Middle English and Anglo-Norman in Contact

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Anglo-Norman: some 'internet myths'

 1. 'Anglo-Normans had an active command of Middle English, which had become, by the end of the twelfth century, their first language. From the 1160s, vernacular French had been declining and by 1180 formal, grammatical French had become a second, acquired language. By the early 13th century, formal and grammatical French had been reduced to a second language, a tongue of acquisition, in England. The primer of Walter de Bibbesworth (1250x1260), produced for Lady Denise de Montchesney, assumed that knightly families spoke English and some French, but would want to learn a more syntactical French.'

FACT: Bibbesworth's poem teaches lexis, not syntax. Its morphosyntax is insular, not continental French.

2. 'In the 13th and early 14th centuries there was an escalation of French literature and prestige. French became swank and was a distinct marker of ambition and class. However, the parallel growth industry of teaching French (French textbooks and teaching manuals) tells us that most French speakers were not, in fact, native. Middle and upper class students who wanted to join the prestigious ranks of politicians, lawyers, judges, and diplomats would learn (continental) French to help secure their futures.'   http://www.chass.utoronto.ca/~cpercy/courses/6361Heys.htm

FACT: No French textbook/teaching manuals in 13th-early 14th centuries other than Bibbesworth and spelling manuals. Nothing for grammar until early C15. Lawyers and judges can be seen in the Law Yearbooks to have spoken insular, not continental, French throughout the C14 and beyond.

3.'From the XIIth century, the French language [in England] began to decline and English was progressively restored. The main reasons are the loss of Normandy (1204), which forced the nobility to choose between England or the continent, and the power of Capetian kings, which contributed to marginalize [sic] the Anglo-Norman language at the expense of the French that was spoken in Paris….' http://www.ecoles.cfwb.be/arjfleurus/Comenius/norman_conquest.html

FACT: French expanded its range of functions in England until the late C14. English was not 'progressively restored' as a language of prose literature and public life until long after the loss of Normandy.

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1. Contact between French and English in the medieval period

Anglo-Norman : A variety of French used in England between c. 1066-1420 for literary and administrative purposes. It is not known to have been taught as an instructed language until the late C14, see **http://www.richardingham.com/id20.html**. Two principal modes of transmission in a naturalistic context: (a) English speakers used French at school until c. mid-C14 as a vehicle language through which to learn Latin. (b) French was frequently used in aristocratic households and court at least until c. 1400; knights/gentry often sent children to noble households to learn courtly accomplishments.

Late medieval bilingualism

(i) *Ieo say bien qe, coment qe le tenant aliene pendant le bref, vnquor il respondra come tenant ; mez coment qil vouche, il ne luy liera al garranti….*   William Paston, *YBHenry VI*, 17, 1422

'I am certain that, although the tenant alienates while the writ is pending, yet he will answer as tenant ; but although he vouches, it will not bind him to warranty…'

> (ii) *And that it lyke yow to… graunte your worthy lettres, witnessing the same acceptacion and admyssion of the seyd resignacion, and al your seyd lettres to delyver to my clerk.* William Paston, *Paston Letters*, c. 1430

1. Language contact and language change
Degrees of contact (Winford 2003):-

Language maintenance: Source language and target language are maintained
- Borrowing: Target language (TL) borrows items from a Source Language (SL) leaving core linguistic systems unaffected (recipient language agentivity)
- Structural convergence (uncertain agentivity): 'In cases involving bi- or multilingualism within the same speech community, the results of language convergence are often manifested in increasing structural convergence between the languages involved… Thus, though they belong to quite distinct language families, [the] languages use practically the same syntactic structures' (Winford 2003: 13)

Language shift: abandonment of source language in favour of target language
-   TL adopted as an L1 by incoming group, who may or may not abandon original L1; TL may be influenced by incoming group's L1 (source language agentivity)

TL introduced into new geographical area by colonisers, adopted as an L1 by formerly L2 speakers, shows considerable L1 substrate effects, e.g. Hiberno-English (source language agentivity)

Question: Did ME show contact-induced grammatical change having SL agentivity of French? Or vice versa? Or both?

