

**Loan verb accommodation:
A comparison of Old Norse and French in Middle English**

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It is common consensus that loan words of many origins, such as *give* from Old Norse and *command* from French, have permeated the basic vocabulary of English (Durkin 2014; Grant 2009; Finkenstaedt & Wolff 1973). The number and nature of borrowings resulting from a contact situation depend on the intensity of contact (Campbell 1998; Thomason & Kaufman 1988), but also on the morphological complexity of the borrowable categories (Matras 2009: 175f.). From this follows that linguistic closeness of the languages in contact could favour the borrowing of complexer categories (Winford 2003: 51ff.; cf. Johanson 2002).

When entering a language, loan words are integrated grammatically into the recipient language system (Muysken 2000; Poplack, Sankoff & Miller 1988). The present study focuses specifically on loan verbs. For verbs, the structural implications of loan integration are often focused on less in models of borrowability and loan integration (cf. Matras 2007; Thomason & Kaufman 1988), or they are operationalised as a constraint on lexical borrowing (cf. Winford 2003). Wohlgemuth (2009), an expert on verbal borrowing, has found for those formal aspects that direct insertion, where recipient-language inflections are added directly onto the borrowed stem, is the most frequent accommodation strategy cross-linguistically. Hence, loan verb integration should not be constrained by inflection. However, more recent research has shown that, even under direct insertion, loan verbs are subject to constraints and enter some usage categories more readily than others (De Smet 2014; Shaw & De Smet 2022). Concretely, French loans in Late Middle English are disproportionally more frequent in non-finite and uninflected forms than in finite and inflected forms. In this study we deepen our understanding of the nature of such ‘accommodation biases’ by looking into another language pair in contact: Old Norse (ON) and Middle English (ME).

Considering that French and English belong to different language families, the question is whether these biases still hold in the contact between typologically and lexically closer ON and ME. While the contact situations are comparable regarding intensity of contact, the respective language pairs contrast in their typological closeness, socio-economic dynamics and their probable status of existing bilingualism (Ingham 2020; Townend 2000, 2002). A corpus study on ON and French loan verbs entering ME compares their overall usage as well as the nature and course of their structural integration. A set of native English words serves as a baseline for the analysis. Data are extracted from the *Penn-Helsinki Parsed Corpus of Middle English* (Kroch & Taylor 2000). Following the methodology developed by Shaw & De Smet (2022), we use a mixed-effects logistic regression model to gauge the impact of the etymology, finiteness and inflectional endings of the loans on their integration in ME. We also control for the temporal distance to the period of contact, which is ongoing for French (and peaking between 1350 and 1420 (Dekeyser 1986)), while contact with ON has subsided by the end of the OE period (although many loans are only first recorded in writing throughout ME (Hug 1987)). If the analysis shows that accommodation biases are stronger for French than for ON loan verbs, we may conclude that biases are less prominent in contact between typologically closer languages.

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