	1531	English	academic dissertations
5	Preverbes or adagies	Erasmus, Desiderius, d. 1536	1539	English	proverbs

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6	A treatise of schemes & tropes: very profytable for the better understanding of good authors, gathered out of the best grammarians & oratours	Sherry, Richard, ca. 1506-ca. 1555	1550	English	textbooks
7	That chyldren oughte to be taught and brought up gently in vertue and learnynge, and that euen forthwyth from theyr natiuitie: a declamacion of a briefe theme	Erasmus, Desiderius, d. 1536	1550	English	addresses
8	The arte of rhetorique: for the use of all suche as are studious of eloquence, sette forth in English	Wilson, Thomas, 1525?-1581	1553	English	textbooks
9	Gammer Gvrtons nedle	Brett-Smith, H. F. B. (Herbert Francis Brett) (ed.)	1575/ ed. 1920	English	comedies
10	The first part of the elementarie which entreateth chieflie of the right writing of our English tung	Mulcaster, Richard	1582	English	essays
11	The New Testament: translated from the Latin Vulgate	author unknown	1582	English	
12	Discourse of Western Planting	Hakluyt, Richard, 1552?-1616	1584	English	discovery of America
13	The arte of English poesie: contriued into three bookes : the first of poets and poesie, the second of proportion, the third of ornament	Puttenham, George, d. 1590	1589	English	academic dissertations
14	The Spanish tragedie	Kyd, Thomas, 1558-1594	1592	English	drama
15	Arden of Feversham	author unknown	1592	English	plays
16	The raigne of King Edvvard the Third	author unknown	1596	English	plays
17	The Tragedy Of Hoffman	Chettle, Henry,(ca. 1560-1607)	1599	English	plays
18	The shoemakers' holiday	Dekker, Thomas, ca. 1572-1632	1599/ ed. 1968	English	plays

Texts 1 belongs to the OE period and texts 2 and 3 represent the MidE period. I found the text *Everyman* in UP library in printed form as *Everyman with other interludes including eight miracle plays* (1910), so I will refer to this printed copy. The rest of the texts belong to ModE period.

I opened every text and searched via the query "Ctrl + F" on the concrete page. I first searched for all question marks because tag questions stand usually at the end of a clause which is closed with a question mark. I read every such sentence and I copied sentences which contained a tag question or something similar into a separate MS Word document for further examination.

If there were e.g. 135 sentences closed with a question mark, I read all of them. This was not, however, the only query I tried. I also looked for individual words and phrases such as *right?*, and *say?* for fixed phrase tags, *not?*, *she not?*, *he not?*, *isn't he?* etc. for negative variable tags and *he?*, *she?*, *they?*, *you?*, etc. for positive variable tags.

4.2   Results: fixed phrase tags

Before I start with the analysis of individual texts and question tags of both types which appeared in the texts, a few things must be mentioned. First, there were twelve texts in which neither fixed phrase tags, nor variable tags were found. Following texts belong to the category without question tags: the first three texts from the earliest periods (texts 1 – 3 in Table 3) and the texts number 4, 5, 7, 8, 11, 12, 13, 14 and 15 in Table 3. The texts which contain either fixed phrase tags or variable tags are marked with bold and underlined in Table 3.

One of the reasons there were no question tags is that the texts were not structured as dialogues or conversations, although a contact of the author towards the readers appears in *Pliny's epistels in ten books* (18 AD), as example (63) shows.

(63)   a) *A Small Legacy, but one that is more acceptable than the largest, has fallen to me. Why preferable to the Greatest, **you will say?*** (Pliny 1724, 210)

b) *To what Purpose is all this, **you'll say?*** (Pliny 1724, 273)

The tags *you will say?* in a) and *you'll say?* in b) cannot be fully understood as question tags because the reason they are used is not for confirmation, but more likely for connecting the author with his readers, as he is obviously not expecting any answer.

The second text *The vision of Piers Plowman: a critical edition of the B-text* (1387) shows a different phenomenon. Instead of question tags, short questions from the hearer such as *Ye?* and *No?* are used to repeat what was uttered before, as in (64).

(64) *And Pride of Parfit Lyvynge to muche peril thee brynge.'*

*'**Ye?** Recche thee nevere!' quod Rechelesnesse, stood forth in raggede clothes (...)*

(Langland 1978, section 12.11)

Today, short questions such as *is it?* or *does it?* could be used.

The interest of *Everyman with other interludes including eight miracle plays* (text 3) lies in negative questions which semantically function as question tags. A typical use of a negative question is represented by following example (65) from *The Nativity* play.

(65) *2ⁿᵈ Shepherd. Glory, Gloria in Excelsis, that was their song,*

How say ye fellows! **Said they not thus?**

1ˢᵗ Shepherd. That is well said, now we go hence (...)

(Rhys 1910, 88)

The meaning could be transformed into something like this: *The song is called Gloria in Excelsis, isn't it?* because the 2ⁿᵈ shepherd asks for confirmation from other shepherds, and the 1ˢᵗ one agrees.

The first tracks of fixed phrase tags can be found in text 6, *A treatise of schemes & tropes: very profytable for the better understanding of good authors, gathered out of the best grammarians & oratours* (1550). Following example (66) shows fixed phrase tags in this text.

(66)   a) *Yet he liueth,* **liueth?** *yea commeth also into the counsel house.* (Sherry 1550, D1r)

b) *It is a myscheuous deede to bynde a Citizen of Rome, haynous to beate hym,* **what**?
(Sherry 1550, E4v)

Example (66) a) is interesting because the tag is a repetition of a lexical verb of the anchor. It is a constant polarity tag like in North Walian. It is on the edge of variable tags. It could be a predecessor of variable tags which usually contain a modal or an auxiliary verb in the Ω positions. In the second example b), the tag is created by interrogative pronoun *what*, which is similar to Danish *or*-questions and *or-what*-questions.

The last text where only fixed phrase tags occur is text 10, *The first part of the elementarie which entreateth chieflie of the right writing of our English tung* (1582). The tag *saie you?* is represented in example (67) below.

(67) *Is the thing hard,* **saie you?** (Mulcaster 1582, 263)

Today, the tag *would you say?* would be used with the same meaning.

Text 9 contains both fixed phrase tags as well as variable tags and it will be described in the following section.

4.3 Results: variable tags

According to studied texts, the first records of variable question tags start in 1575. It is not surprising that all texts containing variable question tags were plays, especially comedies. Text 9, *Gammer Gvrtons nedle* (1575), is also a comedy. The text contains two negative variable negative tags of reverse polarity, as example (68) shows.

(68)   a) *Hodge: Ye haue made a fayre daies worke* **haue you not?** *pray you say.*
(Brett-Smith 1920, 8)

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b) *Hodge: Chym goodly rewarded, **cham I not**, do you thyncke?*

(Brett-Smith 1920, 16)

In the seconds example (68) b), the rhetorical question *cham I not?* is followed by a fixed phrase tag *do you thyncke?* Both tags a) and b) resemble the typical structure where the verbs in the Ω position repeat the verbs in the Ω position of the anchor. The auxiliary is followed by a pronoun which also corresponds with the subject in the anchor. In those two sentences, the negator *not* stands at the end of the tags. Nowadays, a contracted form *n't* would be preferred in most cases.

The last example which can be found in text 9 is similar to example (64) because there is not a tag as such, but there is a short question which is followed by a short answer in the following clause. Example (69) shows a conversation between Bayly and Chat.

(69) *Bayly: Will you confesse hir neele?*

*Chat: **Will I?** no sir **I will not**.*

(Brett-Smith 1920, 16)

Another two variable tags can be found in text 16, *The raigne of King Edvvard the Third* (1596).

(70) a) *King: That is thy daughter Warwicke **is it not?*** (Anonym 1596, B1)

b) *Ch.: Villiers procurd it for thee, **did he not?***

*Sal: **He did.***

(Anonym 1596, I1v)

Example (70) shows two negative variable tags of reverse polarity. The tags perfectly correspond to their anchors in all given criteria such as tense and agreement. In the second example b), the character Sal uses a short answer *he did*, therefore it seems obvious that the variable tag *did he not?* asks for confirmation.