2. French in later medieval England: language shift or language maintenance?
The structural influence of French on English is conventionally downplayed, following Thomason & Kaufman (1988: 306ff) who argued for only superficial influence, other than lexical. They claimed that French users 'shifted' to English in the 13th century. Their argument partly relies on minimising the presence of French as a natural language in England. After 1300, poor knowledge of French in England, 'no competent speakers of French' after c. 1250. This view is not well supported, however :-
(i) Anglo-Norman (AN) thrived in C14 (Rothwell 2001, Trotter 2003), spreading across genres from late C13 onwards, as does a standard language (Haugen 1966)
(ii) AN followed syntactic changes in French ongoing around 1300 (Ingham 2006a,b)
(iii) AN remained accurate on noun gender until late C14 where phonological interference was not involved (Ingham forthcoming)
(iv) AN used partitive article after *point*, not after *pas*, just as in Continental French (Ingham 2008)

Thus competent users of French were in a position to have influenced English later than is often supposed. Contact influence in a bilingual context would then be expected, following Clynes (2003), who shows how divergent syntax may 'converge' in bilingual usage in Australia, e.g. German verb positions adopt English order.

3. Contact influence of French on English
3.1. Modal + 'have' auxiliary
Molencki (2001) found that EME consistently avoided modal + aux in favour of the pluperfect. The following examples of counterfactual past conditionals support his position:

(1) & ȝef an miracle nere …. ha hefde iturpled wið him…. dun into helle grunde
                                                                    (CMANCRIW,II.195.2804)
'And were it not for a miracle she would have toppled with him down to the bottom of hell.'

(2) ȝef he nefde iseid þt ilke þing…. he were idemet imong þe forlorene .
                                                                    (CMANCRIW,II.234.3387)
'If he had not said the same thing; he would have been condemned among the lost souls'

But some use of main clause modal + aux *have* in Early Middle English, e.g.:

(3) Mo ðanne fif ðusende besantes of gode þohtes , and of gode wordes, and of gode woerkes,

ðu mihtest habben biȝeten , ȝif ðu woldest   *Vices and Virtues* 17 (c. 1200)
'You could have obtained more than 5,000 besaunts' worth of good thoughts and of good words and of good works, if you had wanted.'

(4) Hwenne schulde ich al habben irikenet.   *Ancrene Riwle* 152 (c. 1225)
 'When should I have counted it everything?'

(5) Ich mahte… wel habben aweld hire.   *St Katherine* p. 27 (c. 1225)
 'I could have well rewarded her'

Molencki (2001) showed that in ME a trend developed towards the use of a modal + auxiliary *have* in the apodosis of counterfactual past conditionals , e.g.:

(6)a He wald haue forced me in…   *Cursor Mundi* ms. C 4399 (Southern)
(6)b Wold he neuer haue ghyuen to rede…   *Cursor Mundi* mss. T & A 10788 (Southern)
'He would never have given his advice'

In contexts where Southern mss make more use of modal + aux *have*, Northern mss keep the pluperfect in the apodosis, e.g. (cf. 6b):
(7) Ne had he neuer gyuen to rede…   *Cursor* ms G 10788 (Northern)
'He would never have given his advice'
Molencki argued that these show a changing taking place by which the modern English construction, with modal + perfect in the apodosis clause, spread from Southern to Northern varieties; this direction of change is relatively unusual in the earlier history of English.

