

History of the English Language

S. Gramley, SS 2009

Middle English: French and Latin
Influence

Lexis and Morphology

Dialectal Variation in OE

Old English began its history in England with some dialectal variation, e.g.

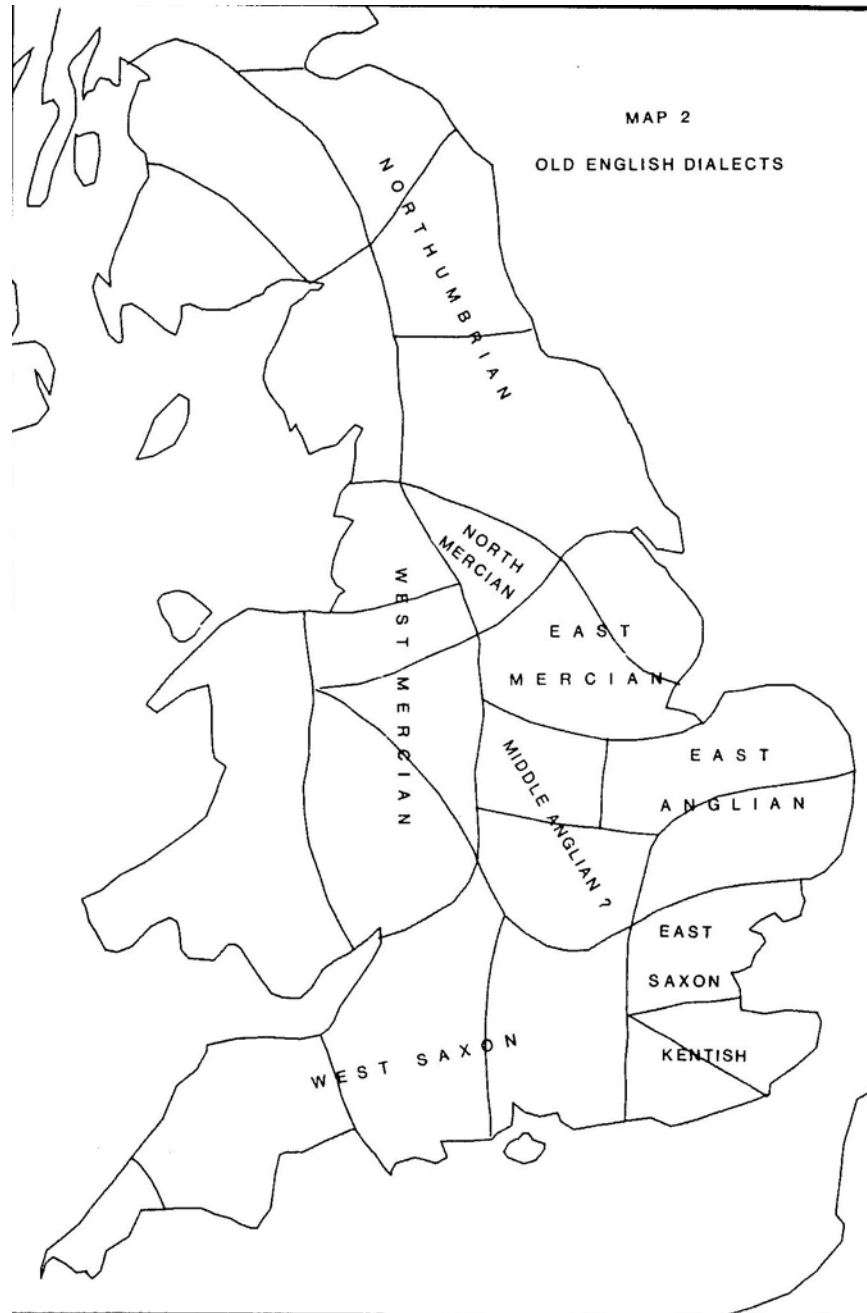
- long /æ:/ varied with /e:/ (*wiðcwæðan* and *wiðcweðon*), and short /æ/ varied with /a/ (*an* and *æn*), the former coming from *a: and the latter from *a
- palatalization of West Germanic *k and *g near front vowels and *j was not completely uniform

At least the following five dialects are distinguished: Kentish, West Saxon, West Mercian, North Mercian, and Northumbrian.

Probably East Saxon, East Anglian, and East Mercian; maybe even Middle Anglian were also distinct (T/K: . 266)



Old English Dialects from: McCrum et al., p. 63



**Old English
Dialects
from: T/K**

Linguistic change of two types:

A. Internal change, which leads to new subsystems

B. External change, which leads to creolization
(Bailey/Maroldt: 22)

Early internal changes in OE

These dialects underwent the processes of breaking and umlaut non-uniformly in England, but this happened before the first records.

Some changes were continental (contact was maintained from 500 to 800) and included:

- palatal umlaut (as in *foot-feet*) [umlaut – the fronting of a back vowel, originally as the result of assimilation to a following (front) /j/, as in IE **falljan* → *fiellan*],
- voicing of initial spirants (f, θ, s) and of all four spirants (f, θ, s, and x) in non-initial voiced environments,
- the raising of /æ/ to /e/ and
- the shift of /y/ to /e/

Internal Change in OE

Most important here: the loss of inflections

These changes were occurring seemingly independently of contact with ON and Norman French.

Furthermore, there were syntactic forms in probable free variation which would later be endowed with new meaning due to contact. An example of this is the verb *be* + the present participle, a form which does not seem to have had systematic aspectual meaning.

External Change: Possible Celtic Influence

- verbal aspect (the English progressive)
- zero relative in defining relative clauses (possibly)
- clear [l] (possibly from ON)
- unaspirated [p t k] (possibly from ON)
- virtually no lexical borrowing came from Celtic, and this in spite of a mixed population over several generations:
 - Celtic slaves
 - intermarriage

which meant there must have been widespread bilingualism

External Change in OE: The Norse in England

The advance of the Norse started with a *micel here* in 865. The Norse established themselves in the north - Northumbria, eastern Mercia from 876 – 878 (cf. our Text 2.1 for 871). Alfred stopped their advances southward in the latter year. By 920 the West Saxons (under Edward) had united all of southern England, and in 954 the north was added after the death of the last of the Scandinavian kings (Eric Blood-Axe of York) (T/K: 276).



