

MIDDLE ENGLISH INFLUENCE ON LATE ANGLO-NORMAN SYNTAX: THE EFFECT OF IMPERFECT L2 ACQUISITION*

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Abstract: During the end of the thirteenth century and through the fourteenth century, French was a common second language in England. Many of these L2 speakers of French had little contact with continental varieties of medieval French and as a result the French spoken in England (Anglo-Norman) quickly diverged, both syntactically and phonologically, from the French spoken at the time. This paper examines the decline of verb second (V2) in this dialect of medieval French as compared to the decline in continental varieties. It appears as though V2 declined more rapidly in Anglo-Norman than in other varieties, and it is argued that this is due to interference from L1 speakers of Middle English and their imperfect acquisition, over several generations, of Anglo-Norman.

1. Introduction

The variety of French spoken in England during the medieval period has been relatively understudied compared to other varieties of medieval French,¹ due to its linguistic divergence from those dialects on the continent. The reason for divergence in Anglo-Norman was its intense contact with Old and Middle English and its comparatively weaker contact with continental varieties of Medieval French, especially once Anglo-Norman was no longer an L1, but rather a widespread and prestigious L2 of native English speakers. Gaston Paris went so far as to say that Anglo-Norman « n'est pas à proprement parler un dialecte; il n'a jamais été qu'une manière imparfaite de parler le français. » (“is not a dialect, strictly speaking; it was never but an imperfect way of speaking French”) (Rothwell 1995). While it may not have been a “pure” variety of Medieval French, Anglo-Norman (or Anglo-French, as it is also called) is highly informative for those examining language contact situations, since not only is it a well documented L2 but the language with which it was in contact as well as the dialects from which it was born are also well documented. Thus, unlike earlier medieval contact situations, much can be learned by the historical linguist of what contact between Old Germanic and Old Romance languages could be like. It also presents an intriguing contact situation since it was a wide spread L2 for centuries after it lost its L1 status; and as an L2 it developed in drastically different ways than its sister languages. Additionally, by examining the differences between Anglo-Norman and Old and Middle French, we may be able to gain a better understanding of the structure of spoken Middle English. For these reasons, I have

* I would like to thank Kevin Rottet, Barbara Vance and Anthony Kroch as well as my anonymous reviewers for their helpful feedback. Any remaining errors are my own.

¹ I use the term “Medieval French” here to cover both the Old and Middle French periods. As my paper examines texts from the thirteenth-fifteenth centuries this is only appropriate since the dividing point between these two periods is considered to be the fourteenth century.

decided to look more closely at the structural developments of Anglo-Norman. In this paper, I focus on the loss of the Verb-Second constraint (V2) in Anglo-Norman (AN) syntax. I claim that the more rapid weakening of this constraint, as compared with continental Medieval French varieties, is due to imperfect acquisition by Middle English (MidE) speakers.

2. Historical background

The history of French in England begins before the Norman Conquest—the event that many typically presume introduced French into England. There had been a history of intermarriage between the Normans and the Anglo-Saxon noble families, such as the marriage of Emma of Normandy to Aethelred the Unready (and later to Cnut) early in the eleventh century. Later, her son Edward, who was sent to Normandy during his childhood, ruled England before the Norman Conquest. It was his death in 1065 that eventually triggered the events that led to the Norman Conquest. The line of succession was not clear upon his death, the king having apparently promised the throne to both the Anglo-Saxon brother of his wife and the Norman Duke William, amongst others. This confusion in the line of succession demonstrates the strong connection between the English and Norman nobility during this period. It is probable that Old French, of one variety or another, had been a second language amongst the English nobility well before the conquest.

2.1 French in post-conquest England

With the conquest of England by William of Normandy in 1066, there was an influx of Normans into England. First of all, William brought with him Norman nobles to supplant the previous ruling class. According to Pope (1934, §1068) approximately 5000 knights were given fiefdoms after the conquest. Secondly, it seems somewhat absurd to assume that none of the men-at-arms who fought for Normandy would have stayed in England. Thus with a new French speaking ruling class and a sizable lower class immigrant population, the use, if not the importance of French in England grew. Coupled with this emigration of lay peoples, there was a rise in popularity of monasticism across Europe at the time; this ultimately led to a rise of French monastic orders in England. Again, according to Pope (1934, §1068) there were 100 branches of French orders such as the Cistercians, Cluniacs and Augustinians by 1100.

Considering that it was the upper classes of the nobility and the clergy that saw the biggest impact from the immigration of French speakers, the two most socially dominant groups, it cannot be doubted that Anglo-Norman would have been more prestigious than English. Given what is known generally about language use amongst the middle class, it has been assumed that due to this prestige Anglo-Norman would have spread to the merchant class, in an attempt to rise in social status. It would also have been advantageous for the merchant class to be bilingual as trade between England and France understandably increased during this period. Not only that, but many Norman merchants moved to England “because it was a fit place for their trade” (Pope 1934, §1068).