Fischer (1992: 257) 'it is unlikely that either Latin or French played any role'. However, Brunot & Bruneau (1949) show that Old French commonly used the modal + perfect infinitive with *avoir* to express counterfactual past notions, e.g.:

(8) …que je ne le deüsse pas avoir refuse (Joinville sec. 426).
'…that I should not have refused it'

Further examples:
Early C13
(9)a Ge voldroie miauz avoir faite une chevalerie   *Lancelot du Lac* II p. 314 (c. 1220)
'I would rather have done some knightly deed'
Later C13
(10a) Se je le demandoie par les resons que je peusse avoir dites devant le jugement….g'irois contre le jugie'   *Beaumanoir* I 126 (c.1280)
'If I asked for it according to the reasons I could have said before the hearing… I would go against the sentence'
(10)b Il deussient avoir receu les deniers…   Monfrin, *Haute Marne* 77
'They should have received the money'

In all these cases modern French uses the conditional of the auxiliary plus the infinitive of the modal verb (e.g; *j'aurais pu, vous auriez dû*, etc.).

Anglo-Norman counterfactuals with the perfect infinitive are attested early, in the mid-12th century:

(11)a Ke vus dussez aver dyst issy adeprimes   *Jeu d'Adam*: 31 (c. 1150)

'That you should have said this first'
(11)b *Ke nus ne purreiom aver heu autre bref*   *Jeu d'Adam*: 47 (c. 1150)
'That we could not have had another writ'

They continue to be commonly used in later AN:

(12) E pout adunke aver change sy yl vousit, e ne fit nent   *Petitions* 1292 p. 53
'And could then have changed if he wanted, and did nothing'

Old English did not have a 'have' perfect infinitive, so the Middle English trend towards modal + *have* is a candidate for contact influence from French. Examples (13) show the source structure was present **in insular French** at the beginning of the Middle English period.

How plausible is it to see Southern LME modal perfect as the result of 'drift' i.e. independent development? Heine & Kuteva (2006) argue against drift and in favour of a contact-based account of the development of the HAVE perfect, citing especially its presence in Slavic varieties only where these were in contact with non-Slavic languages: '(Our) observations suggest that… language contact must have been involved in the diffusion of the present perfect.' (Heine & Kuteva (2006 : 181)

Since insular French was stronger in the South of England (Rothwell 2001) than in the North, it is plausible to see the same motivation for the development of the English modal perfect: French source language agentivity on English.

3.2. Discourse narrowing of Object-Verb syntax
Old English and Early Middle English commonly had OV in auxiliated clauses, e.g.:
(13)a Þonne ne   miht þu   na   þæt mot … ut ateon   *Ælfr Hom* (Pope) XIII 163
       then   NEG might thou NEG the speck   out draw
          'Then you might not draw out that speck'   (Fischer et al. 2000: 306)
(13)b …hu hie sullen *here lif* laden   *Trin. Hom.* 23 (c. 1200)
       '…how they should lead their lives'

Canale (1978) and van Kemenade (1987) argued for a parameter shift from OV to VO around 1200. However, optional OV order lasted until the late C14 (van der Wurff 1999, Fischer et al. 2000, Roberts 2007).

Analysis of Penn-Helsinki parsed corpus by Pintzuk & Taylor (2006) showed 28% OV in ME1 period (1150-1250), c. 3% in ME2 (1250-1350) and c. 1% in ME3 and ME4. Ingham (2007b): only 7/495 (1.4%) OV with ordinary Objects in late 14th century English prose.

But where ordinary OV is found in Late Middle English, it tended to be used in a particular discourse context (Foster and van der Wurff 1997): the object referent in OV has the discourse status of evoked or inferrable information. Thus the loss of ordinary OV in Middle English seemingly took place in 2 steps:
          i) restriction to certain contexts   ii) elimination

Old French had OV in various constructions (Buridant 1987), e.g. in subject relative and auxiliated clauses. Comparison of relative frequency of OV and VO in auxiliated clauses in:

Table 1: percentage of OV in auxiliated clauses in OFr and MFr chronicles

Chronique d'Ernoul (c.1220):	37.9%
GCRF VI (c.1275):	36.0%
GCRF VII (c.1300):	18.3%
GCRF IX (c.1350):	14.7%
Chr. JIII/Ch. V (c.1380):	4.8%