M6 THE INFLUENCE OF THE NORSEMEN The Norse raids, beginning with the destruction of Lindisfarne in 793, had a lasting influence on the structure and vocabulary of English. After their defeat by Alfred the Great, the Danes withdrew north of a line agreed by treaty (known later as "the Danelaw") where they settled alongside the Saxon communities. This map shows how the east coast bore the brunt of Viking attacks, how Norse settlement was confined within "the Danelaw", and how the Vikings left their mark on the place-names of the north country. One of the most characteristic Norse place-name endings was *by*, meaning "a farm".

Hypothesis (Bailey / Maroldt):

(Middle) English is the product of creolization.

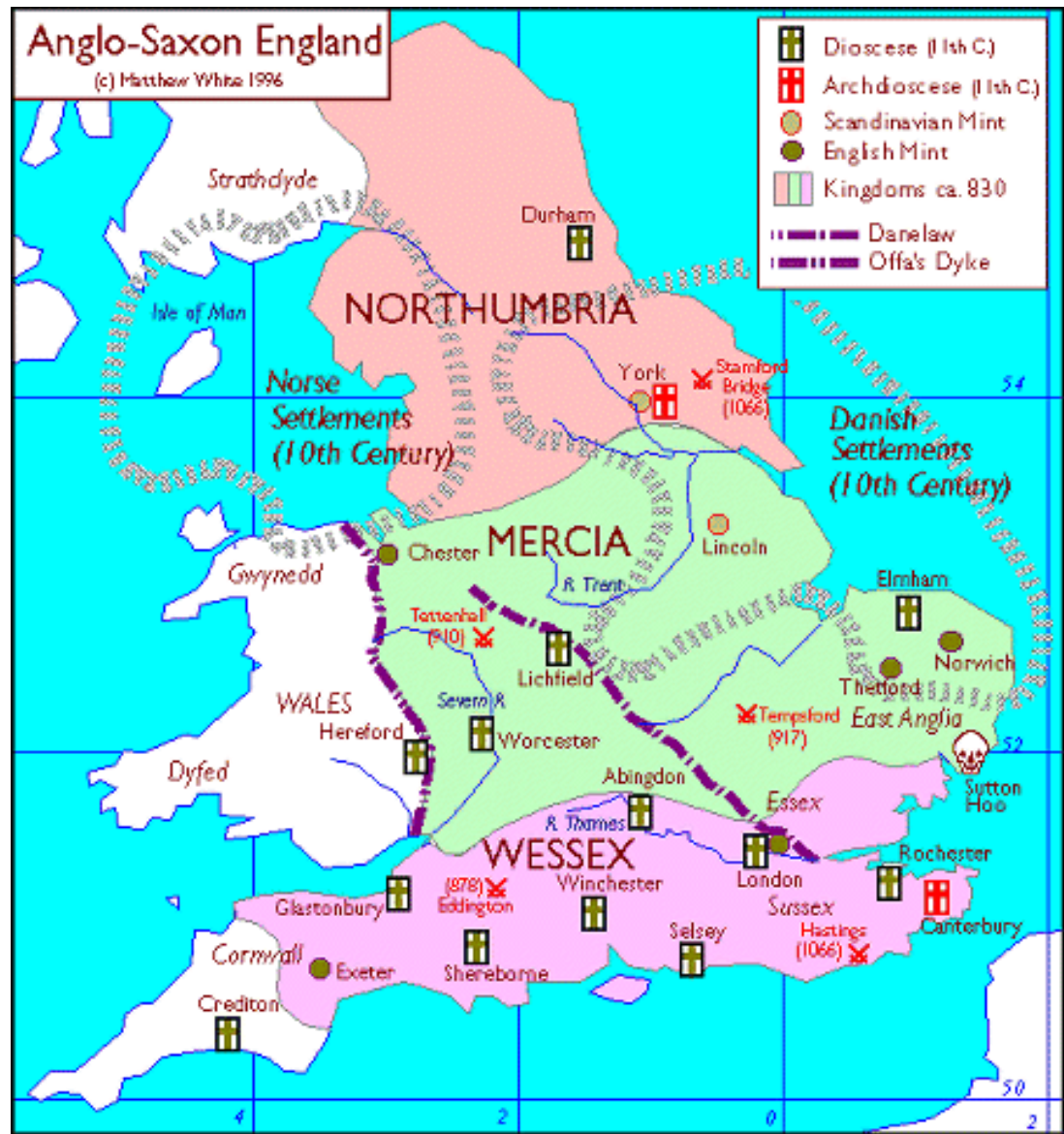
Assumption: OE and ON were in close contact in the north of England, which ended in a creolized form of English.

This is backed up by the demographic-political-geographical division of England as a result of the Viking conquests (see preceding and following maps).

Creolization and Creoles

Creolization: "...a gradient mixture of two or more languages" (ibid.: 21)

Creole: Mixing which is substantial enough to result in a new system (ibid.)



<http://thump01.pbase.com/u49/daveb/small/36255499.saxmap.jpg>

The result: Middle English (ME)

At least 40% of the lexicon, semantax, phonetology, and morphology is mixed – vis-à-vis Old English.

Creole features:

- analyticity (morphological simplification)
- particles in place of inflection
- “indigenous” prosody
- social features: a dominant and a servile class

A counter-argument by Thomason and Kaufman

Most of the features are trivial, i.e. “mere phonological variants of what English had had in the first place.”

“Norse was not structurally different from English in significant ways. (T/K: 299)

The greater simplicity of Danelaw ME is a simplicity of English, not Norse, and many features are not simplified and are not Norse. A number of the cases of grammatical simplification were present in Old Northumbrian, including the switch to natural gender (T/K: 280). The use of Norse pronouns and auxiliaries indicates intense contact and borrowing or considerable influence through shift (T/K: 281).

Northern English (what can we say about it?)

This variety was in many ways simpler than the southern type and was heavily influenced by Norse (T/K: *ibid.*):

- (1) Old Northumbrian retained (or reinstated on the basis of analogy) the /i/ or /e/ of the 2nd and 3rd persons sg, present indicative of strong verbs (lost in the South), e.g. S: *beóden* vs. N: *bédan*. [**breaking** – the tendency of front vowels in OE to acquire a back glide. Example: IE **wert-* → *weorthen*].
- (2) Loss of final /n/ in inflections (except past participles of strong verbs and the preterit plural); this led to later /ə/ and then its loss, as in *sing(an)*.
- (3) Different person/number agreement inflections on verbs (*vis-à-vis* West Saxon) (see next slide)
- (4) no voicing of initial fricatives (f, θ, s) as in Dutch or the English SW (also unvoiced in Frisian and ModE). This may have begun already on the Continent, but the influence of Norse clearly reinforced the lack of voicing in Danelaw.