There is, however, some debate as to the linguistic significance of this first wave of immigration. Certain scholars, such as Berndt (1969), claim that the immigration of Normans into England had very little impact on the linguistic situation. He claims that since the Normans never overwhelmed the English numerically, their influence could not have been

that great. During the reign of William the Conqueror the number of French-born immigrants never exceeded 10% of the population. As I have stated, the majority of these immigrants were of the secular or religious upper-class, and thus had little contact with the peasantry, who made up 85-90% of the population. Berndt concedes that Norman soldiers could have been part of the wave of immigrants and would have ended up as part of the peasantry, but they would have been under great pressure to assimilate linguistically to the language of their neighbors regardless of the fact that they were native speakers of what was the more prestigious language of the new nobility. Part of this assimilatory process would have included intermarriage with the native Anglo-Saxon population, and in all likelihood, this group of settlers would have lost their French within one generation. According to Berndt, this would have been true of both those living in the countryside and in towns or cities. Berndt also refutes the idea that Anglo-Norman would have ever spread as an L1 to the merchant class.

As I have previously stated, the clergy also witnessed an influx of Norman immigrants during this time. The Norman Conquest coincided with a rise in the popularity of monasticism on both the continent and in England. Thus, not only was there a replacement of Anglo-Saxon abbots with Normans, as happened with the nobility, but there was a rise in the number of French-born monks, who brought the French style of monasticism with them. Berndt claims that it is amongst the lower ranking clergy that the most contact between the English and French speaking populations occurred, as there would have been monks from both groups living and working together in the monasteries. He even goes so far as to admit that French monasteries may have continued to exert influence over the English monasteries well into the fourteenth century.

It should be noted that there was a near wholesale replacement of the existing Anglo-Saxon nobility with Normans after the conquest. This replacement was coupled with a policy of forced intermarriage. This was a significant part of William's establishment of control, along with his extensive castle building projects and his compilation of the Domesday Book, which was a record of what had been owned and what had been taxable during the reign of Edward the Confessor. This is not to say that Berndt ignores this socially powerful group of francophones—rather he dismisses their linguistic importance by claiming that they remained more connected to their lands and social networks in France than in England, going so far as to refer to them as absentee landlords who visited their manors only occasionally. He also claims that during the twelfth century, there was a rise in intermarriage between the Anglo-Norman nobility and the native Anglo-Saxons. As in previous cases of intermarriage, he assumes that the result would have lead to loss of Anglo-Norman in favor of Middle English as an L1. This is somewhat surprising considering that Anglo-Norman was the more prestigious language because it was spoken by this class of speakers. However, considering that Anglo-Norman lost its L1 status, this class must have also adopted English as its L1 and Anglo-Norman as its L2 at some point.

Beyond this, Berndt also claims that after the loss of Normandy in 1204, Anglo-Norman lost contact with the continent which seems to be the final nail in the coffin of Anglo-Norman in his analysis. This claim has been refuted recently by many Anglo-Norman scholars, such as Trotter (1996) and Rothwell (2001, 2004). Berndt also seems to give no importance to the continued use of Anglo-Norman in England as an L2, though he does state that there is clear evidence that the nobility, at least, continued to teach their children French by hiring tutors and sending them to France.

2.2 Anglo-Norman as a second language

Though there are scholars who disagree with Berndt's pessimistic view of the importance of French in England and his extremely early dating of its loss, most agree that French lost its L1 status in England during the thirteenth century. It should not be forgotten that even after Anglo-Norman lost its L1 status in England, it was maintained as an L2 amongst the educated (the clergy and the nobility primarily). While it is difficult to date this shift from L1 to L2, various scholars have proposed dates ranging from the end of the twelfth century to the middle of the thirteenth century. It is safe to assume that by the end of the thirteenth century, the only native speakers of French in England are those who grew up on the continent. Anglo-Norman thrived as an L2 in the domains of legal and administrative affairs, if not in the monasteries as well, through the fifteenth century, as Trotter so importantly notes in his 1996 paper "Language Contact and Lexicography: The case of Anglo-Norman":

...as time went on, what we should perhaps now call Anglo-French² changed in function and status, largely ceasing to be a true vernacular and becoming instead, **no less importantly**, one of the languages of record and administration, law and education of medieval Britain. In this capacity, it continued to be used by the literate classes well into the fifteenth century... (Trotter 1996: 21 emphasis mine)

Thus we have over 200 years of Anglo-Norman existing as an L2 taught primarily by non-native speakers to other non-native speakers with little contact with native speakers of continental French. As we will see, Anglo-Norman had already begun to diverge from continental varieties during the twelfth century, when it was still a native language. No doubt, this shift from L1 to L2 led to further and perhaps more extreme divergence from continental French. Even if there had been a great deal of contact between the two groups of French speakers (Anglo-Norman/non-native and continental French/native), the textual evidence demonstrates further divergence from continental varieties of French (semantically, lexically, phonologically), possibly under the influence of Middle English. Thus, even continental influence was not enough to preserve either the similarity of Anglo-Norman to continental varieties of French or its status as an L1.