In the following text 17, *The Tragedy Of Hoffman* (1599), only one variable tag was found.

(71) *Luc: (…)*

*Nor that did not neyther; he lies here **does he not?***

Rod. Yes louely madam, pray be patient.

(Chettle 1599, 4 actus quartus)

As example (71) clearly states, the variable tag *does he not?* is again negative with reverse polarity and repeats the information from the anchor *he lies here*. The answer *Yes, louely madam* does not repeat the auxiliary as in (70), but the particle *yes* is used instead.

In the last text 18, *The shoemakers' holiday* (1599), both positive as well as negative variable tags are found. Example (72) shows negative variable question tags, whereas example (73) shows the only sentence where a positive variable tag appears.

(72) a) *EYRE. This is the morning then, stay my bully, my honest Hauns, **is it not?***

(Dekker 1968, act 5, scene 1)

b) *FIRKE. I sir, I am sirra, you meane me, **do you not?*** (Dekker 1968, act 5, scene 2)

c) *KING: You both are married, Lacie, **art thou not?*** (Dekker 1968, act 5, scene 5)

d) *KING: Already have I beene too troublesome,// Say, **have I not?***

(Dekker 1968, act 5, scene 5)

(73) *HODGE. Come to the purpose, yonder's the Bride and Bride- groome you looke for I hope: though you be Lordes, you are not to barre, by your authoritie, men from women, **are you?*** (Dekker 1968, act5, scene 2)

The above examples (72) and (73) both have reverse polarity. All of the tags meet the requirements for the formal structure of variable tags including the repetition of the Ω position, agreement, tense, and all the variable tags copy the structure from their anchors.

In order to sum up the results of both fixed phrase tags as well as variable tags, I will present a table which includes only the texts which contain tag questions.

Table 4, List of the texts which contain tag questions.

Text number	fixed phrase tags	variable tags	other
6	1	1 (lexical V)	x
9	1	2	1 short question, 1 short answer
10	1	x	x
16	x	2	1 short answer
17	x	1	x
18	1	6	x

As Table 4 clearly shows, there were no question tags of any kind before 1500 in the written texts. Moreover, the amount of them all is negligible even later. One of the reasons may be that question tags did not suit the rhyme in poetry and early plays such as *Everyman*. Another reason may be that question tags were more informal than formal, and again, it did not suit the high genres such as textbooks, essays and poetry. Even nowadays, tag questions would not be found in them.

Table 4 also shows that during the 16th century, the amount of question tags started to grow. As to individual kinds of variable question tags, the reverse polarity type is the only one that appeared. Moreover, negative tags are almost exclusively the only type that appears, the only exception is the positive tag from the text 19 which was quoted in example (73). The reverse polarity type is predominant in South Walian dialect, and also in Formal Welsh, the positive-negative type is the only one acceptable as discussed in 3.3.

Another phenomenon which starts to be present in the above mentioned texts, is short questions and short answers, which will be looked at in the next chapter.

Now, I would like to look at the research done by Tottie and Hoffmann (2009), who claim that "tag questions are almost exclusively a feature of the spoken language, which is not available for a historical study of this kind," (Tottie and Hoffmann 2009, 134). What they mean is that there is not a MidE corpora of spoken language. Despite this obstacle, they highlight the fact that drama texts are closest to spoken language, although such data lack intonation and are artificially created (op.cit., 134).

They examined the 16th century plays and they were able to find 136 variable tag questions in 197 plays which is less than 1 variable question tag per play, but their amount was rising during the 16th century (op.cit., 135).

Concerning the polarity types, their results are similar to my research. The most frequent was the positive-negative type with 68%, the second most frequent was positive-positive type with 17% of all samples and the least frequent was negative-positive type with the occurrence of only 15%. The negative-negative type did not appear in the 16th century at all (op.cit., 136). The frequency of the negative-negative type has not changed until now, as was mentioned earlier in 3.1.

The frequency and the pragmatic distribution of tag questions has, however, slightly changed. Tottie and Hoffmann (2009, 145 – 147) compare the 16th century tag questions with British and American present day English (PDE). Table 5 shows the main differences in distribution of the individual pragmatic types.

Table 5, The distribution of pragmatic functions of tag questions in 16th century and in British and American PDE (Tottie and Hoffmann 2009, 146)

Pragmatic category	*Sixteenth-century drama N=136*	*British PDE N=371*	*American PDE N=500*
Confirmatory	*63%*	*41%*	*34%*
Attitudinal	*13%*	*18%*	*12%*
Challenging	*15%*	*2%*	*1%*
Facilitative	*<1%*	*36%*	*50%*
Hortatory	*10%*	*x*	*x*
Other	*x*	*10%*	*<4%*

The main difference lies in the distribution of facilitative tags, which were almost negligible in the 16th century, but they are the second most frequent type in British PDE with 36%, and the most frequent type in American PDE with 50%. Tottie and Hoffmann (2009, 146) suggest that writers might have not been aware of this type, or they did not write a realistic conversation compared to present-day authors.

Another great difference lies in the distribution of confirmatory tags which were the most frequent type in the 16th century, but their occurrence decreased in both current Englishes because they were partially replaced by other types. Challenging tags were also much more frequent in the 16th century drama texts than they are now. The last difference lies in the distribution of hortatory tags, a special category which is not as frequent nowadays as before, so hortatory tags had to be put together with other types in PDE. Hortatory tags include softening, emphatic and neutral tags in the paper on question tags in British and American English carried out by Tottie and Hoffmann (2006).

According to Tottie and Hoffmann (2009, 133), question tags are much more frequent in comedy than in tragedy. What must also not be forgotten is the author and the type of text. It is important to know whether it is prose, blank verse or rhymed verse. The most frequent type of text containing question tags is prose with 49% which is followed by blank verse with 38% (op.cit., 149 – 150). Blank verse appears mostly in positive-negative polarity (86 %), the positive-positive polarity appears only in 14% of all cases. The negative-positive polarity in not covered in blank verse at all. It is thus clear that prose has a greater variety of polarity types because all three main types occur with the dominance of positive-negative type (48%), whereas there are only two types of variable tags in blank verse.

If the authors are looked at in more detail, significant differences may be observed (op.cit., 151 – 152). William Shakespeare and other late 16th century playwrights prefer the positive-negative polarity type in prose, followed by the positive-positive type, and the negative-positive type stands in the last place. Ben Johnson, on the other hand, prefers the negative-positive type which enormously prevails over the second positive-negative type and the third positive-positive type.

The situation is, however, quite different in blank verse. William Shakespeare and other late 16th century playwrights almost exclusively use the positive-negative type with only slight occurrence of the positive-positive type, whereas Ben Johnson's usage of question tags in blank verse is very limited; his most frequent type is the positive-positive one. According to the research of Tottie and Hoffmann (2009, 152), Johnson is the most productive user of tag questions (280 tags in total, 7 question tags per play) followed by Shakespeare (86 tags in total, 1,8 question tag per play). Other authors qualified with 0,64 question tags per play from the total sample of 41 tags.

This section showed the results of both fixed phrase tags as well as variable tags. Two conclusions could be made. In my research, eighteen texts were examined, but only six of them contained either fixed phrase tags or variable tags. The first records of question tags of both types started in the 16th century. The amount of variable tags started to increase during the 16th century, which confirms also the research of Tottie and Hoffmann (2009). The most common polarity type was the positive-negative type by most authors and styles, including prose and blank verse with the

only exception of the most productive author of variable tag questions, Ben Johnson, who preferred to use the negative-positive type in prose and the positive-positive type in blank verse.

5 SHORT ANSWERS

In this part of the thesis, I will examine short answers in English and compare them with other languages such as Danish, Dutch, German, Irish and Welsh. I will focus on the description of formal properties as well as historical sources.

5.1 The question-answer relations

Before I start defining short answers, I would like to speak about the questions which are bound to short answers because one cannot stand separate from the other in the discourse. As Vennemann (2009, 313 – 314) mentions, there are chapters in various grammar books on questions, but few of them talk about how to create a correct answer. Although this is true, and there are not many references on short answers as such, at least something can be found in the chapter on questions and their kinds.