In about 1300 the north-south differences include:

North: pres. indicative: -e or -es	South: -e	1st p. s.
-es	-st	2nd
-es	-th	3rd
-es or -e	-eth	plural

North: loss of /œ/, /y/, but kept in the South

North: final /ʃ/ → /s/ in Deira, but was kept in the South
cf. *English* with /ʃ/, but *Scots* with /s/

North: final /ə/ dropped; kept in the South

North: infinitive suffix lost; but kept in the South

North: preterit of strong verbs has one vowel; the South kept two, as in

<i>bíde</i>	<i>bád</i>	<i>bidon</i>	<i>biden</i>
<i>singe</i>	<i>sang</i>	<i>sungon</i>	<i>sungen</i>

(selection of features from T/K: 278f)

The data (this and the next two slides are “background” information)
A list of some 57 grammatical traits, some of them really quite trivial in nature, is given – out of a potential of some 260 or more. All in all, ME has 20% Norse traits; 5% are pure innovations; the remaining 75% are of English origin (292).

Norse grammatical elements in Norsified dialects of ME (vs. OE):

I. Processes (selection)

1. non perfect prefix (\emptyset vs. {je-})

II. Affixes

4. *umbe* vs. *ymbe* “around“
5. /-leik/ vs. /-la:k/
6. –*ande* vs. –*ende* (present participle)
7. –*scap* vs. –*st \uparrow ip*

III. Phonetic

8. Non-voicing of initial fricatives

IV. Copula

9. *ert* vs. *aeart*
10. *es* vs. *is*
11. *waare* / *woaren* (vs. *we:ron*)

V. Auxiliaries

12. mun or pret. munda: (vs. zilch) “must”

13. sall: sulde (vs. stʃl, stʃalde)

VI. Pronouns

14. they (vs, hi:e, he:o)

15. theim / theire (vs. him, hira)

16. sliik (vs. swelk)

same (vs. ilka, seolfa)

VII. Noun plurals

19. breedher (vs. bro:θor(o))

20. dehter(es) (vs. dohter(o))

21. hend (vs. hand(a)) (293)

VIII. Strong verbs

22. give(n): gaf: geeven (vs. jefa(n)/ifan, jaef, je:fon, jefen/jifen)

23. gete(n): gat: geeten (vs. jeta(n)/jitan, jaet, je:ton, jeten/jiten)

26. breste(n): brast: brusten: brosten (vs. bersta, baerst, burston,
borsten)

28. riive(n): raaf/roaf: tiven (vs. teren)

IX. Quantifiers

34. minne (vs. lae:ssa) “less”

X. Comparatives

36. werre (vs. wyrsa) “worse”

XI. Place Words

41. til (vs. to:)

43. samen (vs. aet-gaedere / to:gadere) (294)

46. a-mell (vs. be-twih / be-twi:en, on-mang)

XII. Time Words

49. efter (vs. aefter)

XIII. Conjunctions

54. at (vs.  e) “that”

55. at (vs. to:) “to”

XIV. Interjections

56. yaa (vs. je:)

57. way (vs. wa:, wae:, wejla: (wej)) “alas!” (295)

Evidence which is open for interpretation

Loss of inflections:

- inflections were being lost everywhere in OE, but more strongly and earlier in the north

- ON and OE stood in close contact in the North, where the Norse population was over 50% of the total (despite AS dominance)

Linguistic Developments up to the Middle English Period

The North showed large numbers of Norse borrowings and grammatical influence. The South was a more or less unbroken continuation of OE. **Changes from OE to ME:**

- (a) loss of grammatical gender
- (b) simplification (without loss in the South) of gender / number / case agreement in adjectives, qualifiers, quantifiers, and demonstratives
- (c) loss of genitive and dative plural cases

The southern dialects were the most conservative

Borrowings:

The earliest borrowing from ON into OE occurred before 1050

This was what shows up in written documents, which were virtually all in West Saxon – a southern dialect, far from ON.

Borrowings included items in the basic vocabulary (everyday items, parts of the body, family relations, agricultural products, tools, weapons).

Examples: *die, get, give, take, are, fellow, law, sky, they*

“Intimate“ borrowings may be a sign of creolization.

The Middle English Period

Text 3.1 (from *The Owl and the Nightingale*) shows English verse under French influence (rhyme rather than OE stress and alliteration) (McCrum et al. 123). Two more texts are printed in McCrum et al. (a northern text of 1272 and a Herefordshire one of 1230). They show the continuity of ME in regard to OE (124ff).

Ich was in one sumere dale
In one supe dizele hale
Iherde ich holde grete tale
An hule and one niztingale
pat plait was stif and starc an strong
Sumwile softe an lud among

**I was in a summer(y) valley
In a very hidden corner
I heard a great debate being held
An owl and a nightingale
Who were pleading firmly, severely, and strongly
Sometimes softly and loudly in between**

***supe* "truly"
digel "secret"**



French Influence on Middle English and the Question of Creolization (this and the next five slide are “background” information)

As for French – English creolization, Bailey / Maroldt suggest that ME is the product of massive English borrowings into the OF by the UC in medieval England.

Since the basic vocabulary of English stems from OE, this seems to be pretty far-fetched, and this without OE replacement of OF grammar.

Furthermore, the usual case in abrupt creolization is the presence of many languages; yet, in England there were only two.

Bilingualism seems to be a much more likely candidate when it comes to explaining linguistic change in ME (T/K: 307).

Note the following factors:

- the low number of French speakers in England
- the move to English as early as 1235
- the unlikelihood of large numbers of English-speakers learning French between 1066 and 1250 (afterwards, little need to do so)
- missing simplification in the dialects in strongest contact with French
- the Eastern Midlands (and ultimately the North) as the source of simplification
- the disproportion between massive French influence on vocabulary and none on syntax and morphology and its trivial influence on phonology – and this after French ceased to be spoken widely

What we find is

- a high degree of lexical borrowing;
- the phonologizing of initial /f/-/v/ and /dʒ/-/j/ (French influence),
- but no new phonemes (phones) from either French or Norse.
- The particles borrowed (e.g. {-able}) were abstracted later and then widely used;
- no demonstrable influence of word order; none on concord.

Rather, French speakers learned English – and their French suffered as a result (T/K: 308).