Loss of OV in French also took place in two stages:
i) OV as a substantial minority pattern in late Old French without particular discourse conditioning, e.g.:-
indefinite/non-specific
(14)a…que aucuns eust un home occis   *GCRF* VI 119
'that someone had killed a man'
(14)b…tuit cil qui pooient armes porter   *GCRF* VI 52
'All those who could bear arms'
definite / specific
(15)a …quant il voloit tel chose faire   *GCRF* VI 144
'… when he wanted to do such a thing'
(15)b …quant li enfes ot les reliques baisies   *GCF VI* 204
''…when the child had kissed the relics'

ii) Middle French tended to narrow OV to discourse-evoked O, e.g.:
(16)a pourquoy il avoient <u>celle chose</u> faite   *GCRF* IX 22
'…why they had done this thing'
(16)b de quelle part il pourroient plus <u>ladite ville de Lille</u> grever   *GCRF* IX 177
'…from where he could cause more harm to the said city of Lille'
(16)c Dieu qui tout voit et qui vouloit <u>la dicte ville</u> sauver   *J II/ChV* 205
'God who sees all and who wished to save the said city'

The type illustrated in (14) tends to disappear in later C14.

Contact with insular French prevented loss of vOV from going to completion before 1400, and produced the discourse narrowing observed by Foster & van der Wurff (1997).

3.3 XVS order with pronominal subjects in Late Middle English.
Old English did not normally show XVS order (inversion after an initial non-subject constituent) with pronominal subjects. However, Haeberli (forthcoming) show that XVS order with pronominal subjects becomes a notable feature of Late Middle English

(17) And þe cherch of Lincoln **gaue he** to Herry Beuforth…   (Capgrave, 210.11)

This ran against the tide of a gradual loss of inversion overall. With full nominal subjects, XVS survives longest in intransitive clauses, but transitive clauses show a very sharp decline from OE and EME levels of around 80% to below 30% in LME:

Table 2: Frequency of XVS with nominal & pronominal subjects in Late Middle English

Middle English: Helsinki Corpus period	*Inversion with transitive V and full NP subject*	*Inversion with other V and full NP subject*	*Inversion with pronominal subject*
M2 (1250-1350)	30.4% (7/23)	73.7% (60/92)	25.4% (16/63)
M2/4 (comp. 1250-1350, ms. 1420-1500)	40.3 (39/97)	65.2 (60/92)	15.4 (6/39)
M3 (1350-1420)	28.6% (321/1121)	52.5% (1357/2587)	18.5% (181/976)
M3/4 (comp. 1350-1420, ms. 1420-1500)	27.7% (67/242)	54.0% (258/478)	38.1% (110/289)
TOTAL	**434/1483 (29.3%)**	**1735/3249 (53.4%)**	**313/1367 (22.9%)**

(*source*: Haeberli, forthcoming, adapted)

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Pronominal VS runs at c. 23% between 1250-1420, compared with 29% for nominal VS. Haeberli (forthcoming) considers that French influence is a likely explanation for the rise of VSpro in LME to rough parity with VSnom.

4. Contact induced grammatical phenomena in AN

4.1 Case assimilation in Anglo-Norman
Middle English lost accusative versus dative personal pronoun case distinctions of Old English. AN showed a tendency to level these case forms in 3rd person of French personal pronouns, e.g.:

_Le_ (3rd singular direct object) for _lui_ (3rd singular indirect object)
(18) E jeo trovai le clerc le weucunte…, e jeo **le** demaundai ce ke il aveit receu de la vile, e il me respundi ke…. _Litterae cantuarienses_ II, 320-22 (1268). Anglo-Norman Correspondence Corpus
'And I found the sheriff's clerk, and I asked him about what he'd received the previous day, and he replied to me that…'

Les (3rd plural direct object) for _lor_ (3rd plural indirect object)
(19) Et le rei **les** dona truage de xvi. M. liveres.   _Le livere de reis de Engleterre_ (late C 13 ?)
'And the King gave them a ransom of 16,000 pounds'

These are not common, but can be seen as contact-induced.