This is the case of Huddleston and Pullum (2002, 865 – 866) who define questions with respect to the possible amount of answers. They differentiate between two categories: open interrogatives and closed interrogatives. The former are questions which have an infinite number of possible answers, whereas the latter are usually answered by *yes-* and *no-*answers. The following examples (74) and (75) illustrate the two types of questions with their possible answers, respectively.

(74)   *A: Who broke it?*

B: I broke it. / Kim broke it. / The priest broke it. / One of the children broke it.

(op.cit., 865)

(75)   *A: Have you seen it?*

B: I have seen it. / I haven't seen it.

(op.cit., 865)

As example (74) suggests, the question *Who broke it?* is open because there are options such as *I*, *Kim*, *the priest*, *one of the children*, etc. The question in the example (75) is, on the other hand, closed, because there are only two possible answers: positive and negative. The positive and negative answers may also be expressed in different forms such as *Yes, I have., Yes.* and *I have.* for positive answers, and *No, I haven't., No.* and *I haven't.* for negative answers. However, they are equivalent in meaning, so only two answers (positive and negative) will be assign to the question *Have you seen it?*, (op.cit., 866).

Open and closed interrogatives cover three categories (op.cit., 867). The closed interrogatives can be further divided into polar and alternative questions. Polar questions allow only two possible answers according to the polarity: positive and negative. Alternative questions contain the possible answers in the question, and the hearer only chooses from two of more options and they cannot be answered by *yes-/ no-*answers. The third type, variable questions, belong to the category of open

interrogatives; they are often so-called *wh*-questions which can be answered by various ways and the answer is not given in the question. Examples (76), (77) and (78) show polar, alternative and variable questions and their answers, respectively.

(76)　　*A: Do you like strawberries?*

　　　　B: Yes, I do. / No, I don't.

(77)　　*A: Would you like chocolate, vanilla or strawberry ice-cream?*

　　　　B: The chocolate one, please.

(78)　　*A: Why do you want to visit Amsterdam?*

　　　　B: I'd like to see the old paintings in the Rijksmuseum.

Only the polar question in (76) proved to be the kind which can be answered by *yes*-/ *no*-answers. Short answers, which will be formally described below, belong to the polar questions category in most cases.

Huddleston and Pullum (2002, 866) further distinguish between answer and response. An answer may be either positive or negative, whereas a response may contain extra information not covered in the question, or it may lack the information or it may not directly answer the question at all. Examples (79) and (80) show possible answers and responses to the question *Have you seen it?*, respectively.

(79)　　a) *No.*

　　　　b) *I have.*

　　　　(op.cit., 866)

(80)　　a) *I'm not sure.*

　　　　b) *I saw it yesterday.*

　　　　(op.cit., 866)

It is thus clear that a response does not have to be an answer, but an answer is always a response. An answer basically copies the structure of its question, and it has either a positive or a negative form. A response, on the other hand, is a pragmatic term.

As Huddleston and Pullum say, "a polar question has as answers a pair of polar opposites, positive and negative," (op.cit., 868). It is also important to state that the polarity of the answers determines whether to use *yes* or *no* particle. It means that *yes* can be combined only with a positive answer and *no* with a negative one, not vice versa. The polarity of the question has no connection to the polarity of the answer (op.cit., 868), so a positive question can be answered by both *yes* and *no*. Example (81) shows the correct combination of polar questions and their answers, whereas example (82) shows an ungrammatical combination of the particle and its answer.

(81)　　*A: Is it your umbrella?/ Isn't it your umbrella?*

　　　　B: Yes, it is. / No, it isn't.

(82)   *A: Is it your umbrella?/ Isn't it your umbrella?*

        *B: *Yes, it isn't. / *No, it is.*

Note that the negative polarity in the question *Isn't it your umbrella?* does not influence the combination of *yes* and *no* and the polarity of the rest of the answer, although negative questions in English are less frequent than the positive ones.

The same case in creating an answer would be when a sentence contains a variable question tag at the end, as in (83).

(83)   *A: He has gone to the airport, hasn't he?/ He hasn't gone to the airport, has he?*

        B: Yes, he has./ No, he hasn't.

According to Huddleston and Pullum (op.cit., 848), *yes* and *no* in answers to polar questions are defined as polar adjuncts which pre-modify the polarity of the answer.

5.2   Formal properties of short answers

The previous section 0 discussed closely the circumstances when *yes-*/ *no-*answers may appear. This section will examine the formal properties of the short answers.

The structure of short answers is similar to the structure of variable tag questions. Short answers use only those forms which may appear in the Ω position.

(84)   a) *(Yes), $S_{PRO} – \Omega$*

        b) *(No), $S_{PRO} – \Omega – not/ n't$*

Rule (84) shows two ways of creating short answers, the former one being positive, the latter one being negative. Note that the polar adjuncts *yes* and *no* are only optional. The item in the Ω position copies the information from the polar question which functions similarly as the anchor in variable question tags (see section 3.1). Following example (85) represents the rule (84) on concrete examples.

(85)   a) *A: Will you pick up Bill at the airport?*

            B: Yes, I will.

        b) *A: Have you ever been to Brazil?*

            B: No, I haven't.

The difference between the pronominalized subject in question tags and short answers is in the speaker, therefore in the short answer, the subject does not have to be the same one as in the question. The pronominalized subject is *I* in the most familiar cases, as in the previous example (85), but it can be anything else, as in (86).

(86) *A: Does Mark like football?*

        B: Yes, he does.

It follows from the above observation that if the question is aimed directly at the speaker or the speaker and other people, the pronominalized subject will be 1st person singular or plural. It means

that there must be *you* as the subject in the polar question. In other cases, the pronominalized subject will be copied from the polar question, as was in (86).

When defining short answers, one must talk about reduction. Reduction is defined "as a means of avoiding redundancy of expression," (Quirk et al. 1985, 859) especially in semantics and pragmatics and it is therefore a means of language economy. Reduction in short answers is based on two obligatory elements of the English clause: subject and predicate. What is more, English short answers do not need the whole predicate, but the first modal/ auxiliary item which stands in the Ω position is enough. It is the item in the Ω position which carries some of the verbal properties such as tense and mood and it must always agree with the subject of the short answer. So instead of repeating the whole information from the polar question, the answer is reduced to the minimal understandable form. The following example (87) shows how the process looks like in a discourse. There is the gradual reduction of the answers to the question: *Have you even been to Brazil?*

(87) a) *Yes, I have been to Brazil.*

b) *Yes, I have been there.*

c) ?*Yes, I have been.*

d) *Yes, I have.*

e) *I have.*

f) *Yes.*

The gradual process goes from the repetition of the whole clause to the point where only the particle *yes* remains.

According to Biber et al. (1999, 1089 – 1090) the responses such as *yes*, *yeah*, *okay*, *sure*, etc. are commonly used in separate responses as in (87) f), the negative particle *no* is mostly avoided and replaced by an explanation or at least by *no thanks*. The reason may be that the person does not want to sound rude, so the short answer containing subject and the verb would be more appropriate.

Speaking of short answers of negative polarity, two things must be mentioned. First, the negative particle *not* or its contracted form *n't* can be used. The contracted form is less formal and it is frequently used in spoken language. Second, *not* and *n't* cannot be replaced by the negative time adjunct *never* because *never* has an added value of time, so it offers an extra information which was not covered in the question. Example (88) shows the difference between a negative short answer, a response and an ungrammatical response to the question *Have you ever been to Brazil?*, respectively.

(88) a) *No, I haven't.*

b) *No, I've never been there.*

c) **No, I have never.*

Only the first case could be considered a negative short answer because it corresponds to the question which is the anchor. If the adjunct *never* is used, it must be incorporated into the whole clause, not to a fragment like short answers are.

Not always is the exact same item in the Ω position of the question repeated in the short answer. The polar questions with modal verbs are such an example. According to Quirk et al. (1985, 815), the modal verb *may* is not often used in questions where possibility is expressed. The following example (89) shows the difference in the choice of the verb in the Ω position.