There was little simplification in southern ME; only the following:

- **loss of the dative (but optional singular {-e} remained after prepositions) (T/K: 310)**
- **loss of genitive plural (but original {-ene} became a derivational ending forming denominal adjectives [*golden, oaken, wooden*])**
- **reduction of gender/case agreement on prenominal modifiers**
- **loss of small noun classes (< 10 members)**

B/M say the creole origins of ME are obvious, but have to go against obvious interpretations to the contrary (T/K: 311). For example, to insist that a move to analytic structures must be due to foreign influences and count as creolization goes too far. Actually, there are no texts of vernacular English between 900 (“**as the last reliable point of reference**”) and 1200 (when the vernacular is once again documented). But then we see:

little change in the South vis-à-vis OE

some Norse-influence change in the Midlands (312)

a great deal of this in the North (312f)

superficial French influence everywhere, but esp. in the South

“We specifically deny that French has had a disruptive influence on English in the sense of having promoted simplification or denaturing.” Rather simplification was already in progress before the Conquest and was a purely internal process. What changed was vocabulary, the most superficial of changes (313), and these borrowings are seldom part of the colloquial language (313f).

Milroy sees three out of four creole criteria fulfilled by English:

- (1) gross morphological simplification**
- (2) some loss of segmental phonological distinctions
(doubtful, but not ruled out)**
- (3) relexification from a superordinate language**
- (4) a preference for SVO**

Thomason / Kaufman reject all four points (seeing (4) as spurious; (3) as not the case since French “did not for the most part displace native vocabulary**” (314))**

“Finally, there is the acceleration of the normal processes of change which takes place under the special conditions of contact resulting from migration or invasion (6.3). ... This applies to migrations within the area of a single language, and is seen in a mild form in the differences of development between conservative peripheral areas and innovating central areas. But it is seen more clearly in the comparison of cognate languages, as for example within both the Roman and the Germanic groups of languages: in both, the most isolated areas show the lowest rate of change (Sardinian, Icelandic) and similarly in both, the two areas to show the highest rate of change are those that have absorbed conquering invaders speaking a branch of Indo-European long separated and therefore virtually non-cognate: Northern France, conquered by the Franks; and England, conquered by the Normans.”

(Samuels 1972: 133)

Questions:

What was the social relationship of English and its neighbors, French and Latin? That is, what type of contact was this?

How "undemocratic" are the results of the massive import of Romance vocabulary? Do speakers of English really have difficulties with "hard words"?

What was the overall effect of the two languages on English? How have these new borrowings affected the structure of English vocabulary?

What proportion of English vocabulary is of Romance (classical and French) origin?

How have these borrowings influenced the derivational morphology of English?

Why were words borrowed?

The Norman Conquest

The Norman French conquered England between 1066 and 1070. They replaced the English in the ruling class and the clergy and gradually modified the political and religious superstructure.

They used Latin for records, less and less English and only little French.

Nowhere was French in wide use. (The French settled more in the southern commercial centers – along with Bretons and Flemings) (T/K: 267) Even in the Domesday book (1086) “**a sizable number of English fief-holders**” remained. Among the (perhaps 20,000) French fief-holders French was probably common.

In 1204 the English crown lost Normandy to the French. Norman nobles were now forced to choose between France and England.

French was first used more frequently after 1215, and both languages were probably used thru-out the ME period. However, few new English texts were produced until after 1150.

“(It should be remembered that the states of Europe down to the last century were typically multiethnic and multilingual, but not necessarily with many multilingual individuals.”) (T/K: 268)

The Barons’ Revolt (1250s) shows the resentment of continued French influence and is somewhat connected with the use of English (268f). It ended in an official document written in English in 1258 (the first since about 1154).

From 1250 on French words began entering English rapidly – perhaps a sign that previously French-speaking people were now moving into English. This came after one to two generations after the French-English split.

French remained the prestigious language (“the French were culturally 50 to 100 years in advance of other Europeans”), but English was increasingly used in the courts and after 1360 in Parliament as well. French medieval loans stopped by about 1400. [This indicates the approximate end of the period of bilingualism.]

The North-South Balance

Up to 1225 innovations went S → N:

- /a:/ → /oə/ (aka breaking)
- gamma [ɣ] (voiced palatal-velar fricative) → /w or y/

From 1250 on N → S:

- lengthening of short stressed vowels in open syllables
- loss of final unstressed /ə/
- degemination [gemination – the lengthening of a consonant]
- {-eth} → {-es} (S/K: 274)

From about 1400 on, with the growth of London, the S → N tendency returned:

- lengthening of vowels (i:, u:) before /xt/ as in *right*, *drought*
- (/riht → riit → rəit/ and /druht → druut → drəut/)

At the same time, entrepreneurs from the Midlands (Leicester and Northampton) were moving to London and superimposing their English on the Essex substratum. This continued until about 1800.

Language shift (including language imposition)

depends on one – and usually more – of the following conditions:

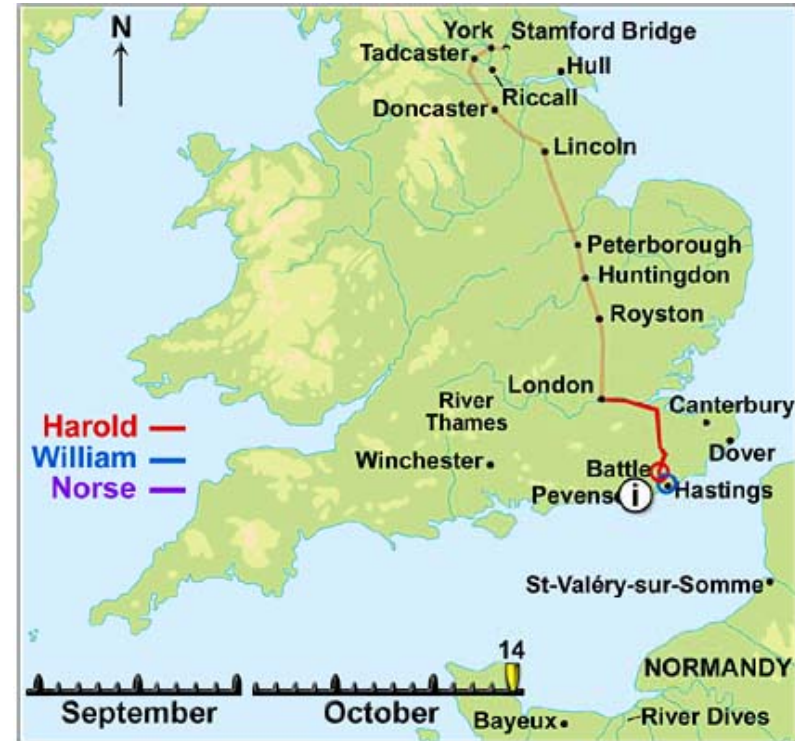
- military conquest**
- a long period of language imposition**
- a polyglot subject group**
- material benefits in the adoption of the conquerors' language (cf. Brosnahan 1963:15-17).**
- urbanization**
- economic development**
- educational development**
- religious orientation**
- political affiliation (Fishman et al. 1977:77-82)**

The Norman Conquest and the Influence of French

The Conquest is frequently portrayed as monumental for the development of English (“progress” toward “civilization”).

