

Differing forms of contact influence between Middle English and Anglo-Norman and their context

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1. Hybrid Languages

No single genetic affiliation; distinct affiliation for different domains of the language (Bakker 2003).

Created via widespread bilingualism, usually one-way, not mutual, used by an in-group as an identity symbol. (Thomason 2001, Matras 2009).

May arise via language shift, e.g. Ma'a speakers shifted to a typologically different language, whilst retaining very large amounts of vocabulary.

Anglo-Norman: a hybrid variety?

‘Under the Norman and Angevin kings... a hybrid speech containing Anglo-Saxon and Norman French elements developed and remained the official language, sometimes even displacing Latin, until the mid-14th century when Late Middle English became the official language. (*Encyclopaedia Britannica*, sub: ‘United Kingdom, languages’)

Wright (1998): ‘mixed language’ texts Latin/Anglo-Norman/English. Evidence for hybridisation?

Issues

Contact influence English <-> Anglo-Norman led to what kinds of system replacement, if any?
Historically, what sort of social linguistic conditions give rise to a hybrid variety?
Does code switching lead to hybridisation?

2. Anglo-Norman: the sociolinguistic context

England was a settlement colony for a Norman French-speaking elite in the 11th to 12th centuries.

Over time, ruling elite underwent a shift from monolingual French to monolingual English

Contact between French and English in the medieval period operated via stable bilingualism from the later 12th to the later 14th centuries (Short 1980, Short 2010).

For bilingual speakers belonging to a restricted social elite, Anglo-Norman (A-N) could have been recognised as an identity symbol.

A-N medium of communication in school generally acquired English as a mother tongue and Anglo-Norman as a child L2 (Ingham 2012, cf. Meisel 2011).

3. Code-switching in later A-N

Estate management - manorial accounts (Ingham 2009)

Common use of French def. article + Eng. Noun embedded in matrix Latin text:-

- (1) Pro le salthus (Framlingham, p. 68 (1324–5)); In **le Nywemedde** (Cuxham, p. 594 (1358–9))
Ad claudendum **le oxenpa(s)tur**, 45

CS constraint (cf. Schendl 2000) in language-mixed medieval records:-

- | | |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| (2) De Rog'o on the Grene | (Longeruge. Staffs 1327) |
| De Ada sur le Grene | (Talynton Staffs 1332) |
| (3) De Rob'to Bythebrok | (Aston & Burveston. Staffs, 1332) |
| De Roberto a le Brok | (Morcott, Rutland, 1296) |
| (4) De Luca Bythewode | (Henherst, Sussex 1296) |
| De Gilberto a la wode | (Hulleberrewe, Worcs, 88, c.1275) |

Switch between article and noun; no switch between preposition and article.

4. Directions of contact influence:

i) A-N on English

French is known to have heavily influenced Middle English lexis and phraseology (Orr 1962); an estimated 10,000 lexical items of French origin entered Middle English (Dekeyser 1986).

Grammatical function words also showed French influence, taking the form of replica grammaticalisation (Heine & Kuteva 2005). Wh- words *who*, *which* gained a relative pronoun function to parallel French *qui*; quantifying pronouns *more*, *most* gained a comparative modifier function to parallel French *plus*:

- (5) He nadde bote an doȝter **wo** miȝte is eir be. *R. Gloucester's Chron.* (1297)
'He had just one daughter who could be his heir'
- (6) ... and oðer meten, **Quilke** ben wune ðe kinges to eten. *Genesis & Exodus* 2080 (c1250)
'And other food which kings are wont to eat'
- (7) Þes we ahte to beon þe edmoddre and þa **mare** imete. *Old Eng. Homilies* 1st Ser. 5 (a1225).
'Therefore we should be the more humble and the more moderate'
- (8) For þah he beo richest, þe alre **measte** poure ... is him wel icweme.
'For though he is the richest, the very poorest... is very pleasing to him'
Hali Meidhad (Bodl. 34) 34 (c1225)

In the 13th century ME *of* displays uses not previously attested, e.g. a possession sense, and introducing nominalisations (subject and object senses)

- (9) Ȝiff þatt itt seþ þe wlite **off** enngle kinde. *Ormulum* l. 666 (?c1200)
'If it sees the face of angelic nature'
- (10) Þe wohunge **of** ure lauerd. a1250 *Old Eng. Homilies* 1st Ser. 269
'The wooing of our Lord'
- (11) Ȝiff ennglissh folc forr lufe **off** crist Itt wolde ȝerne lernenn. *Ormulum* l. 19 (?c1200)
'If English people would learn it for love of Christ'

These uses replicate functions of French *de*.