(89)   *A: Can/ Could they have missed the bus?*

       B: Yes, they may have/ might have.

       (op.cit., 815)

It is also interesting that when the modal in the polar question is followed by the past infinitive such as *have missed* in (89), the past infinitive is also expressed in the short answer which contains not only the modal in the Ω position, but also the auxiliary *have* which indicates the past tense of the answer.

Another interesting phenomenon connected to modal verbs in polar questions is that the past forms such as *might*, *would* and *could* are used in the questions due to politeness (op.cit., 815 – 816). In the short answers, however, the present forms are allowed, as in (90).

(90)   *A: Would you pay for me?*

       B: Yes, I will.

       (op.cit., 816)

Despite those exceptions, the principle remains unchanged. Appropriate pronominalized subject and the M/ Aux verb must appear in the short answer.

It is also not possible to use a lexical verb in the short answer in cases like (91), since the verb *plays* never appears in the Ω position.

(91)   *A: Does Charlie play football on Sundays?*

       *B: *Yes, he plays.*

As was mentioned above in 3.1, it is the VP-ellipsis which causes the occurrence of variable tag questions (Culicover 1992, 211), and the same case are short answers which are based on the same principle. That is why short answers do not contain lexical verbs.

The last thing I would like to mention is the fact that a certain kind of short answer based on reduction can appear as answers to *wh*-questions.

(92)   *A: Who broke the window?*

       B: I did.

The answer is again based on reduction, and only the pronominalized subject *I* and the auxiliary *did* in the Ω position appear. The only difference between the *yes no* short answers is that they can be preceded by the polarity adjuncts, whereas the short answer in (92) cannot.

This part of chapter 5 discussed the formal properties of English short answers and compared them with English variable tag questions. There are lots of similarities such as reduction based on the two obligatory elements: subject and predicate. The predicate is in form of VP-ellipsis which means that only the items appearing in the Ω position such as auxiliaries and modals can be part of variable short answers. The following part will closely examine short answers in other languages.

5.3   Short answers in other languages

The first part of this section will describe the process of question-response systems in Danish and Dutch which are both Germanic languages. I will focus on polar questions and their answers.

5.3.1 *Danish*

The two main sources for examining the Danish question-response system are Heinemann (2010) and an e-mail about Danish short answers by a native speaker.[5]

I will start with the e-mail in which I got some examples of Danish polar questions and their answers.

(93) *A: **Er** Tom hjemme?*

    Is Tom at home?

    'Is Tom at home?'

  *B:Ja,   det **er** han.*

    Yes, that is he.

    'Yes, he is.'

(94) *A: **Kan** du komme i morgen?*

    Can you come   tomorrow?

    'Can you come tomorrow?'

  *B: Nej, det **ken** jeg ikke.*

    No, that can I   not.

    'No, I can't.'

(95) *A: **Har**   du været i Olomouc?*

    Have you been to Olomouc?

    'Have you been to Olomouc?'

  *B: Ja,   det **har** jeg.*

[5] Nicholas Hedegaard Mikkelsen, e-mail from 30.09.2016.

Yes, that I   have.

'Yes, I have.'

The above examples (93), (94) and (95) show that when a finite verb of the question is an auxiliary or a modal, the answer normally uses that verb. The above examples also suggest that the answer is created as a full sentence. Nicolas, however, comments that using only the particles *ja* or *nej* would also be grammatically correct. Confirmation or rejection without the polarity particles may also occur, but it would be less frequent.

Nicolas further states that in cases where no auxiliary or modal appears in a question, the auxiliary *gøre* 'to do' would be used in the answer, as in (96).

(96) *A: Spiller du fodbold?*

Play   you football?

'Do you play football?'

B: Ja,   det gør jeg.

Yes, that do   I.

'Yes, I do.'

The above examples show that the *yes/no*-answers in Danish are created in way similar to the English ones. There is usually a polarity particle followed by a short answer. The short answer uses the auxiliary or modal verb in the Ω position. The only difference is that the verb in the Ω position does not have to be used in the question itself.

Heinemann (2010, 2703 – 2705) made research based on 350 questions and their responses which were collected as video recordings, so the non-verbal part of the conversation could also be considered. The most frequent type was polar questions (75% of all samples) which were mostly created by inversion of main verb with the subject (61%). Unlike English, Danish uses also lexical verbs in interrogatives, but if the tense requires a modal verb, then the modal verb is inverted in the question. The following examples (97) and (98) show lexical verb and auxiliary inverted in a question, respectively.

(97) *Gik   du alene hjem gar   eftermiddag,*

Walked you alone home yesterday afternoon,

'Did you walk home alone yesterday afternoon?'

(98) Ve'   du   ha: no'   et   mad me'?

Will you have some food with you?

'Do you want some food with you?'

Danish speakers responded the answers in 60% of all cases, the rest of the samples cover situations when there is no response or a non-answer response such as *I don't know* (op.cit., 2718 –

2720). In general, the usage of exclusively non-verbal means of answering is not used, and the speaker would probably not accept it as a sufficient answer (op.cit., 2723).

Concerning the typical type-confirming answers, Heinemann says that "type-confirming answers are answers that take the simplest form with which to answer a *yes/no*-question, either *yes*, *no*, a variation thereof or a head nod or shake," (op.cit., 2722). It means that typically, the particles *yes* and *no* would be used without adding the rest of the short answer. The longer answer would be used only in case it had some more information, so it would be a response according to Huddleston and Pullum (2002, 866). Example (99) illustrates a part of typical conversation finished by a rejecting answer.

(99) *Sanne: Peter har den ikk mere.*

Peter has it not more.

'Peter doesn't run/ own it anymore.'

Ester: Nej.

PRT

'No.'

(Heinemann 2010, 2722)

Example (100) shows a negative response to a polar question in a conversation between Birthe and Anne about a reality show. The long answer emphasizes rejection that the cameras are not in the toilet, but the answer *Nej der as pa toilettet* is not in the form of a short answer.

(100) *Birthe: sad et kamera i alle rum. undtagen toilettet*

then's it camera in all rooms. except toilet-the

'then there's cameras in every room. except the bathroom'

Anne: Nej der as pa toilettet

PRT there's also on toilet-the

'No there's in the the bathroom as well'

(op.cit., 2724)

In general, I did not find any examples in Heinemann (2010) of the type my email informant Nicolas gave me. I suppose that in a conversation, it is more efficient to answer only by *yes* or *no*, and if there must be something added, it is extra information. If some information of the question is repeated in the answer, it can be due to emphasis. The important thing is, that short-answers are possible in Danish, although not probably as frequently used as in English.

5.3.2 *Dutch*

Another language which I would like to examine is Dutch. Dutch belongs to the category of West-Germanic languages. The conclusions for the answering system in Dutch were taken from Englert (2010).

Englert (2010, 2666) made research based on 350 questions and their responses. The largest group was polar questions with 72.9%, the second largest was content or *wh*-questions with 20.56% and the third largest group was alternative questions with 6.54%.

According to Englert (op.cit., 2668), polar questions were created by inversion by 34.19%, invariant tags by 27.78%, and the largest group was formed by declaratives (38.03%) where intonation plays the crucial role in distinguishing between a statement and a question. To create a question in Dutch by inversion, one can use only the main verb, the auxiliary is not required, so the situation is similar to Danish.

Polar questions are answered by the particles *ja* 'yes', *nee* 'no' and *jawel* 'yes' (op.cit., 2668). The particle *jawel* is used to answer negative questions. Example (101) shows a typical question-response relation for an interrogative question and a negative response.

(101) *Pat: Heb je   okk geen bibliotheekpasje   (dan).*

Have you PAR none library membership card PAR

'Do you have a library membership card then.'

   Mik: Nee.

No

'no.'

   (op.cit., 2669)

According to Englert (op.cit., 2680), most questions are responded to with an answer (83%), the rest of the questions received either no answer or a non-answer response. Answers can be further distinguished as minimal and non-minimal answers. Minimal answers include only the polarity particles, whereas the non-minimal answers add some extra information to the polarity particles. Example (102) shows a non-minimal answer.