3. Previous work on Anglo-Norman

It would appear as though the crux of the debate over Anglo-Norman is whether or not it should be studied beyond the point that it loses its L1 status. Those who come down on the con side of the debate, like Berndt and Paris, seem to rule out the dialect all together, essentially claiming that AN is not worth studying since it is so different from *francien* and because it is dead since it is no longer an L1. Their argument is supported by the fact that there exists little textual evidence of Anglo-Norman until over a century after the Norman Conquest and the strongest period of its literary tradition occurred after its L1 status is presumed to be lost. Thus, without textual evidence of a once living language to examine, it appears to

² There are some who use the terms Anglo-Norman and Anglo-French to denote the shift from L1 to L2. Thus, Anglo-Norman refers to the L1 variety of the language and Anglo-French refers to the L2.

be the goal of scholars like Paris and Berndt to dismiss the variety out right. However, the literary record of Old French in general is rather sparse during the eleventh century. As we have seen above with Berndt's discussion of the status of Anglo-Norman amongst various groups of speakers, he systematically dismisses the role of Anglo-Norman in each speech community.

Those who come down on the pro side of the debate fall into one of two camps: those who more or less ignore the L1 vs. L2 status of the language (Rothwell 1975, 1985, 2001, 2004; de Jong 1996), and those who recognize the L2 status of Anglo-Norman, but still consider it worthy of investigation (Trotter 1996; Kibbee 1991, 1996, 2000).

3.1 Anglo-Norman, without regard to L1 or L2 status

Those who have generally ignored the L2 status of Anglo-Norman seem to have a greater stake in the preservation of Anglo-Norman as a prestigious language in England, and one that had a great deal of contact with the continent until a fairly late date. For example, in her 1996 paper, de Jong, following the dialectal work of Dees, compares the phonological features found in a collection of English charters from 1220-1391 written in French to charters written at the same time on the continent. She makes no mention whatsoever of the fact that Anglo-Norman would have been a learned L2 during the majority of the period that she investigates. The goal of her study is to examine the continental influences on Anglo-Norman legal documents, following in the methodological footsteps of Dees (1987). She ends up finding that Anglo-Norman bears the greatest similarity to varieties spoken in Normandy and Picardy and that at a given moment, the similarity seems to shift from one continental variety to another.

This is also not to say that she demonstrates that Anglo-Norman is somehow preserved as a variety of French by this influence; rather, she demonstrates that there are features of these different continental varieties in Anglo-Norman texts and that the frequency of different dialect features changes over time. If nothing else, she provides evidence that Anglo-Norman continued to be influenced phonologically or at least orthographically by continental French. While it may seem that the status of Anglo-Norman as an L1 or L2 would not be relevant to her study, it is important to be aware that, especially when looking at legal documents which tend to be highly formulaic, continental influence may be stronger in this genre than in others. And while she does mention this later point, that Anglo-Norman was heavily influenced by continental varieties of French, she neglects to mention that this influence could have different outcomes based on the competency of the influenced writer

Rothwell, throughout the body of his work, puts out calls to action to other scholars to pick up the torch of Anglo-Norman. As one of the most vocal defenders of Anglo-Norman, he consistently argues that Anglo-Norman was an important language of the medieval period which deserves credit as such from both scholars of French and English and to be studied in its own right. In his work he seems to be single-handedly defending Anglo-Norman from what he sees as the unjust criticism of the Neogrammarians and scholars of Middle English. These views can be seen in the following statement:

...In spite of the somewhat patronizing neglect accorded to Anglo-Norman by so many scholars in the past, on both sides of the Channel, Chaucer himself and all his successors who speak and write English—

not to mention those who deal only with the ‘correct’ French of Paris—would be much the poorer were it not for the humble French of Stratford atte Bowe... (Rothwell 1985: 54)

At the same time that he fights for the legitimacy of Anglo-Norman, he makes clear the fact that it has always been a variety of French which has been looked down upon. One such quotation from Chaucer, mid-fourteenth century, comes from the introduction of the Prioress in the Prologue of *Canterbury Tales* (Rothwell 1985):

And Frensch she spak ful faire and fetisly
After the scole of Stratford atte Bowe,
For Frensch of Parys was to hire unknowe

Clearly, the French spoken in England was recognized as a highly divergent variety of French by the English, and no doubt by the French. Quotations such as these, serving to either distance the writer from Anglo-Norman or apologize for using such a marked variety, appear long before the time of Chaucer. For example, as early as the middle of the twelfth century, Marie de France, one of the most prominent poets associated with Anglo-Norman, makes a point of identifying herself as a speaker of *francien*, stating ‘Marie ai nun, si sui de France’ (Mary is my name, I am from France). One of her contemporaries, the nun of Barking apologizes for the quality of her French by explaining that she is from England (Rothwell 1985):

Un faus franceis sai d’Angleterre,
Ke ne l’alai ailurs quere.
Mais vus ki ailurs apris l’avez,
La u mester iert, l’amendez

I know a false French of England
That I did not acquire elsewhere.
But you who learned [French] somewhere else,
Where it is necessary, correct them³

Rothwell seems rightly to be under the impression that the features that made Anglo-Norman stand out from *francien* are the same that made nineteenth century, and subsequent, scholars dismiss the language. He immediately defends Anglo-Norman, stating that even by the middle of the fourteenth century Anglo-Norman is completely intelligible to speakers of continental varieties of French and that there must have been a wide range of people who spoke French with native-like competence. I will return to his views on the structural similarities between Anglo-Norman and continental varieties below.