Some see this as a rupture in the continuity of English. This view has propagated the myth of the Norman yoke, which turned out to be opportune for, among others, the monarchy.

In emphasizing this the idea of English-French competition was engendered and continued up into the 20th century: **“hostility mixed with admiration.”**



The Norman Invasion is described in *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* in “doom-laden paragraphs,” and it changed the face of English forever. The Normans “seized control” with “systematic rigour” and built strong points with English labor, but manned by Norman soldiers.

William also purged the church. The country was “dominated by French-speaking Normans” for several generations after. So “the overwhelming majority of English people experienced the humiliations of a linguistic apartheid: religion, law, science, literature were all conducted in languages other than English, as words like *felony*, *perjury*, *attorney*, *bailiff* and *nobility* testify.” (McCrum et al.: 73)



An episode is recounted which “expresses the bitter resentment the English felt.” “In court, church and government circles, French was established as the smart and Latin as the professional language.” (74)

Norman – Saxon relations in Scott's *Ivanhoe*



Scott helped to do this, cf. “In short, French was the language of honour, of chivalry, and even of justice, while the far more manly and expressive Anglo-Saxon was abandoned to the use of rustics and hinds, who know no other.” (originally 1815).

Scott continues:

A circumstance which greatly tended to enhance **the tyranny of the nobility, and the sufferings of the inferior classes**, arose from the consequences of the Conquest by Duke William of Normandy. Four generations had not sufficed to blend **the hostile blood of the Normans and Anglo-Saxons**, or to unite, by common language and mutual interests, **two hostile races**, one of which still felt **the elation of triumph**, while the other groaned under all the consequences of defeat. ... All the monarchs of **the Norman race** had shown the most marked predilection for their Norman subjects; the laws of the chase, and many others, equally unknown to **the milder and more free spirit of the Saxon constitution**, had been fixed upon the necks of the subjugated inhabitants, ... (*Ivanhoe*, chap. 1)

Here the original passage in fuller context:

At court, and in the castles of the great nobles, where **the pomp and state of a court** was emulated, Norman-French was the only language employed; in courts of law, the pleadings and judgments were delivered in the same tongue. In short, **French was the language of honour, of chivalry**, and even of justice, while **the far more manly and expressive Anglo-Saxon was abandoned** to the use of rustics and hinds, who knew no other.

Still, however, the necessary intercourse between the lords of the soil, and those oppressed inferior beings by whom that soil was cultivated, occasioned the gradual formation of a dialect, compounded betwixt the French and the Anglo-Saxon, in which they could render themselves mutually intelligible to each other; and from this necessity arose by degrees the structure of our present English language, in which the speech of the victors and the vanquished have been so happily blended together, and which has since been so richly improved by importations from the classical languages, and from those spoken by the southern nations of Europe.

The encounter between Wamba, the jester, and Gurth, the swineherd

"Why, how call you those grunting brutes running about on their four legs?" demanded Wamba.

"Swine, fool, swine," said the herd, "every fool knows that."

"And swine is good Saxon," said the Jester; "but how call you the sow when she is flayed, and drawn, and quartered, and hung up by the heels, like a traitor"

"Pork," answered the swineherd.

"I am very glad every fool knows that too," said Wamba, "and pork, I think, is good Norman-French; and so when the brute lives, and is in the charge of a Saxon slave, she goes by her Saxon name; becomes a Norman, and is called pork, when she is carried to the Castle-hall to feast among the nobles..."

In the continuation we find:

A-S ox
calf

Norman : beef
veau (veal)



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Why were words borrowed?

Middle English

Middle English is generally placed between 1100 or 1150 and 1500. Although this is a short period, it saw massive changes in pronunciation, such as the **Great Vowel Shift**, grammar, e.g. the continuation of the loss of inflections which had already begun in the OE period, and enormous additions to vocabulary from French.

The Great Vowel Shift refers to a set of changes in the long vowels of English which took place between the early ME period and the beginning of the ModE period, e.g. /i:/ became /eɪ/ (= ModE /aɪ/ (*tima* → *time*)) and /u:/ became /aʊ/ (*ful* → *foul*). We will look at it later.

Vocabulary from French

The eleventh century brought the last military conquest of England, by the Norman French.¹ Since much of the new ruling class spoke French while the common people continued to speak English, it was less words for everyday things and activities which entered the language than words the new masters were likely to use (cf. the passage from *Ivanhoe*). This involved fashion, art and literature, and learning. Beyond this French words were taken into English massively in the areas of law and administration as well as the military. The church also provided numerous new additions.

The influence of French was more of the Central than of the Norman variety, esp. after 1204, when the kings of England lost Normandy.

¹The name Norman comes from the Northmen (Norse Vikings) who had taken possession of the French coast at Normandy as well.

Typical early loans were the following (French loan words in ocher):

fulluhtere

baptist

mæzester

meister

forecwedere

prophete

halig

seint

hlæfdige

dame

eald-modor

grandame

hlaford

sire

æpeling

prince

Note that *hlaford* < *hlafwearð* “warden of loaves” (cf. *hlaƿ* with Slav. *xleb*)

and that *hlaefdige* “lady” comes from “kneader of loaves” > I-E **dig-* “knead,” cf. *dough*

As we can see, religion terms (domain: church) and feudal titles were prominent.