(102) *Ja, maar ik heb geen bibpas   meer.*

Yes but   I have none library card anymore.

'Yes, but I don't have a library card anymore'

(op.cit., 2681)

Englert mentions another way to answer a polar question: "Polar questions can also be answered by full or partial repeats of the question but this is rare in Dutch," (op.cit., 2682). She only found one example, which I will quote as (103).

(103) *Pie: Maar dat is gratis geloof ik.*

But   that is free   believe I

'But that's for free I believe'

Hen: <u>*Da's   gratis.*</u>

That+is free

'That's for free.'

(op.cit., 2682)

The above examples clearly show that Dutch prefers to answer polar questions with the particles *ja*, *nee* and *jawel*. The structure of short answers where an Aux/ M verb is used in the Ω position is not known to Dutch speakers. The case of repeating the information in the polar question is very rare.

The following part will closely examine question-response systems in Welsh and Irish, which are both Celtic languages. I will also consider the relationship between variable tag questions and corresponding short answers.

5.3.3 *Welsh*

During the development of the Welsh variable tag questions system, short answers in North Walian dialect started to resemble the form of the variable tag questions. Rottet and Sprouse (2008, 41 – 47) divide the development of the tag questions into five stages. The first three stages are similar for both SW and NW dialect and they have a mixed polarity. After stage 3, SW and NW developed more differently from each other.

In stage 4 (op.cit., 46), negative question tags in NW are already identical with corresponding short answer. Positive variable tags, on the other hand, show only partial agreement. Examples (104) and (105) show negative and positive question tags with their short answers, respectively.

(104) *Dydy   Iwan ddim yn   dal, <u>nag ydy?</u> <u>Nag ydy.</u>*

NEG.be.3SG Iwan NEG   PRED tall NEG be.3SG NEG be.3SG.

'John isn't tall, is he?' 'No.'

(105) *Mae   Iwan yn   dal, <u>yn t-ydy?</u> <u>Ydy.</u>*

be.3SG Iwan PRED tall YN be.3SG be.3SG

'John is tall, isn't he?' 'Yes.'

Stage 5 of the development of the NW tag questions can be divided into two sub-stages (op.cit., 46 – 47). In the stage 5a, the particle *yn* precedes the negative tag, so constructions such as *yn nag ydy* 'isn't he' can be observed. In the stage 5b, however, the particle *yn* is removed from positive tags. Finally, at the end of stage 5b, the question tags were identical with their responses, as in (106).

(106)   a) *Mae   Iwan yn   dal, <u>ydy?</u> <u>Ydy.</u>*

be.3SG Iwan PRED tall be.3SG be.3SG

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'John is tall, isn't he?' 'Yes.'

b) *Dydy   Iwan ddim yn   dal, <u>nag ydy?</u>   <u>Nag ydy.</u>*

NEG.be.3SG Iwan NEG   PRED tall NEG be.3SG NEG be.3SG

'John isn't tall, is he?' 'No.'

(op.cit., 47)

The example (106) a) shows the total symmetry for a positive tag and a positive short answer, and (106) b) represents a symmetry of a negative tag with a negative short answer.

The question is whether it was the shape of the tag or the short answer that caused the symmetry in form. Rottet and Sprouse (op.cit., 47) argue that it is more likely that is was the shape of the responsive that caused the change in the form of the tag question. I also agree because the short answers in stages 4 and 5 were the same, but it was the tag questions that changed. In the above examples (104), (105) and (106), the short answers are *ydy* or *nag ydy*, but the tag questions vary a bit.

Rottet and Sprouse conclude that "NW tag system has been reorganized in order to create symmetry with responsives, and this includes its being a constant polarity system," (op.cit., 48). Despite this fact, variable short answers and variable tag questions existed even before the symmetry in NW dialect was created. As was mentioned at the end of section 3.3, Modern Colloquial Welsh is closer to SW and English rather than NW nowadays. There were also no records of tag questions or short answers in earlier periods, namely Middle Welsh.

Welsh also exclusively uses short answers to respond to polar questions. In the above examples from Welsh, there were no polarity particles such as the English *yes* and *no*. Jones (1913, 422 – 424) describes several ways to say *no* in Welsh which are different considering given environments of the negative particle and the form of the question. There is no unique way to say *no*. Jones states: "the negative adverb *na* 'no' may answer any question introduced by *a* or *ai*; it may be used alone, but is generally followed by a neg. part., as *na*, *nid hynny* 'no, not that'," (Jones 1913, 423). This quotation describes one of many options for a question can be answered negatively.

If Welsh and Danish or Dutch are compared, it can be realized that Welsh differs from Danish and Dutch because they prefer only polarity particles to answer polar questions, whereas Welsh almost exclusively uses short answers. In that sense, Welsh is much closer to English than the other two languages. The reason could be that at first Old Norse influenced Middle English, and Middle English influenced Early Modern Welsh, as was said in (60) a). Interesting is that the SW dialect resembles the English structure and reversed polarity, whereas the NW dialect developed further and has constant polarity.

5.3.4 *Irish and Irish English*

Irish, similarly to Welsh, uses only short answers to respond to polar questions (Vennemann 2009, 321 – 323). Even in Irish English, *yes* and *no* are barely used in a response as well (op.cit., 321).

However, the situation was not always like that in the earlier periods. Thurneysen (1946, 541) states that Old Irish had individual expressions for *yes* and *no*. The expression *tó* 'yes' has risen from IE. **tod* 'that', and it lost the final consonant *t* in the phonological process called absolute auslaut, where consonants at the end of the syllable *d, t, k, n* and *s* disappeared (Thurneysen 1946, 110).

The autonomous negative particle *nay* or *no* was in Old Irish expressed by three different ways (Thurneysen 1946, 541):

1. *na-thó*, the opposite of *tó*,
2. *naicc* (*nacc, naic(c)*) can be found as a second part of disjunctive questions,
3. *náte, náde* are used in emphatic negatives.

The following examples (107), (108) and (109) illustrate the above three ways of expressing autonomous negation, respectively.

(107) *A: Pridchabat?*
      'Shall they preach?'
    B: <u>Nathó</u>, ol Pól.
      'Nay, saith Paul.'
    (op.cit., 541)

(108) *In tree æm didiu fa <u>nacc</u>?*
     'Is it though it (fem.) then indeed or not?'
    (op.cit., 541)

(109) *A: Inn ed in sin furuar dait?*
     'Is it that that caused (it) to thee?'
    B: <u>Náte</u>, ní ed.
     'Nay, it is not.'
    (op.cit., 541)

Present Day Irish, as mentioned above, does not have any polarity particles such as the English *yes* and *no*. Irish repeats the lexical verb of the question in the short answer. It is also possible to use the auxiliary verb *déan* 'make, do' in the short answer. If a copula is present in the question, it is repeated in the answer, however, it may never stand alone, but a pronominalized subject must be present as well (Filppula 1999, 160 – 161). The following example (110) shows three polar questions and their answers.

(110) a) *A: An dtiocfaidh tú?*
      'Will you come?'

   B: Tiocfad.

    'I will come.'

  b) *A: Ar ólais an tae?*

    'Did you drink the tea?'

   B: Dheineas.

    'I did.'

  c) *A: Is é an múinteoir é?*

    'He is the teacher?'

   B: Is é.

    'He is.'

(Filppula 1999, 161)

The example (110) a) represents the principle of the repetition of the lexical verb in its possible shortest form. The following verb *dheineas* in b) shows the auxiliary *déan* in past tense, first person singular. The last answer *Is é* in c) illustrates the answer with the copula *is*.

  Pokorny (1927, 236 – 238) further expands the idea of answers being whole sentences in the sense that it is true not only for *yes/no* answers, but also for answers to *wh*-questions in Irish, so simple answers containing only a noun would be insufficient. Example (111) shows a proper answer to a *wh*-question in Irish.

  (111) *A: Cad é an rud é sin?*

    'What is it?'

   B: Is leabhar é.

    'It is a book.'

(Pokorny 1927, 236)

Although there were words for *yes* and *no* in Old Irish, there was a tendency to answer with a whole clause even then (Pokorny 1927, 237).

