

Re: Noun and Pronoun flexion in contemporary English

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- *From:* Joachim Pense <snob@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx>
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Am 15 Jul 2006 10:15:40 -0700 schrieb Gorol:

Joachim Pense wrote:

We know English has only a handful of verbal flexion forms. But in modern English the tenses etc. lead to a conjugation (or declination?) of the subject, as in

he'll go
Peter's going
we've done it

and so on.

Is there a name for this kind of flexion? Would it make sense to call "he'll" a case of "he"?

Does something like that occur in many languages?

Joachim

This is no declension. Imagine the German sentence "wie geht's". Is that a conjugation of the verb? Absolutely not.

Absolutely. Look at a similar case: the second person "du gehst". The "t" originally was a postponed 2nd person singular pronoun ("du") that was incorporated into the word (more than 1000 years ago). (Compare other IE languages like Latin, that only have the "s" ending in the 2nd person).

Today, "es" is being incorporated yielding the new form "geht's".

Word incorporation a standard way flexion comes into being, and that's what's happening to the English nouns and pronouns here.

Re: Noun and Pronoun flexion in contemporary English

The interesting part for me is that in my English examples ("I'll go") tense/aspect marking now is done on the subject (with no or only defective tense/aspect marking on the verb (go/going)).

Your German example is interesting as well – the form "geht's" ("wie geht's?" "so geht's!") is a new 3rd person form that has an implicit subject and does not accept an explicit one.

Joachim

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