3.2 Anglo-Norman as an L2

As I mentioned above, there are scholars who have focused on the L2 status of Anglo-Norman. Among them are Douglas Kibbee and David Trotter. Kibbee (1991) devoted an

³ translation is my own

entire book to the study of manuals of French written for English learners from 1000-1600 century. Beyond this, he continues to exploit this special status of Anglo-Norman to explain certain features in the language not shared in continental varieties. For example, he discusses the verb *estoper* which took on a legal meaning during the thirteenth century. There happened to be an Old English equivalent of this verb *stoppan*. To explain why the Anglo-Norman word would have won out over the native English word, Kibbee calls upon the prestige of Anglo-Norman as an L2, and the fact that it would have been known only to a small, privileged group of the population and thus the more common English word would not interfere with the legal definition of *estoper*. Kibbee seems to be at odds with Rothwell for his insular view of Anglo-Norman, and whereas Rothwell promotes the study of Anglo-Norman itself, Kibbee promotes the importance of studying the influence of Middle English on Anglo-Norman.

Like Kibbee, Trotter embraces the L2 nature of Anglo-Norman and suggests that it is in fact during the period after it loses its L1 status that it is of particular linguistic interest as it is then that we see a new outcome in the contact between Germanic and Romance. On the continent, the usual outcome of contact between these two language families “is not merger but a wary and frequently hostile stand-off, and either the loss of one of the languages or the development of a territorial or diglossic distribution” whereas the impact of Anglo-Norman is likely “greater than has hitherto been supposed.” He states that English influence on Anglo-Norman had more or less been ignored up until the time of the publication of his book in 1996. Unfortunately, fourteen years later this is largely still true.

Rothwell (1975) states that modern linguistic methods and theories need to be applied to the study of Anglo-Norman phonology and syntax if Anglo-Norman is to be understood for what it is rather than just viewed as a bastardized version of Medieval French. Rather than pursue this line of research, scholars up until now have focused on discussing the state of Anglo-Norman at various points in its history and quibbling with each other about what happened to the language as a whole. One of the reasons for this lack of research is due to the fact that, as pointed out by both Thomason and Kaufman (1988) and van Coetsem (1988), historical linguists tend to ignore the possibility of external sources of change without significant lexical borrowing. Thus, most of the contact work that has been done between English and Anglo-Norman has focused on lexical borrowings from one language to the other. Kibbee (1996), Trotter (1996) and Rothwell (1985) all demonstrate English borrowings into Anglo-Norman as well as Anglo-Norman borrowings into English that were previously attributed to Latin. Thus, it is my goal to examine the effect of contact on the syntax of later Anglo-Norman in light of work that has been done both in the field of contact linguistics and Middle English and Medieval French syntax. Before turning to the syntactic features to be examined, let us further discuss the contact situation in England during the fourteenth century.

4. Language contact in fourteenth century England

Late Anglo-Norman presents an intriguing issue in terms of contact linguistics as it only existed as an L2 during the time period investigated in this paper. Typically, though not necessarily, when discussing contact situations all the languages involved are part of a larger community of native speakers of the languages in question, more akin to the situation with early Anglo-Norman when there were still native speakers. Here we find an L2 common to a

community of Middle English speakers that is no longer a living language and as such has no native speakers to reign in changes. The closest Late Anglo-Norman has to native speakers are speakers of continental varieties of Medieval French in France, but as we have previously seen, these two groups of French dialects were already very different when Anglo-Norman was still a living language⁴, so without a large wave of new immigrants to England, it is improbable that contact with *francien* for example, could have had as large of an impact on Anglo-Norman as Middle English, since this contact would not have been widespread enough to equally affect the community of L2 learners.

4.1 Anglo-Norman as a recipient language.

Van Coetsem (1988) defines two types of transfer, in terms of the direction of change (native to non-native versus non-native to native). According to this approach, in any given contact or transfer situation there is a *recipient language* (rl), the language receiving the transferred linguistic material, and a *source language* (sl), the language that provides the transferred linguistic material. Roughly, when a given speaker uses a foreign word in their native language without changing the phonology of the word, the transfer in question would be of the *recipient language agentivity* type. An example of this, as provided by Van Coetsem, would be a native speaker of English using the French phrase “*déjà vu*” in an otherwise English sentence and pronouncing “*vu*” as [vy] rather than [vu] meaning that they had not adapted the phonology of the original word in French to suit English phonology. Thus in this example, French would be the source language (as it is the source of the phonological materials) and English would be the recipient language (as it is receiving the materials), and we can say that the native speaker of the rl is the agent of change. On the other hand, if a native speaker of French (source language) were to pronounce the English (recipient language) word “*pit*” [pit] rather than [p^hit], applying French phonemics to the English word, then this would be an example of *source language agentivity* as the sl native speaker is realizing “the sl code in an rl message” (Van Coetsem 1988).