  Pokorny (1927, 238) finishes his remarks by saying that there is no other Indo-European language that would have such a high frequency of answers in a form of the whole sentence, so Celtic languages seem to be unique in forming their answers. This principle which can be seen in both Irish and Welsh, remains in the language development until today.

  The question remains how the English short answers are related to the principle of answering polar questions with a pronominalized subject, verb in the Ω position and possible negator *not*. Vennemann suggests the following: " just as Irish English has *intensified* a property of British English as a result of its Irish substratum, so British English itself had *acquired* it from its Brittonic substratum," (Vennemann 2009, 324). I suppose that Vennemann suggests that the Celtic languages, Britonnic and Old Irish, influenced the use of short answers not only in Present Day Irish, but also in

Irish English as well as British English. This structure remains despite the influence of the superstrate languages. There is, however, no evidence for this theory because even Vennemann (2009, 320) admits that OE texts translated from Latin cannot be taken as an evidence since such high language of the biblical texts was used only by a minority and the same model can be found in the Old German texts. No other evidence from Old Irish were found to confirm his hypothesis. As was mentioned in 5.3.3, it is more likely that it was English that influenced Welsh and Irish, not the other way around.

This section compared polar questions and their answers in Danish, Dutch, Welsh and Irish. Although Danish has a structure of short answers similar to English, it is not used in everyday conversation. Dutch does not use the structure of short answers at all and it prefers only polarity particles. Welsh and Irish, on the other hand, do not use polarity particles, they prefer to answer polar question with the whole sentence excluding polarity particles which is the closest to Present Day English. The following chapter will more deeply examine some historical texts in English containing answers to polar questions from various periods.

6 HISTORICAL SOURCES OF ENGLISH SHORT ANSWERS

This chapter will concentrate on the comparison of historical texts and their representation of answers to polar questions. The main source for this chapter is the article "Celtic influence in English? Yes and No" by Theo Vennemann (2009) who conducted comparative research of English, German, Irish and Welsh. There are three main fields of his research: marriage vows in English and German, *The Canterbury Tales* by Geoffrey Chaucer and plays by William Shakespeare and their translation to German by Schlegel. However, despite his title, Vennemann (2009) gives very few sources that concern Celtic.

As was mentioned in 2.2, German does not have variable tag questions; it uses only fixed phrase tags. It is not therefore surprising that there are no variable short answers in German either. One of the evidence in the difference between German and English are marriage vows in both languages. While the English answer in the marriage vow contains only a short answer without any polarity particle, German uses only polarity particles *ja* 'yes' (Vennemann 2009, 310 – 313). Examples (112) and (113) show the contrast between English and German wedding vows, respectively.

(112)   a) *Minister: Ridge, **will you** have this woman to be your wife, to live together in the covenant of marriage? **Will you** love her, comfort her, honor and keep her, and forsaking all others, be faithful to her as long as you both shall live?*

*Ridge: **I will**.*

(op.cit., 311)

b) *Minister: Clarke Garrison, **do you** take this woman to be your wife, to love and honor from this day forward, in faith and tenderness, to live with her and cherish her according to the ordinance of God, in the holy bond of marriage?*

*Clarke: **I do**.*

(op.cit., 311)

(113) *Pfarrer: So frage ich dich, N.N. (Name des Ehemannes): **Willst du** N.N. (Name der Ehefrau) lieben und ehren, und mit ihr leben in guten und in schweren Zeiten, welches Glück euch Gott, der Allmächtige, auch immer beschweren mag – wie ein Ehemann mit seiner Ehefrau leben soll, bis der Tod euch scheidet? – **Ja**!*

(op.cit., 312)

The above examples illustrate only the part of the vow between the minister or the priest and the bridegroom. The part of the vow of the minister/ priest and the bride is identical. It can be noticed that both English answers in vows (112) a) *I will* and b) *I do* represent the grammatical structure of short answers where only pronominalized subject and a M/ Aux verb in the Ω position appear. It is

the shortest available form without the polarity particle *yes* and the short answers copy the structure of given polar questions at the same time. In the German vow (113), on the other hand, no such thing appears. The priest asks *willst du* 'do you want to', but the groom gives only one word response *ja* 'yes' instead of the sentential *Ich will* 'I want to'as in the English case.

Vennemann (op.cit., 313) argues that this difference between the two West Germanic languages is not only due to habit, but also due to grammar because German responses such as *Ich tue* 'I do', *Ich will* 'I want to', *Ich werde* 'I will', etc. are ungrammatical because such German constructions need an object, usually an infinitive.

The English marriage vows also resemble the Irish and Welsh model of constructing a short answer in which they do not use polarity particles. German, on the other hand, is much closer to Dutch or Danish way of creating answers where polarity particles are used, although Danish has the possibility to create grammatical variable short answers like those in English. Like Dutch, German does not have the opportunity to create variable short answers, since they would be ungrammatical.

The second part of the comparative research goes back to William Shakespeare and his translation to German by August Wilhelm von Schlegel (1767 – 1845). Vennemann (op.cit., 315 – 318) chose to compare *Hamlet*; the German translation was made in 1798, in the Romantic period. It is also important to notice that "the translator, August Wilhelm von Schlegel, who wanted to be faithful to the admired original author but also produce good German that would appear native and natural on the stage, translated the answers against the English text, as would a translator of the twenty-first century," (op.cit., 316). It is clear from the quotation above that what can be seen in the German translation is close to native German, at least the way polar questions are answered.

Example (114) represents typical polar question-answer relationship in English and in German. The first line of the dialogue is in English, the second line in German.[6]

(114) *Hamlet:* **Hold you** *the watch tonight?*

Habt ihr *die Wache heut?*

Marcellus and Bernardo: **We doe** *my Lord.*

Ja, *gnäd'ger Herr.*

(Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, Scene 2, 1.2)

The above example (114) clearly illustrates the difference between the two languages. The English short answer *we doe* is again closer to Irish and Welsh ways of answering polar questions, whereas the German answer *ja* is closer to Dutch. This set of question and answer corresponds exactly with the rules for English and German marriage vows.

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[6] Vennemann (2009, 316) refers to the English edition from 1986, the German lines are taken from English and German bilingual edition; see References.

Similar rules can be found in (115) where a variable tag question *haue you not?* appears.

(115) *Polonius: You haue me,* **haue you not?**

Ihr habt's gefaßt, **nicht wahr?**

Reynaldo: My Lord, **I have**.

Ja, *gnäd'ger Herr.*

(Shakespeare, *Hamlet,* Scene 6, 2.1)

Confirmation or rejection are done by polarity particles in German.

The third part of the research goes back to Medieval English, to *The Canterbury Tales, Troilus and Cresseide* by Geoffrey Chaucer and anonymous *York Plays* and *Towneley Plays* (Vennemann 2009, 327). It seems likely that it was between the time of Chaucer and Shakespeare when significant changes happened since the answering system in Medieval works was different than two centuries later (op.cit., 326).

Example (116) shows the answering system in the 14th century.

(116)   *This housbonde, with glad chiere, in friendly wyse,*

Answerde and seyde as I shal yow devyse:

*'**Is ther** oght ells, Dorigen, but this?'*

*'**Nay, nay**,' quod she, 'God helpe me so as wys!...'*

(Chaucer, *The Franklin's Tale*, lines 1467 – 70)[7]

In the above example (116), the answer *nay, nay* resembles the current German structure where polarity particles are used without the clause structure. Similar answers with only the polarity particles were found in other three sources (op.cit., 328 – 330), so this gives quite transparent evidence that in the East Midland dialect which developed into MiE, the answering system to polar questions was the same as the German one.

Occasionally, however, the short answers we know today with the pronominalized subject and a M/Aux verb started to appear even in the 14th century (op.cit., 330). Following example (117) demonstrates an exceptional case of variable short answers in this period.

(117) *Uxor: ...com hap me.*

Mak: **I wyll**.

(*The Towneley Plays*, *Second Shepherd's Play*, line 433)

The answer *I wyll* belongs to the variable short answers; in this case, it was meant as an answer to a command. The important thing is that such constructions already existed in this period, but they were not used on regular basis in the written texts until the time of Shakespeare.