To express past counterfactual possibility, English *could have* or *might have* were used in later ME in the same way as French *pouvoir* + *avoir* in earlier ones, e.g.:

- (12) Or **deüsiez avoir** prié icil qui ci m' ont asegié que il se traissient ariere.

‘Now you should have asked those who have besieged me to withdraw’

Roman de Renart. Branche 11, 11732 |

(13) Pour ce est il appellé Jhesus, qui vault autant a dire comme sauveur; car ce qu' il **peust avoir** fait par un sien sergent il fist par li meismes. *Miracle de Oton, roy d' Espagne* p. 318

‘This is why he is called Jesus, which means to say saviour, for what he could have done through one of his servants he did by himself’

(14) Diverse persones ... have not put thaim in such devoir to that that **might have** avaunced the honour and prosperite of him. *PROME* July 1455

‘Various people have not devoted themselves to what might have advanced his honous and prosperity’

(15) He ne hath noght born hym as he **sholde hav** doon.

PROME Nov 1411

‘He has not behaved as he should have done.’

Grammatical influence of French on English came about where function words were used in ways replicating French, but probably not otherwise.

ii) English on A-N

- Replication in the reverse direction, from English to Anglo-Norman, is virtually unattested.

- Phonology of Anglo-Norman disconnected from Old French; Anglo-Norman lost vowel contrasts and palatal/non-palatal contrasts lacking in English.

- Interface effects where grammar interfaced with semantics are found:-

a) Verbal aspect:

Unlike Old French, Middle English did not distinguish preterite and imperfect. In A-N these verb forms were sometimes confused (Buridant 2000) e.g.:

(16)a Et lors **estoit** sertein jour **assigné**

Cron. Lond. p. 71

‘And then a certain day was designated’

(16)b ...Monsire William de Mountagu, qi puis **estoit fait** counte de Salesburi.

‘Sir William de Montague, who later was made Earl of Salisbury’ *Anon. Chr2* p. 168

b) Indefinites under negation.

In late Middle English (1300-1500), *n-* indefinites (e.g. *none*, *never*) became negative, with the loss of sentence negator *ne*. In A-N *nul* and *rien* tended to be inherently négative, dropping *ne*:

(17) **Nulle** ley nous mette a respondre a ceo qil ount allege. YBs XV Edw III, p. 33 (1341)

‘No law makes us reply to what they have alleged’

(18) Nous voloms **rien** faire. YBs XIV Edw III, p. 313. (1340)

‘We wish to do nothing’

In keeping with contact effects on Judeo-Spanish (Fischer and Villanova 2014): Verbal aspect influenced by contact with majority language (French, Bulgarian).

The replication effects operated from a societally dominant on a societally subordinate language, not vice versa.

5. Contemporary context

Anglo-Norman as a post-colonial variety? Schneider (2007: 184) equates language mixing with code switching.

Postcolonial Englishes include mixed codes such as Taglish, Hinglish, and Hong Kong and Malaysian PCE varieties. These varieties feature extensive code-switching, but not replacement of whole linguistic systems.

6. Conclusions

In English, non-basic lexis heavily replaced by French

In A-N, phonology of Old French replaced by English

In English, grammatical influence of French limited to replication of function words

In A-N, grammatical influence of English limited to interface effects

Code-switching did not lead to hybridisation.

Anglo-Norman was an elite professional variety, not an in-group language. Contact did not lead to hybridisation, but overall had more restricted effects.

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