Couching the contact situation examined here in the terms of Van Coetsem (1988), we can easily identify Middle English as the source language (sl or model language) and Anglo-Norman as the recipient language (rl or replica language) in any change where Middle English is influencing Anglo-Norman, as all speakers of AN would be native speakers of the sl Middle-English⁵. For example, were Middle English to influence Anglo-Norman syntax, this would be the result of sl agentivity, wherein a given speaker⁶ is bilingual in both the sl (Middle English) and the rl (Anglo-Norman) but dominant in the sl (as we would presume all fourteenth century speakers of AN to be). These sl speakers are in control, a fact which is obvious in fourteenth century England, and they are acting upon a language which is not their

⁴ I use living language here to refer to a language or dialect that has native speakers. Under this definition, Late Anglo-Norman does not qualify as a living language, distinguishing it both from Early Anglo-Norman and continental varieties of Medieval French.

⁵ The other type of transfer, rl agentivity, would not be possible in this context as it would require native speakers of AN to be affecting their own language with material from Middle English. This may have occurred, and likely did occur, in Early Anglo-Norman, however this simply would not have been possible during the time periods of interest in this paper.

⁶ I use the term “speaker” here to refer to individuals with linguistic competence in a given language. It is possible, and probably likely that such an individual would have only been able to *write* in Anglo-Norman. However, for the purposes of this paper the distinction between *speakers* and *writers* is not crucial for Anglo-Norman.

own. Crucially, van Coetsem predicts that with this type of agentivity, the more stable domains, such as phonology and syntax, of the rl are affected. Importantly, lexical borrowing is far less frequent when dealing with sl agentivity as opposed to rl agentivity, which may explain why historical linguists have largely ignored the possibility of Middle English influence on Anglo-Norman. Van Coetsem claims that this type of agentivity would only ever affect the speech of an individual speaker and would not have spread to the larger linguistic community. However, this assumes that there is a larger community of native speakers to prevent the spread of an individual L2 speaker's change, which again would not have been the case for Anglo-Norman.

4.2 Anglo-Norman as a Target Language.

Beyond this idea of agentivity, Thomason and Kaufman (1988) examine the influence of social pressures and contact on language change. They identify two global processes: *borrowing* and *substratum interference*. These two processes can result in different types of outcomes depending on the nature of the contact situation. Borrowing is defined in this framework as the incorporation of foreign linguistic material into a speaker's native language, similar to the example of rl agentivity described above. Unlike that case, whether or not a given item is realized in a target-like manner in the speaker's native language is of less importance. Borrowing primarily occurs with lexical items, though it is suggested that phonological and syntactic elements could be borrowed if there is a strong, long-term contact situation. Given the fact that there appears to be little transfer of lexical items from Middle English into Anglo-Norman, it seems unlikely that we can classify this contact situation as being one in which borrowing occurred. For this reason, we must examine the second type of contact-induced language change proposed by Thomason and Kaufman.

Substratum interference refers to "imperfect group learning during a process of language shift" (Thomason and Kaufman 1988). This type of interference or transfer typically occurs with syntactic, morphological or phonological elements—lexical items are rarely transferred. These changes are more likely to be transferred into a target language (TL) rapidly than slowly. Anglo-Norman provides a somewhat difficult situation in this framework as according to Thomason and Kaufman's theory, to account for the types of changes that we find, Anglo-Norman would have to be a target-language, i.e. the language that speakers are shifting *to*. We know from the historical record that this is not the case. However, side-stepping that aspect of their theory momentarily, what we find in Anglo-Norman seems to fit in the category they refer to as substratum interference which is described as follows:

...in this kind of interference a group of speakers shifting to a target language fails to learn the target language (TL) perfectly. The errors made by members of the shifting group in speaking the TL then spread to the TL as a whole when they are imitated by original speakers of that language... interference through imperfect learning does not begin with vocabulary: it begins instead with sounds and syntax...
(Thomason and Kaufman 1988: 39)

This description seems consistent with what we find in Late Anglo-Norman: imposition of features from the L1 on the syntax and phonology of the L2 without widespread lexical bor-

rowings. Additionally, these changes likely spread easily amongst the community of L2 speakers of Anglo-Norman as there were no L1 speakers to correct their errors or halt the spread; rather there were only other L2 speakers who would have likely imitated the errors of other speakers as they would not have had the L1 competency or intuition to “know better”. Thus substratum interference should have been common if not wide spread in Anglo-Norman as all of the L2 speakers would have shared Middle English as an L1 and likely would have tended to make the same types of errors.

5. Verb second

To explore this possibility, I have decided to examine the status of the verb second, or V2, constraint in Anglo-Norman and compare it to both the V2 constraint in Medieval French and Middle English during the same time period. If sl agentivity or substratum interference played as large of a role as I have claimed, we ought to find a difference between the realization or vitality of this constraint in Anglo-Norman and continental French⁷.