Vocabulary from French

French replacements 1200 → 1250 (taken from *Brut*, a Southwestern text)

boc-runen	lettre	
æhte	tresur	
munucclif	abbey	> monk + life
munstre	nunnerie	
milce	grace	[cf. <i>milsian</i> , <i>milts</i> to pity, mercy]
heren	serve	[to honor, cf. ravage, harry]
here-toga	chieftain	
here-marken	pensiles	“standards”
ʒisles	hostages	cf. Geisel
friðe	park	“protected place” to “hunting reserve”
wisen	atyr	“attire, guise”
bolle	coupe	“cup”
at-breac	ascapede	
hozien	aspien	“consider” to “see” > <i>hogian</i> “study, think, be anxious”
husting	conseil	Norse > <i>hus</i> + <i>thing</i>

In the 13th and 14th centuries this source becomes more prominent and includes names of people, with their classes, ranks, temperaments and offices, terms for finance, property and business, for building and for homes equipment, for law and social organization, religion, war, the arts, clothing and food, entertainment, hunting, animals, esp. foreign, science and medicine. It is chiefly nouns which are adopted, but fairly many verbs and adjectives and a few other forms are as well.

The vocabulary of power, rank, and status. Here a new evaluative function of terms is established, esp. as “**the projection of attitudes that are upper-class on to the words.**” These items include: *king, queen, lord, lady, duke, prince, squire, villain, alderman, thane, earl, knight, gentle, churl, villain, peasant, vulgar, common, illiterate, lewd, burgess, and bourgeois* (Leith: 80-82).

French

fashion: *gown, robe, cape, frock, petticoat*, etc.

art and literature: *art, painting, music, beauty, poet, romance, story*, etc.

learning: *medicine, physician, study, grammar, logic, geometry*, etc.

law and administration: *jury, verdict, sentence, fine, prison; govern, administer, crown, state, realm, royal, court, council, parliament*, etc.

military: *army, navy, battle, combat, siege, peace*, etc.

church: *sermon, sacrament, baptism, chaplain, parson, pastor, vicar*, etc.

The Influence of French on English

Other words which reflect Norman areas of dominance are

curt	"court"	castel	"castle"
rente	"tithe, quitrent"	poure	"poor"
lei	"law"	chapel	"chapel"
prisun	"prison"	tur	"tower"

Well over 200 words stem from the 12th century.

The later borrowing from Central French **“was indeed borrowing from a language of high culture into one of lower culture.”** In contrast the English were more advanced than the Normans in everything except military sophistication (i.e. castle-building) at the time of the Conquest (Strang: 251). In 1066 there were a recorded 50 French loan words in English, but many from Latin and Norse.

Norman French kept Germanic /w/, but adapted it to /gw/, then to /g/. Early borrowings have /w/, but from the 14th century on /g/ forms, sometimes the two side by side

were	guerre
wile	guile
ward(en)	guard(ian)

An indigenous French change is of /k/ to /tʃ/ before /a/, so

Norman gives us *carpenter, caudron*

CentFr gives us *chair, charity*

Doublets are *cattle-chattel*

catch-chase (*chase* reflect the later change
/tʃ/ → /ts/ → /s/)

Norman has /g/ as in *garden, gaol*

CentFr has /dʒ/ as in *joy, jest, jail*

Norman has /ei/ as in *obey, air, fair*

CentFr has /oi/ as in *exploit, poise, royal, loyal*

Read and translate Text 3.2 into Modern English.

How many words are there of French origin?

And þis corrupcioun of Englysshe men yn þer modre-tounge, begunne as I seyde with famylyar commixtion of Danys firste and of Normannys aftir, toke grete augmentacioun and encrees aftir þe commyng of William conquerour by two thyngis. The firste was: by decre and ordynaunce of þe seide William conqueror children in gramer-scolis ageyns þe consuetude and þe custom of all oþer nacyons, here owne modre-tonge lafte and forsakyn, lernyd here Donet on Frenssh and to construyn yn Frenssh and to maken here Latyns on þe same wyse. The secounde cause was þat by the same decre lordis sonys and all nobyll and worthy mennys children were fyrste set to lrynyn and speken Frensshe, or þan þey cowde spekyn Ynglyssh and þat all wrytyngis and endentyngis and all maner plees and contravercyes in courtis of þe lawe, and all maner reknygnis and countis yn howsoolde schulle be doon yn the same. And þis seeyinge, þe rurales, þat þey myghte semyn þe more worschipfull and honorable and þe redliere comyn to þe famyliarite of þe worthy and þe grete, leftyn hure modre tounge and labouryd to kunne spekyn Frenssh: and thus by processe of tyme barbarizid thei in bothyn and spokyn neythyr good Frenssh nor good Englyssh.

Bokenham on English and French, 1440

And this corruption of Englishmen in their mother tongue, begun, as I have said, in the every-day admixture of first Danish and then Norman, was greatly augmented and increased after the arrival of William the Conqueror by two things. The first was by the decree and ordinance of the aforesaid William the Conqueror that children in the grammar schools should leave off and forsake their own mother tongue and learn their Donatus in French and construe it in French and do their Latin in the same way, which is something which goes against the habit and custom of all other nations. The second cause was that in the same decree the sons of the lords and the children of all the nobles and worthy men were first set to learn and speak French, before they could speak English and that all writings and indentureships and all manner of pleas and controversies in courts of law and all manner of calculations and accounts in households should be done in the same (language). And seeing this, the rural people [saw] that they might seem to be the more esteemed and honorable and the more easily open to the acquaintance of the worthy and the great, abandoned their mother tongue and labored to be able to speak French: and thus in the course of time mutilated them both and spoke neither good French nor good English.

And þis **corrupcioun** of Englysshe men yn þer modre-tounge, begunne as I seyde with **famylyar commixtion** of Danys firste and of Normannys aftir, toke grete **augmentacioun** and **encrees** aftir þe commyng of William **conquerour** by two thyngis. The firste was: by **decre** and **ordynaunce** of þe seide William **conqueror** children in **gramer-scolis** ageyns þe **consuetude** and þe **custom** of all oper **nacyons**, here owne modre-tonge lafte and forsakyn, lernyd here **Donet** on Frenssh and to **construyn** yn Frenssh and to maken here **Latyns** on þe same wyse. The **secounde cause** was þat by the same **decre** lordis sonys and all **nobyll** and worthy mennys children were fyrste set to lrynyn and speken Frenssh, or þan þey cowde spekyn Ynglyssh and þat all wrytyngis and **endentyngis** and all maner **plees** and **contravercyes** in **courtis** of þe **lawe**, and all maner reknygnis and **countis** yn howsoolde schulle be doon yn the same. And þis seeyinge, þe **rurales**, þat þey myghte semyn þe more worschipfull and **honorable** and þe redliere **comyn** to þe **famyliarite** of þe worthy and þe grete, leftyn hure modre tounge and **labouryd** to kunne spekyn Frenssh: and thus by **processe** of tyme **barbarizid** thei in bothyn and spokyn neythyr good Frenssh nor good Englyssh.