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[7] According to Vennemann (2009, 328), all texts by G. Chaucer and other anonymous authors of that time were taken from *Middle English Collection*, which I found under the following link: http://quod.lib.umich.edu/c/cme/

The following example (118) has a combination of a polar particle and a variable short answer.

(118) *"… Ye han a mannes shap as wel as I;*

    Han ye *a figure thane determinat*

    In helle, ther ye been in youre estat?"

    *"**Nay, certainly**," quod he, "**ther have we** noon;*

    But whan us liketh, we kan take us onn, …"

    (Chaucer, *The Friar's Tale*, lines 1458 – 62)

More interesting is that the answer *Nay (…) that have we noon* is similar to current Danish way of answering polar questions as was already demonstrated in the previous examples (93), (94) and (95) in section 5.3.1. What seems to be an exception for Vennemann, is an evidence for me that the grammar of Middle English already had similar features with North Germanic languages.

Of course, one should consider that the verbs *wyll* in (117) and *have* in (118) could be lexical verbs, and not M/ Aux verbs. However, the structure differs from simple polarity particles that can be observed in (116).

Vennemann (2009, 331 – 332) further argues that the change of the answering system from polarity particles to variable short answers was due to other developments in the structure of language, namely syntax. The use of the *do*-support played the crucial role. It seems likely that the variable short answers would not have appeared without the change in the verbal system and without the existence of the Ω position. This change, however, did not come from the Celtic languages, but from the North Germanic, namely Old Norse, a predecessor of present day Danish.

This chapter discussed the development of the answering system in English and compared it with the current German system. It was proved that in the 14th century, the English answering system was the same as the German one in most cases, although short answers started to appear in this period as well. During the following two centuries, the system was transformed completely and in the 16th century, the answering system was based on pronominalized subject and a M/ Aux verb in the Ω position. Shakespeare does not use additional polarity particles to modify the short answers. The system in the 16th century drama resembled the Irish and Welsh system we know today. Of course, the genre and the rhyme could have influenced the fact that there are no polarity particles in front of the short answers, but the short answers were already massively used, which is crucial. The development of the verbal system and the Ω position in English is, in my opinion, one of the features which were brought to the British Isles with Old Norse and this is the reason there is a difference between the English original of *Hamlet* and the German translation which uses exclusively polar particles as answers to polar questions.

7 CONCLUSION

The aim of this thesis has been to examine the connections between the grammar of the English tag questions and short answers and the grammar of these phenomena in other languages such as Danish, Dutch, German, Irish, Norwegian and Welsh. The hypothesis was that the grammar of English variable tag questions and short answers would be more similar to the North Germanic languages rather than the West Germanic languages, in the light of the proposal in Emonds and Faarlund (2014). The thesis used both synchronic as well as diachronic perspectives.

Two kinds of tag questions were examined: fixed phrase tags and variable tags. The former type covers invariant small questions at the end of the sentence such as Czech *že* 'that', German *oder* 'or' and Danish *eller* 'or' and *eller hva(d)* 'or what'. Such forms which do not change the form according to the given subject and the predicate in the main or the "anchor" clause can be found in all languages. Variable tag questions, on the other hand, are a feature of only a small group of languages which are connected through historical language contact. These languages are: Danish, Norwegian, English and Celtic languages on the British Isles. This "shared innovation" (Emonds and Faarlund 2014, 126) happened due to language contact with the superstrate language, Old Norse. When the variable tag questions were accepted in a language we call Middle English, they spread further to Wales and Ireland or they could have been accepted from Old Norse as well, but there is little evidence to make a conclusion for Welsh and Irish in this thesis.

The grammatical structure of both variable tag questions and short answers is based on the same principle, the repetition of the M/ Aux verb in the Ω position (Veselovská 2009, 139) and the pronominalized subject from the anchor. As Culicover (1992, 211) points out, the existence of VP-ellipsis is crucial for tag questions to appear. The same is true for the short answers.

Tag questions mainly ask for confirmation, new information, soften the discourse or invite the hearer to participate in the discourse. Tag questions usually appear in spoken language, but there is no corpus of spoken Middle English. The assumption was that if I examine available written texts from Old and Middle English periods, I will not find many tag questions of any kind. The second assumption was that if there are no fixed phrase tags in those texts, there will hardly be any variable tags there. I had to add also some drama texts from the 16th century to get more data for the comparison.

I searched in the *Oxford Text Archive* on the internet and found 18 texts, out of which only 6 of them contained either fixed phrase tags or variable tags. All of them were from the 16th century (see Table 4). In the earlier texts, other communicative means were used to express the same as tag questions today. There were negative answers or short questions containing only polarity particles

instead of tag questions. I compared my research with Tottie and Hoffmann (2009), who explained in more depth the frequencies of variable tag questions in drama texts in the 16th century.

Concerning short answers, hardly any grammar books describe how to construct a proper answer, especially to a polar question. It is certain that the English short answers are based on reduction. Again, there is always a pronominalized subject with a M/ Aux verb in the Ω position. Polarity particles are not obligatory in English. I compared the English way of creating short answers with other languages, but only some of them had the same properties. Dutch, a West Germanic language, uses polar particles exclusively and variable short answers would be ungrammatical (Englert 2010). Danish, a North Germanic language, on the other hand, can create grammatical short answers like those in English. Despite this, native speakers prefer to use only polar particles and extend the sentence in case of additional information or explanation due to language economy (Heinemann 2010, 2724).

The Celtic languages Welsh and Irish are typical for their lack of polar particles, so they use short answers to respond to a polar question. Vennemann (2009, 324) is of the opinion that English acquired the structure of tag questions and short answers from Celtic, but he gives no evidence for his claim. Moreover, there were also no tag questions found in Middle Welsh texts yet, and first records of tag questions in Welsh literature come from 1850s (Evans 1989, 176). Vennemann (2009) also gives no earlier examples for Middle Irish.

Finally, I took the research from Vennemann (2009) who compared current English and German wedding vows, *Hamlet* and its Romantic translation by Schlegel to German, and short answers from the 14th century texts by Chaucer and other authors. It was shown that where German uses exclusively polar particles, English answers with short answers without polarity particles both in the wedding vows and *Hamlet*. Like in Dutch, using the English structure for short answers in German would be ungrammatical which shows the difference between North and West Germanic languages. Texts from the 14th century, on the other hand, showed in most cases that polar particles without short answers were used. However, constructions similar to current English short answers could be occasionally observed, although in that time, it is probably too soon to speak about the separable Ω position of Modern English.

To come back to the hypothesis, it seems likely that ON influenced Middle English, and later, English influenced the Celtic languages (see rule (60) a)), because tag questions were not found in earlier Welsh or Irish periods and are not used in written language frequently today. It is also likely that the structure of the variable tag questions and short answers comes from North Germanic because in present day Danish and Norwegian, these phenomena are grammatical and still used. On the other hand, to use these structures in Dutch or German would be ungrammatical, which further contributes

to the theory that English grammar is more North Germanic than West Germanic, so the influence of the Scandinavian conquerors on the English grammar cannot be ignored.

8 Shrnutí

Tato diplomová práce se zabývá vlivem staré norštiny na specifickou část anglické gramatiky: tázací dovětky a krátké odpovědi. Hlavním cílem je prozkoumat dané jevy v angličtině a porovnat je s jinými jazyky a tím určit, ke kterým jazykům má angličtina gramaticky nejblíž a proč tomu tak je.

První kapitola vysvětluje historii kolonizace Britských ostrovů třemi germánskými kmeny. Na západě země vládl král Alfréd, ale už za jeho vlády v 9. století bylo království postupně přepadáno skandinávskými kmeny, které se usadili na východě země, načež tato dvě království žila odděleně. Po roce 1066 přestala být angličtina zapisována a když se znovu objevila jako středověká angličtina, byla úplně jiná a více se gramaticky podobala skandinávským jazykům. Předpokladem Emondse a Faarlunda (2014, 44) je, že skandinávské kmeny žijící na východě země si ponechaly gramatickou strukturu svého jazyka a převzaly pouze slovní zásobu Anglosasů, protože jakožto dobyvatelé neměli důvod přebírat jazyk poražených kmenů.