Both Middle English and Medieval French have been proposed to be V2 languages (c.f. Pintzuk 1991, 1993; Kroch and Taylor 1997; Kroch, Taylor and Ringe 2000; Haerberli 2002a, 2002b; and Westergaard 2007 for English and Vanelli, Renzi and Beninca 1986; Adams 1987; Vance 1995; and Vance et al. (to appear) for Old French)⁸. The term “verb-second” describes languages in which the finite verb falls in the second position in the sentence. The first position can be filled by a variety of constituents, such as the subject, adverbs, prepositional phrases, or even a subordinate clause. If the subject does not fall in the initial (preverbal) position, then it must come immediately after the verb, resulting in inversion with respect to the verb.

V2 languages fall into two different types: symmetric and asymmetric. Symmetric V2 languages, like Yiddish and Modern Icelandic permit V2 in both subordinate clauses and matrix clauses. This is achieved with verb movement from V to the inflectional node, INFL, along with movement of another constituent, such as the subject, to the specifier node, SpecIP. Since the complementizer node is not filled by the verb in this type of V2, V2 can occur in both subordinate and matrix clauses. Kroch and Taylor (1997) following the analysis of Pintzuk (1991, 1993), claim that Old English and Southern Middle English were both IP-V2 languages, so called for the type of movement involved.

Asymmetric V2 languages, like Modern German, on the other hand, only permit V2 word order in matrix clauses. The reason for this is that these languages achieve V2 by means of V-to-C movement. That is to say, the finite verb moves from the V node to the complementizer node by way of I (to pick up inflection), along with the movement of another constituent to the specifier of C, SpecCP. Since the verb must move to C to achieve V2, complementizers can block V2 as they are found in this same location. This forces the verb to remain in I. Typically in these cases, the subject is found in SpecIP, resulting in SVO order in subordinate clauses. Following the work of Adams (1987), Vance (1995) and Vance

⁷ For the purpose of this paper, I am not distinguishing between different dialects of continental Old French. While it is possible that differences in the loss of V2 may exist between Picard and Champenois, for example, the differences should not be significant enough to affect this study.

⁸ There is some controversy as to the classification of both of these languages as V2 due to apparent V3 word orders (c.f. Kiser 2002 for Old French), though for the purposes of this paper, I side with the above cited authors on labeling both languages as V2.

et al. (to appear) I assume that Old French (and subsequently Anglo-Norman) falls into this class of V2 languages.

Both Middle English and Medieval French lost their V2 status over the course of the several centuries, beginning in the thirteenth century for French and the fourteenth century for English. It should be noted, and will be demonstrated in the data, that this loss took centuries to occur.

6. Methodology

To compare the relative strength of the V2 constraint in continental French and Anglo-Norman, I have collected data from texts from the end of the thirteenth century through the beginning of the fifteenth century for these two languages. The texts from Anglo-Norman and continental French as well as the data of their manuscript and dialect where necessary are as follows:

Anglo-Norman	
Le Mirour de Seynte Eglise	late thirteenth century
Fouk le Fitz Waryn	1340
Scalacronica	1355-1369
Anglo-Norman Letters	1390-1412
Continental French	
Le Roman de Cassidorus (Champenois)	1267
Melusine ('northern')	1390
Journal d'un bourgeois de Paris	1405-1455

I did not choose to examine exclusively texts from Normandy, as was suggested by one reviewer. It appears as though there is little syntactic variation amongst dialects of Old French, especially in literary texts such as *Le Roman de Cassidorus* and *Melusine* (cf Vance et al., to appear). Also, given de Jong's (1996) results that demonstrate influence from several continental varieties on Anglo-Norman, it does not seem necessary to limit the sample of texts. Additionally, it would not be sufficient to examine Norman, or western, texts according to Pope because:

“the French introduced was... primarily western but western with a northern element, because it must be remembered that before the establishment of the Normans in France, the northern half of the territory assigned to them formed a part of the region in which the northern form of French was spoken” (1934, §1082).

Finally, while the majority of immigrants from France to England in the eleventh century were from Normandy, there were a significant number of immigrants from Brittany and Picardy, and as a result Anglo-Norman would not have been simply a variety of Norman French.

Data was collected by reading each text and pulling out examples of V2 (or Germanic type) inversion. Examples with the subject in absolute initial position were excluded from the data as they are uninformative as to the strength of V2, as French became an SVO lan-

guage once V2 was lost. Examples with null subjects were also excluded. While it has been claimed that null subjects only are possible in contexts when subject pronouns would occur, typically after the verb when another constituent was in first position, it is difficult to know where they would have been located during this period when the V2 constraint was breaking down. So, rather than make assumptions about the position of null subjects at this time, I have excluded them from my data. This leaves adverbs, adjectives, adverbial complements, direct objects, particles (such as *si* and *lors*), adverbial finite clauses and prepositional finite clauses, as possible constituents to fill the first position.

7. Results

I have chosen to analyze the data based on the frequency of inversion of the subject and verb for both full NP subjects and subject pronouns, separated according to the initial element, following Kroch and Taylor (1997). The data demonstrates a nearly complete shift from V2 to SVO word order from the first text to the last for both subject pronouns (89% inverted to 9%) and full NP subjects (89% inverted to 19%) in Anglo-Norman.