Bokenham on English
and French, 1440

25 types from French; 5 clearly from Latin

augmentacioun

cause

comyn

construyn

contravercyes

countis

custom

Donet

endentyngis

gamer

labouryd

nacyons

ordynaunce

processe

scolis

barbarizid

commixtion

conquero(u)r

consuetude

corrupcioun

courtis

decre

encrees

famyliarite, famylyar

honorable

Latyns

nobyll

plees

rurales

secounde

Binomial expressions in the text

augmentacioun and **encrees**

Fr - Fr

decre and **ordynaunce**

Fr - Fr

þe **consuetude** and þe **custom**

Fr – Fr

lafe and forsakyn

Eng-Eng

lernyd here **Donet** on Frenssh and to **construyn** yn Frenssh

Fr – Fr

lordis sonys and all **nobyll** and worthy mennys children

Eng-Eng

nobyll and worthy

Fr – Eng

to lyrnyn and speken Frensshe

Eng-Eng

wrytyngis and **endentyngis**

Fr – Eng

plees and **contravercyes**

Fr - Fr

reknygnis and **countis**

Fr – Eng

worschipfull and **honorable**

Fr – Eng

þe worthy and þe grete

Eng-Eng

neythyr good Frenssh nor good Englyssh

Eng-Eng

Jespersen points out that writers originally (say, in the 13th century) used a French word with an English one next to it as an interpretation, e.g. "cherité, þet is luve."

By Chaucer's time the reader would have been familiar with both members of a pair and they would serve to heighten the effect of the passage, e.g. "in honour and worship" or "olde and auncyent doctours." (Jespersen 99-101)

It is Jespersen from whom we have "undemocratic" hypothesis (see next slides), and it is he who remarks, "...the differences that have developed in course of time between two synonyms when both have survived, one of them native, the other French. The former is always nearer the nation's heart than the latter, it has the strongest associations with everything primitive, fundamental, popular, while the French word is often more formal, more polite, more refined and has a less strong hold on the emotional side of life. A *cottage* is finer than a *hut*, ..." (102).

And he continues with *bill* and *beak*; *dress* and *clothe*, *amity* and *friendship*, *help* and *aid*, *folk* and *people*, *hearty* and *cordial*, and more yet (102-104).

Lexical and word-formation borrowings

Borrowing already took place before the Conquest though then and initially after the Conquest not very fast, for first bilingualism was necessary, and Anglo-French bilingualism was slow to develop on a significant level. But then loans poured in (Strang: 250). First Anglo-Norman, than Central French ones.

Borrowing came to prevail over word-formation, which Jespersen regarded as “**undemocratic,**” for compounds and derivations are transparent while borrowed words are opaque and require more education, cf. *mouth-oral* and *hear-auditory* in comparison with German *Mund-mündlich* and *hören-hörbar*. A mistaken notion is that English was missing the words it borrowed and that borrowing reflects inferiority in vocabulary and culture. The mass of words borrowed were redundant.

Jespersen also points out that the French were the fashion leaders of the Middle Ages (see the list above). But the English words were retained for everyday occupations (*baker, miller, smith, weaver, saddler, shoemaker, wheelwright, fisherman, shepherd*, etc.

He also maintains that common folk have difficulty with non-native words and recounts the following episode (originally published in 1879) about a clergyman "who blamed a brother preacher for using the word *felicity*. "I do not think all of your hearers understood it; I should say *happiness*." "I can hardly think," said the other, "that any one does not know what *felicity* means, and we will ask this ploughman near us. Come hither, my man! you may have been at church and heard the sermon; you heard me speak of *felicity*; do you know what it means? "Ees, sir!" "Well, what does *felicity* mean?" "Summut in the inside of a pig, but I can't say altogether what." (102)

He also quotes Shakespeare (*As You Like It*, Act 5, Scene 1):
"Therefore, you Clowne, abandon, - which is in the vulgar leave, - the societie – which in the boorish is companie, - of this female, - which in the common is woman; which together is, abandon the society of this Female, or Clowne, thou perishest; or, to thy better understanding, dyest."

Latin Influence on English

Previous to the Germanic invaders, the Romans had conquered Britain (A.D. 43 - 410) and had transmitted some of their culture and vocabulary to the Britons. A few words borrowed by the Celts from Latin were passed on to the new Germanic conquerors. Examples include *cross*, *curse*, and *ass*.



In the period after the Roman troops left Britain the influence of Latin was much stronger than before. As Anglo-Saxon Britain underwent Christianization, it came under the strong influence of Latin, the language of Christianity in the West. This included not only ecclesiastical words (*alms*, *altar*, *angel*, *candle*, *chalice*, *cleric*, *deacon*, *disciple*, *mass*, *minster*, *nun*, *palm*, *priest*, *relic*, *shrift*, *shrine*, etc.), but also words with a more immediate connection to everyday life such as *belt*, *cap*, and *tunic*; *cook*, *crisp*, and *kettle*; *cedar*, *cypress*, and *pine*; *cherry*, *pear*, and *radish*; *oyster*, *lobster*, and *mussel*; *coriander*, *ginger*, and *parsley*. The list could easily be extended.

The languages of classical learning

Almost as significant as the French influence following the Norman Conquest was the increase in words of Latin or Greek origin. Although this process began in late medieval times, it was with the revival of learning in the Renaissance that classical borrowing really took off. This meant that there were now sometimes **triplets**, where a native English word stands next to one taken from French and another derived from Latin: *kingly, royal, regal*. As Baugh/Cable have it:

The richness of English in synonyms is largely due to the happy mingling of Latin, French, and native elements. It has been said that we have a synonym at each level - popular, literary, and learned. Although this statement must not be pressed too hard, a difference is often apparent, as in ... *fast - firm - secure*.... (Baugh / Cable 1993:182)

As positive as these new words were for the increased possibilities of expression they offered, they were also accompanied by controversy and were rejected in many cases. Besides enriching the language, they also made certain **stylistic registers** more inaccessible to the masses and so widened the educational gap between the classes.

For many people the semantic relations between everyday words and the corresponding scholarly Latinate words are not immediately evident, but have to be learned. That is, the association between a verb like *see* and the corresponding adjective *visible* ("able to be seen") must be established. While both of these words are well known, this is not always the case as with pairs like *smell* and *olfactory*. Hence the designation of these non-Germanic items as ***hard words***.

