On the relation of Middle English to West Saxon

in the 1000th year since Canute became King of England

'In the early 19th century, Old English was called "Anglo-Saxon,," the English of the 12th and 13th centuries was known as "Semi-Saxon" or "Old English," and "Middle English" was applied to material dating after 1250.' (Thomason and Kaufman 1988: 275).

Footnotes in the original essays have been renumbered, and the references combined into one list at the end.

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How Viking descendants reshaped the English vocabulary

Joseph Emonds and Jan Terje Faarlund

This essay will appear in *Language Contact and Variation in the History of English*, Studies. M. Uchida, Y. Iyeiri & L. Schourup (eds.). Osaka: Osaka Books. The essay focuses on the formation of the Early Middle English lexicon from its Old English and Old Norse sources. Some of its sections are reproduced essentially unchanged from Emonds and Faarlund (2014); Sections 4-6, reproduced below, contain new material.

4. The nature of the transition from Old to Middle English

A little reflection on the changes discussed Emonds and Faarlund (2014: Chs. 3-5) makes it obvious that somehow Middle English "moved closer to" the language of the Scandinavians in England, even as that language, according to traditional accounts, died out. In fact, that unwritten "lost" language is nothing more than a fiction in traditional accounts, used only to explain the mysterious "late borrowing" alluded to earlier. For us on the other hand, that language not only existed, but indeed remained very much alive. Namely, the lost language of the Scandinavians who settled in England up to the Conquest, and governed the greater part of it for two centuries (870-1066), finally began to be written after 1150. This newly written North Germanic language was *nothing other than Middle English*.

Traditional scholars of the history of English stop short of any such conclusions about the changes evident in Middle English. They typically treat them in isolation from one another, with references to vague terms such as "loss of inflection," "simplification," "increasing transparency," "language contact," or "intermingling of populations." The grammatical innovations of Middle English are sometimes even conceived of as resulting from mostly illiterate subjects of the Normans no longer having a reliable written (monastic) standard.[1]

Emonds and Faarlund (2014) take issue with these impressionistic perspectives, and argue that Middle English developed along a relatively unremarkable diachronic path from earlier Norse. The resulting "Anglicized Norse" developed first in the Danelaw did indeed borrow extensively from Old English and undergo some *relexification* in that direction, but such sociolinguistic events are commonplace.[2] The Anglicized Norse of the Scandinavians was thus modified to accommodate Old English speakers newly adopting it through (i) relexification and (ii) simplifications in inflection.[3]

It seems then that Old English and Anglicized Norse co-existed first in the Danelaw and then ever more widely during the reigns of the Danish kings in Saxon Winchester (1013-1042).[4] An 11th c. writer of Icelandic sagas confirms the presence of Anglicized Norse: "there was at that time the same tongue in England as in Norway and Denmark" (Freeborn 1998: 46–47). Traditionalists are uncomfortable with this statement,[5] even though it does not imply that Norse was England's *only* tongue; for the observer it simply stood out.

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[1] In sharp contrast to these implausible rationalizations of why Old English changed so quickly, Norwegian, which was not written for 400 years, did change, but in nothing like so radical a fashion.

[2] For sentence negation structure, Middle English adopts the Mainland Scandinavian structure, with the Norse word *eigi* 'not' being replaced by the Old English *noht* 'nothing' (Emonds and Faarlund 2014: Section 7.2.6).

[3] For example, Middle English loses the adjectival agreements of both Old English and Old Norse.

[4] As the two languages came to share, besides cognates, many Old English roots, there must have been increasingly many bi-linguals. One of them was plausibly the 'Beowulf poet', the person who wrote down in Old English this oral epic that treats *exclusively Scandinavian characters and places*.

[5] Burnley (1992, 418) tries to explain away this statement (he uses a slightly different translation).

Of the two, Norse was plausibly predominant, since it was the language of the country's rulers and many new settlers; on the extent of the settlement, see chapters on the Danelaw in Wood (1986) and Kershaw (2009). On the other hand, as the only written language besides Latin, West Saxon was needed for documents and legal agreements. Given the huge overlap in Germanic vocabulary, the two communities found it easy to communicate (Townend 2002) and even to learn the other's language.

After the Conquest, these two communities found no further reason for any continued separateness. Since the new Norman rulers had thoroughly dispossessed them both, the two groups began to forge a single language.[6] They went about fusing even the daily life and closed class grammatical vocabularies of both Anglicised Norse and Old English, to a degree that surpasses usual scenarios of borrowing. But counter to unexamined belief, the syntactic model they used to express this new lexical amalgam was *North Germanic*, as extensively argued in Emonds and Faarlund (2014: Ch. 3-7).

The next sections show why we can expect that Middle English (=Anglicized Norse) had many cultural borrowings from Old English, and then shows that even the more prosaic aspects of the Middle English Dictionary are of roughly equal Norse and Old English provenance.[7]

5. Formation of an Anglicized Norse lexicon

We cannot accurately estimate how much English vocabulary Norse had borrowed during 200 years prior to the Conquest. First of all, because of common Germanic cognates, probably 60%-70% of at least the daily life and grammatical West Saxon words were already part of Norse. An even higher percentage seems suggested by Baugh and Cable (2002: 97).