Table 1: Anglo-Norman data

text	fronted element	inverted NP	inverted SP	text	fronted element	inverted NP	inverted SP
Mirour late thirteenth	adj	10/10	0/0	Scala-cronic 1355-1369	adv	3/5	2/5
	adv	15/17	9/10		adv comp	9/22	0/0
	adv clause	0/0	35/39		adv clause	1/2	2/4
	np comp	6/6	12/12		np comp	1/3	0/0
	pp comp	16/20	11/14		pp comp	13/24	0/6
	particle	0/0	1/1		particle	0/6	0/0
	Total:	47/53 (89%)	68/76 (89%)		Total:	27/62 (44%)	4/15 (27%)
Fouk 1340	adv	31/37	2/5	AN Letters 1390-1412	adv	3/14	1/6
	adv comp	3/5	0/1		adv comp	1/4	0/6
	adv clause	5/19	1/16		adv clause	2/4	2/13
	np comp	0/0	1/1		np comp	1/3	0/2
	pp comp	4/6	3/4		pp comp	0/10	0/6
	particle	14/14	1/1		pp clause	0/2	0/0
	Total:	57/81 (70%)	8/28 (29%)		Total:	7/37 (19%)	3/33 (9%)

To understand what this means, we must compare this data to that of Old French. Here we notice a distinct difference between the Anglo-Norman and the continental French. Whereas Anglo-Norman started out with near complete inversion of the subject pronoun (89% in *Mirour de Seynte Eglise*), we see that only 58% of the subject pronouns are inverted in *Cassidorus*, the earliest continental French text examined in this study. Continuing with the subject pronouns, we see that the near categorical lack of inversion found in the Anglo-Norman text (9% in *Letters*) is not found in *Bourgeois*, which maintains 21% inversion.

Turning to the full-NP subjects, we find almost no change in the rate of inversion between the earliest and latest Old French texts (89% to 84%), as compared to the drop from 89% to 19% in Anglo-Norman. This does not, however, necessarily suggest that the V2 con-

straint is drastically stronger in continental French as the time, though it could be taken to indicate that⁹.

Table 2: Continental French data

text	fronted element	inverted NP	inverted SP
Cassidorus 1267	adv	17/17	10/13
	adv clause	3/7	6/18
	pp comp	3/3	5/6
	np comp	1/1	1/1
	particle	9/9	0/0
	Total:	33/37 (89%)	22/38 (58%)
Melusine 1390	adv	7/10	3/11
	adv clause	1/2	0/23
	adv comp	3/3	2/4
	particle	10/13	0/0
	np comp	0/0	1/2
	pp comp	1/3	2/9
	Total:	22/31 (71%)	8/49 (16%)
Bourgeois 1405-1455	adv	13/18	2/9
	adv clause	1/1	0/7
	particle	6/6	3/4
	np comp	34/40	1/2
	pp comp	7/8	0/7
	Total:	61/73 (84%)	6/29 (21%)

To make sense of this difference between Anglo-Norman and continental French, we turn now to the data given in Kroch and Taylor (1997), Kroch et al. (2000), and Haerberli (2002a, 2002b). As has been previously stated, Southern Middle English is an IP-V2 language, unlike Medieval French which is CP-V2. In their paper comparing Southern and Northern Middle English, Kroch and Taylor present the following data, which comes from seven southern texts from the early to mid thirteenth century. Pronoun subjects in Middle English are considered to be clitics, which would explain their general lack of inversion. Thus, the only real comparisons that can be made are between the full-NP subjects. As we can see from this table, the data from Middle English during the thirteenth century seems to resemble the early Anglo-Norman and Old French, as far as full-NP subjects are concerned.

Unfortunately, clean quantitative data like the above table are hard to come by for later Middle English. The only such data comes from Kroch et al (2000) in which they compare two versions of the same text, one from a southern monastery, the other from a northern monastery.

⁹ It has been suggested that subject pronouns are a stronger indicator of the strength of V2 than full-NP subjects as they are not permitted to be inverted in as many contexts as full-NP subjects (B. Vance, p. c.). It has also been suggested that a language may only be considered V2 as long as its subject pronouns undergo inversion in the proper contexts (A. Kroch, p. c.). Others, however, have suggested that they may in fact be a worse place to look at the strength of V2 as they do seem to demonstrate loss of V2 earlier than full-NP subjects which could be linked to possible cliticization. For the purposes of this paper, I too will claim that subject pronoun inversion is the key indication, as far as subjects are concerned, as to whether or not a language is V2.

Table 3: Southern Middle English (from Kroch and Taylor 1997, Kroch et al. (2000)).