Latin borrowing of this period came from areas similar to ones where Central French was the source (and sometimes the exact source in unclear):

Religion: *credo, dirge, ipocrisis* (Gk), *requiem, limbo, pater (noster)*

Law: *client, arbitrator, conviction, exorbitant, extravagant, pauper*

School : *allegory* (Gk), *cause, desk, index, item, library, major, minor, scribe*

Science: *diaphragm* (Gk), *digit, orbit, ligament, dissolve*

Non-technical : *adoption, collision, colony, conflict, depression, accede, adjure, combine, comment, discuss, expend, aggregate, alienate, complete, imaginary, immortal*

Hard words have often been objected to as "**inkhorn**" **terms**, that is, words felt to be pretentious and/or obscure. Present-day users of English will agree in those cases where the words objected to have not come into common use (e.g. *obtestate* "to call upon as a witness" or *expend* "to weigh mentally, to ponder"). However, such now common words as *native*, *fertile*, or *verbosity* were also once the subject of ridicule.

Part of the objection to these new words or **neologisms** lies in their pretentious use, often by the semi-literate. One of the well-known genres of American pioneer life was the frontier boast, which thrived on mock Latinisms meant not to express content so much as to impress listeners (cf. also §3.7).

The frontiersman, ring-tailed roarer, half horse and half alligator, described himself as *kankarriferous* and *rambunctious*, his lady love as *angeliferous* and *splendiferous*. With consummate ease he could *teetotaciously exfluncticate* his opponent in a *conbobberation*, that is to say a conflict or disturbance, or *ramsquaddle* him *bodaciously*, after which the luckless fellow would *absquatulate* (Marckwardt 1980:110).

English remained the language of common folk.

French had “social and cultural prestige.”

Latin “remained the principal language of religion and learning”

(McCrum et al.: 75)

cf. the triplets:

kingly, royal, regal (and *sovereign*)

rise, mount, ascent

ask, question, interrogate

time, age, epoch.

Can you think of further triplets of this nature?

Questions:

What was the social relationship of English and its neighbors, French and Latin? That is, what type of contact was this?

How "undemocratic" are the results of the massive import of Romance vocabulary? Do speakers of English really have difficulties with "hard words"?

What was the overall effect of the two languages on English? How have these new borrowings affected the structure of English vocabulary?

What proportion of English vocabulary is of Romance (classical and French) origin?

How have these borrowings influenced the derivational morphology of English?

Why were words borrowed?

Vocabulary

The French element in the vocabulary of English: **28.3%**

Examples: *uncle, aunt, niece, nephew*

The Germanic element in the vocabulary of English: **27%**

Examples: *mother, father, brother, sister, son, daughter*

The Latin element in the vocabulary of English: **28.24%**

Examples: *maternity, avuncular, paternalistic, fraternity, sorority, filial*

In 1460 the 6000 words of French origin in English were the equivalent of over 40% of the vocabulary of English (= **types**).

These French words had, however, a low frequency of occurrence (= **tokens**)

Pyles says 85% of ME vocabulary is of French origin.

Based on Swadesh's 200-word list of basic vocabulary and “a 700-word non-cultural, non-regional diagnostic list” research by Kaufman shows 7% (in Modern English) comes from French and 7% from Norse

– and many of these items only enter the English language later than the ME period.

Questions:

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What was the overall effect of the two languages on English? How have these new borrowings affected the structure of English vocabulary?

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Why were words borrowed?

Word formation: “While we have not abandoned this technique altogether, it is generally true to say that English has been particularly receptive to the possibility of absorbing foreign words; instead of making up new words, we borrow them; ...”
(Leith: 62)

Leith view, while appropriate on the one level, seems to ignore the enormous amount of **compounding** and **metaphor**, both of which are enormously productive.

Furthermore, new derivational morphemes were adopted into the language, as the next slide demonstrates.

Romance (French) derivational morphemes (suffixes)

- ard** (also: {-art}) from OFr but of Germanic origin, cf. {-hard} as in *Gerhard*; “one that is characterized by some action, quality, or thing. Here {ger-} means “sword“
From this period we have *sheward* “like a shrew“
- ery** from OFr {-ier / -er} + {-y / -ie}; "having the quality of" (*snobbery*); the art or practice of (*quackery*); place of doing (*bakery*); collection of (*finery*); state or condition of (*slavery*)
From this period: *husbandry* “the practice of husbanding, careful management“
- ous** from OFr {-ous / -eus / -eux} from Latin {-osus} abounding in (*poisonous*)
From this period: *gluttonous*
- ment** from OFr, but ultimately from Latin {-mentum}, a suffix denoting a concrete result; the result of something (*statement, government*)
From this period: *chastisement*

The presence of

(a) a large number of non-native words

(b) employing a different set of affixes and

(c) using different stress patterns

(d) has had a lasting effect on the morphology of English.

(e) However, it has not eradicated the deep-seated distinction between Romance and Germanic lexical items, even though it has blurred the edges at a number of spots.

Questions:

What was the social relationship of English and its neighbors, French and Latin? That is, what type of contact was this?

How "undemocratic" are the results of the massive import of Romance vocabulary? Do speakers of English really have difficulties with "hard words"?

What was the overall effect of the two languages on English? How have these new borrowings affected the structure of English vocabulary?

What proportion of English vocabulary is of Romance (classical and French) origin?

How have these borrowings influenced the derivational morphology of English?

Why were words borrowed?

Why were words borrowed?

Words are borrowed mainly for one or both of two reasons:

- (a) the donor language has more prestige, e.g. French terms for government and organization, cookery, etc. in Norman England.
- (b) the recipient language has a lexical gap.

Prestige explains the large influx of Latinate words in the 15th and 16th centuries of the ME period: **“It can be no coincidence that writers throughout this period characterised English as ‘rude’ and lacking in eloquence.”** (Samuels: 94)

The donor language may die out despite prestige – as French in England did. The Norse invasions led to the adoption of many Scandinavian words, even grammatical forms, possibly because of their mutual intelligibility, but Norse as such died out.

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Maps:

Dialects of Old English

from McCrum, Cran, MacNeill

OE Dialect Areas

from Thomason / Kaufman

Danelaw

from McCrum, Cran, MacNeill

<http://thump01.pbase.com/u49/daveb/small/36255499.saxmap.jpg>

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Homework

Read and translate Text 4.1 into Modern English.