4.2 Preterite and imperfect in AN
Old French verbal marking distinguished a punctual past time event (preterite tense) from a past time event seen as having duration (imperfect tense):

(20)a …li traitor,/Ki nus _jugat_ devant l'empereur   _Ch. Roland_ 1024-5
    'The traitor, who accused us before the emperor'
(20)b Jo _atendeie_ de te bones noveles   _St. Alexis_ 479
    'I was waiting for good news from you'

The verb _estre_ formed an exception, in that the preterite and imperfect could be used interchangeably to denote a past state of affairs (Foulet 19390: 224).

In AN, the imperfect was sometimes used to denote a punctual past time event, as noted by Buridant (2000: 368ff).

Medieval English did not distinguish punctual and durative aspect in past time events; the –ed(e) tense inflexion was used for both, e.g.:

(21)a (durative) Al folc him _luuede_   ASC 1140
                'Everyone loved him'
(21)b (punctual)… & _bebyried_ him heglice in þe minstre.   ASC 1137
                '… and buried him solemnly in the cathedral'

By searching the AN Hub prose texts for typically point-time adverbs (_puis, maintenant, lors_), 250 past-referring contexts were identified. 240 uses of the preterite were recorded, as against ten uses of the imperfect. Thus the choice of tense form was highly nativelike. The AN texts displayed imperfect and preterite forms of the _estre_ auxiliary just in actional passive clauses, e.g.:

Imperfect of auxiliary
(22)a Et lors **estoit** sertein jour assigné   _Cron Lond_ 71
 'And then a particular day was assigned'
(22)b Monsire William de Mountagu, qi puis **estoit** fait counte de Salesburi   _Anon Chr2_ 168
'Sir W. de M., who later was made Count of Salisbury'

<u>Preterite of auxiliary</u>
(23)a … ki engendra de ly Henri, ke **fu** pus fet rey de Engletere   *Reis Britt* 180
  'Who begat from her Henry, who later was made King of England'
(23)b Et lors **furent** maundez messagers à le…   *Cron Lond* 70
  'And then messengers were sent to the…'

Four instances of the imperfect with *estre* were observed, as in (22), out of 24 actional passive contexts, the other cases having the preterite as in (23). The clearly atypical uses of the imperfect were limited to these few atypical passive constructions e.g. (22).

With over 70 ordinary verb types (240 tokens), AN users never confused the preterite and the imperfect. Faulty learning of the Old French tense system by L2 learners does not offer a satisfactory account of these results.

The imperfect/preterite alternation with *estre* as an actional passive auxiliary can be seen as a contact phenomenon, in which a target language intensifies a pre-existing trait, under the pressure of a source language. Contact with English favoured an extension of the imperfect tense beyond the stative cases to an actional passive sense of *estre* where in continental French the alternation did not apply.

5. Conclusions
Continental French paralleled Middle English in:-

(i) developing a modal perfect
(ii) eventually losing OV in auxiliated clauses, after a period of discourse narrowing
(iii) inversion with pronominal subjects

Nos. (i) and (iii) are present in Anglo-Norman, but (ii) as yet unclear in absence of parsed AN corpus.

How much structural convergence Middle English – Anglo-Norman?
Limited but genuine contact influence in each direction, suggesting bilingual users were generally able to keep the grammatical systems of the two languages distinct, yet liable to operate some structural convergence, in keeping with Winford's (2003) language maintenance scenario.

The period 1250-c.1400 was one of continued bilingualism among educated classes in England. Massive lexical borrowing at this time can now be better understood: its source was insular, not Parisian French (Rothwell 2001). This outcome is inexplicable if French speakers had shifted to English c. 1250. The 'language shift' model (see esp. Thomason & Kaufman 1988) should be abandoned, in preference for a 'maintenance with bilingualism' model until the late C14.

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