Preposed expression	full NP		pronoun	
	Number inverted	% inverted	Number inverted	% inverted
NP comp	50/54	93	4/88	05
PP comp	12/16	75	0/11	00
Adj comp	20/21	95	7/21	33
tha/then	37/39	95	26/36	72
now	12/14	92	8/22	27
PP adjuncts	56/75	75	2/101	02
adverbs	79/138	57	1/182	01
Total¹⁰	266/365	75	48/469	10

Since the French population and the majority of French speakers were in the south of England, we will only look at the results for the southern manuscript of the *Mirror of St. Edmond* from the fourteenth century. These results can be found in Table 4 below:

Table 4: Later Southern Middle English (Kroch et al. 2000)

Preposed expression	full NP		pronoun	
	Number inverted	% inverted	Number inverted	% inverted
NP comp	12/13	92	5/28	28
PP comp/ adjunct	24/29	83	9/50	18
Adj comp	14/14	100	0/1	00
then	6/8	75	13/26	50
now	3/3	100	5/14	36
adverbs	20/25	80	4/45	09
Total	79/82	86	36/164	22

Here, we find data similar to that found previously for Middle English. It appears as though the V2 status of Southern Middle English is still quite robust, especially in comparison to Anglo-Norman.

8. Discussion

So how do we account for this difference between Anglo-Norman, continental French and Middle English? Why would the V2 constraint seem to break down more thoroughly (with both types of subjects) and more rapidly in Anglo-Norman than either language that it was in contact with? To explain this we need to re-examine the proposals of van Coetsem (1988) and Thomason and Kaufman (1988).

As has previously been determined, the type of contact-induced changes found in Anglo-Norman seems to result from sl agentivity, or substratum interference. This means that speakers of Middle English imposed features from their L1 on to the grammar of Anglo-

¹⁰ I have added this final row to the table for easier comparison with the Anglo-Norman and Old French data.

Norman, their L2, thus resulting in imperfect L2 acquisition. Since Anglo-Norman and Middle English had two different types of V2, the existence of V2 in Middle English would not necessarily prolong the existence of V2 in Anglo-Norman. In fact, it appears as though the mixture of the two grammars resulted in the speeding up of the loss of the verb-second constraint in Anglo-Norman. Additionally, the fact that we find different structural features in Middle English and Anglo-Norman does not mean that this change in Anglo-Norman could not have resulted from contact with Middle English. As Alleyne (1979) states (quoted from Thomason and Kaufman 1988):

... in dealing with the input source for first language transfer in SLA and for creolization, we have to make allowances for plausible processes of change analogous to what in anthropology are called reinterpretations, remodellings, of such a nature and to such a degree that the relationship between the new form and the input source becomes difficult to decipher... (Thomason and Kaufman 1988: 62)

Thus, in spite of the fact that we end up with two very different systems for Anglo-Norman and Middle English, it is still possible that the changes in Anglo-Norman result from contact with Middle English. We are now left with the question of how this would have happened, from a structural point of view.

As has previously been stated, Middle English was an IP-V2 language, in which V2 was achieved through V-to-I movement, with the subject or another constituent moving into SpecIP. Anglo-Norman, like continental French, was a CP-V2 language, in which V2 was achieved through V-to-C movement, where the verb moved up into the complementizer node from V by way of I⁰. The canonical position of the subject in this system was SpecIP, unless it was further raised to SpecCP for reasons of topicalization. It seems plausible that Middle English speakers who learned Anglo-Norman would have acquired SpecIP as the location for the subject and would have continued to move the verb into I⁰ as they would do in their native language, thus creating a sort of negotiated grammar. In this way, the only major change to the grammar of Anglo-Norman would be the inability to move the verb into C⁰, which is the only part of the previous grammar that seriously conflicted with the speakers' L1.

As the data show, this change took at least a century to complete. The fact that this change did not happen overnight, or even within a single generation supports the idea that changes resulting from imperfect acquisition must be spread to other speakers in order to solidify. The data suggest that this change in verb movement most likely would have happened at different rates depending on the constituent in first position. It appears as though the verb was no longer permitted to move up to C⁰ first after fronted adverbial finite clauses, coincidentally perhaps the same environment where V2 was first lost in Medieval French. This prohibition would have then spread to other contexts until the change from V2 to SVO was complete.

It has also been suggested that this data may in fact provide an indication as to the grammar of *spoken* (as opposed to *written*) Middle English (A. Kroch, p.c.). If this contact situation is one of either sl agentivity or substratum interference, contact would not be occurring between Anglo-Norman and the *written* grammar of Middle English. The transfer of syntactic elements to Anglo-Norman would most likely have come from the grammar of *spoken* Middle English, the variety in which the writer/speaker would have been dominant. This

would thus suggest that the early loss of V2 in Anglo-Norman reflects the loss of V2 in Middle English, well before such a loss is realized in the texts. If this is indeed the case, it seems clear that more work ought to be done on contact in historical linguistics, as it may lead to a better understanding of the differences between the spoken and written grammars of these old languages.

Though it has been relatively under studied by the historical linguistics community, and by philologists before that, Anglo-Norman is a variety of Old French that is worth investigating, if for no other reason than it may shed light on language contact phenomena in a way that other varieties of Medieval French cannot. For instance, factors such as imperfect L2 acquisition appear to have played a role in the development of features that make it such a divergent dialect as compared to the supposed standard *francien*. Further work still needs to be done to determine just how significant an impact Middle English had on Anglo-Norman in terms of its syntax, but also its phonology and morphology.

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