Druhá kapitola seznamuje čtenáře s pevnými tázacími dovětky, které se nachází ve všech jazycích a nejsou tvarově závislé na předchozí části věty. Porovnány jsou různé typy pevných tázacích dovětků v češtině, němčině a dánštině. Jejich účel je podobný ve všech jazycích: pozvání ostatních účastníků rozhovoru, aby se připojili, potvrzení dané informace nebo zjištění, jestli je informace správná.

Třetí kapitola se věnuje variabilních tázacím dodatkům. Zkoumá se formální stránka, která je založena na opakování podmětu v pronominalozované podobě a také prvního modálního nebo pomocného slovesa ze slovesné fráze, které stojí na tzv. Ω pozici (Veselovská 2009, 139). Podle typu polarity se tázací dovětky dělí na polaritu obrácenou (reversed) a konstantí (constant). Angličtina preferuje polaritu obrácenou, kdy věta, která se na dovětek pojí, má opačnou polaritu než dovětek samotný. Culicover (1992, 211) předpokládá, že existence samostatné Ω pozice je spouštěčem variabilních tázacích dovětků, což znamená, že jen jazyky, které tuto pozici mají a mohou ji oddělit např. v elipse, mohou tvořit variabilní tázací dovětky. Kapitola také zkoumá sémantické vlastnosti tázacích dovětků a podle sémantického typu rozlišuje mezi stoupající nebo klesající intonací.

Třetí část třetí kapitoly porovnává možnost vytvořit gramatické tázací dovětky v jiných jazycích. Ukázalo se, že severogermánské jazyky, norština a dánština, mohou tyto dovětky tvořit. Němčina, která je západogermánský jazyk, takovou možnost však nepřipouští a vytváření variabilních tázacích dovětků by bylo negramatické. Dále byly prozkoumány variabilní tázací dovětky ve velštině, která tuto možnost naopak připouští. Mluvená velština se dělí na dva hlavní dialekty, kde jižní dialekt se více podobá angličtině, protože dovětky mají obrácenou polaritu. Severní dialekt se naopak vyvinul jiným směrem a má konstantní polaritu. Podle článku Rotteta a Sprouse (2008) je důvod se domnívat, že struktura tázacích dovětků byla převzata z angličtiny.

Čtvrtá kapitola blíže zkoumá historické zdroje tázacích dovětků a popisuje metodologii jejich získání. Hlavním zdrojem byl on-line korpus *Oxford Text Archive*, ve kterém bylo nalezeno 18 relevantních textů z období staré, středověké i raně moderní angličtiny. Jen 6 zdrojů však obsahovalo nějaké tázací dovětky a všechny tyto zdroje byly až ze 16. století. Ve starších dílech pro stejnou sémantickou funkci byly použité jiné jazykové prostředky, např. záporné otázky. Výzkum ukázal, že nejčastější byla obrácená polarity. Můj výzkum byl porovnán s výzkumem Tottieho a Hoffmanna (2009), který se s mým výzkumem v mnohém shodoval.

Pátá kapitola se zabývá tématem krátkých odpovědí. Porovnává vztahy otázky a odpovědi v různých gramatikách jako je Quirk a kol. (1985) a Huddleston a Pullum (2002). Kapitola popisuje formální vlastnosti krátkých odpovědí, která podobně jako variabilní tázací dovětky obsahují pronominalizovaný podmět a modální nebo pomocné sloveso na Ω pozici. Krátké odpovědi mohou obsahovat částice *yes* 'ano'a *no* 'ne'.

Poslední část páté kapitoly porovnává současný stav germánských a keltských jazyků ve vztahu ke krátkým odpovědím. Dánština má možnost tvořit gramatické krátké odpovědi, které mají podobnou strukturu jako ty anglické. Nizozemština naopak používá jen odpověďové částice krátké odpovědi podobné angličtině by byly negramatické. Velština disponuje formou krátkých odpovědí a na rozdíl od dánštiny nepoužívá odpověďové částice. Irština podobně jako velština rovněž používá jen krátké odpovědi bez odpověďových částic.

Šestá kapitola zkoumá některé historické zdroje, které porovnávají angličtinu a němčinu. Nejdříve byly porovnány svatební sliby, na které se v Německu odpovídá pouze pomocí odpověďových částic, zatímco anglické svatební sliby obsahovaly pouze krátké odpovědi. Dále byla porovnána anglická a německá verze Shakespearova *Hamleta*. Situace byla stejná jako při svatebních slibech. Na závěr byly uvedeny příklady z děl Chaucera, ve kterých krátké odpovědi měly spíše německý charakter, i když se našlo pár odpovědí, které se blížily současné anglické normě. Tyto příklady se shodovaly se současnou dánskou normou.

Na závěr vyplynulo, že spojitostí mezi gramatikou variabilních tázacích dovětků a krátkých odpovědí v angličtině a severogermánských jazycích je daleko více než mezi danou gramatikou v angličtině a západogermánských jazycích. Keltské jazyky na Britských ostrovech rovněž mají stejnou strukturu jako angličtina a severogermánské jazyky, nenašel se však důkaz, že by ony ovlivnily angličtinu, spíše naopak. Z této práce vyplývá, že stará norština ovlivnila vývoj angličtiny, která později měla pravděpodobně vliv na vývoj irštiny a velštiny.

Anotace

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<u>Klíčová slova v angličtině:</u> tag questions, short answers, Middle English, Modern English, Old Norse, language contact, Danish, German, Irish, Welsh, 16th century drama texts, verb phrase

<u>Charakteristika diplomové práce:</u> Tato magisterská práce se zabývá vlivem severogermánských jazyků na anglickou gramatiku v období vikingských nájezdů a srovnává současný stav angličtiny a severogermánských jazyků jako je norština a dánština. Zkoumané jevy jsou tázací dovětky a krátké odpovědi, které jsou vystavěny na stejném principu: opakování pronominalizovaného podmětu a modálního nebo pomocného slovesa na tzv. Ω pozici. Tyto jevy jsou porovnány se západogermánskými jazyky jako je němčina a nizozemština, které ale nemohou tvořit gramatické tázací dovětky ani krátké odpovědi jako má angličtina. Srovnání proběhlo také s keltskými jazyky na Britských ostrovech (irština, velština). Tyto jazyky také disponují stejnými gramatickými jevy jako má angličtina a severogermánské jazyky. Výzkum ukázal, že tázací dovětky se plně rozvinuly v průběhu 16. století, kdy bylo publikováno mnoho dramatických textů, které se blíží mluvenému jazyku. Na závěr byl porovnán výzkum Vennemanna (2009) s teorií, jestli keltské jazyky ovlivnily angličtinu nebo naopak. Nebyly nalezeny důkazy, že keltské jazyky by mohly takto angličtinu ovlivnit, proto je pravděpodobné, že nejprve stará norština ovlivnila gramatiku angličtiny a ta později ovlivnila i keltské jazyky na Britských ostrovech.

<u>Characteristics of the master's thesis:</u> This master's thesis examines the influence of the North Germanic languages on the English grammar in the time of Viking conquerors and it compares the state of PDE and present day North Germanic languages such as Danish and Norwegian. For the research, variable tag questions and short answers were chosen. The examined phenomena are based on the same principle: the repetition of the pronominalized subject and a M/ Aux verb in the Ω position. These phenomena are also compared with West Germanic languages such as German and Dutch which cannot form similar grammatical structures as the English ones. English was also

compared with the Celtic languages on the British Isles, Irish and Welsh, which can create the same structures as the English ones. The research showed that the variable tag questions were fully developed and used in the 16th century drama texts which are closest to spoken language. In the end, the research of Vennemann (2009) on the short answers was compared with the theory that it was Celtic languages which influenced the grammar of English. No evidence for this theory was found though. According to this thesis, it is likely that it was Old Norse that influenced Middle English and later, Middle English influenced the Celtic languages on the British Isles.

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