> …many of the more common words of the two languages were identical, and if we had no Old English literature …, we should be unable to say that many words were not of Scandinavian origin)

Let's examine a concrete example of Old English vocabulary. A *Collins Dictionary* publicity page enthusiastically invites the reader to check their dictionary to find that at least 148 Modern English words have an Old English source. Tellingly, 115 of these can *as well have come from Old Norse*. The forms of the Old Norse and Old English cognates in (1) are, overall, equally plausible ancestors of these words. One is indeed "unable to say that [the words in (1) are] not of Scandinavian origin."

(1) **Plausible OE and ON cognates.** *ale, alive, apple, awake, axe, back, bath, blood, brother, can, carve, chicken, child, clean, cold, cup, daughter, dead, deer, door, drink, dusk, ear, elbow, end, eye, fair, fall, feather, find, fish, friend, game, gate, god, gold, good, ground, green, hammer, harbour, hand, high, honey, house, husband, I, ice, if, in, it, keen, kind, king, kiss, knife, knot, land, laugh, lip, listen, long, love, make, man, marsh, milk, moon, nail, name, night, now, nut, oak, of, open, owl, pin, pipe, plough, pretty, queen, quick, rag, rain, rat, read, ride, right, say, see, send, sister, sword, take, thank, thirst, thumb, udder, under, up, us, vat, wag, wake, walk, west, winter, woman, wrong, yard, yarn, year, you, young*

Only the 33 words in (2), 22% of the *Collins* sample, lack close cognates in Old Scandinavian.

(2) **Only OE cognates**. *abide, above, bed, bird, body, daft, each, evening, evil, fox, island, itch, keep, ladle, meadow, mouth, needle, nest, on, old, orchard, path, plant, poppy, rock, shadow, sheep, thimble, today, tomorrow, yawn, yes, yolk* [8]

[6] The extent of the common impoverishment and suffering of the two groups is outlined in Emonds and Faarlund (2014: Sect. 1.5).

[7] Nothing in our view requires that borrowing from Old English into Anglicized Norse be completed when Middle English texts begin to appear. Southern/ western Middle English dialects essentially continued West Saxon into the 14th c. Until then Middle English may well have borrowed "new" Old English vocabulary.

[8] It is easy to imagine how many borrowed Saxon words in (2) might have represented objects or concepts different from those previously encountered in Scandinavia, e.g., *bed, fox, harbour, ladle, meadow, needle, orchard, poppy, path, thimble.*

As we will see in Baugh and Cable (2002: 99-105) and Emonds and Faarland (2014: Ch. 2), a similar percentage of common words in Modern English have Old Norse but not Old English cognates. (More exact comparative figures await further research.)

If such percentages are representative, then less than a quarter of the early Middle English lexicon, even before the massive borrowings from French began in the 13th c., can be asserted with certainly to come from Old English and not Norse. Roughly 70-75% of the daily life lexicon of Middle English was composed of Norse words (and similarly for Old English words). The huge overlap (more than half the lexicon) was from Germanic cognates, the facilitating factor in members of each population leaning the language of the other.

Does this imply that the contributions to the Middle English lexicon are simply a puzzling and unmotivated mix of two languages? Or is there some factor that might explain patterns of borrowing in one direction or the other? In fact, scholarship has suggested two views:

(3) **Borrowing into the main language from an unwritten and dying language.** As Middle English began to be written in the late 12th c., writers borrowed extensively from unwritten Norse, just as it was dying out, despite the lack of any borrowing from Norse when it was spoken, *or*

(4) **Borrowing into the vernacular from the language of culture and education.** Over three centuries (860-1160), Scandinavian settlers in England borrowed extensively into their unwritten Anglicized Norse from West Saxon, the island's written language of culture and learning.

The next section compares the relative plausibility of these two incompatible scenarios.

6. Pre-Conquest borrowing: from developed South to developing North

The first scenario (3) is espoused, without being spelled out clearly, by the still predominant traditional view. But one is hard pressed to think of any documented contact situation like it, anywhere in the world.[9]

However, the second scenario is far from unfamiliar. To understand it, consider a difference between roughly 10th and 11th c. England. The 10th c. could be called the culminating Anglo-Saxon century. In the wake of Alfred the Great's achievements after 878, cultural as well as military, his son and grandson continued to extend Saxon hegemony, including over the newly arriving Scandinavians that were settling on previously uncultivated lands. In this period, the monasteries and writing flourished (Woodruff 1974). Though Latin was the abstract standard, Old English was much prized, and used in original and copied texts.

However, Saxon political hegemony did not endure. The Danish defeat of the English in 987 in the Battle of Malden (recounted in a notable Old English poem of this name) was followed by the disastrous reign and then defeat of Ethelred the Unready, who lost the entire country and fled to France in 1013.[10] Until 1041, three generations of Danish kings, including Canute, then *ruled all of England* from the Saxon capital Winchester.[11]

During the period 1013-1066, the now Christian Scandinavians successfully ruled England. Nonetheless, the written language and vehicle of culture, learning, literature, legal documents and religion remained Old English (West Saxon). As a consequence, the Scandinavians in England had strong incentives to *extend their vocabulary* via cultural borrowing, since Anglicized Norse must have lacked terminology in many areas.

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[9] In the 19th c., French replaced the closely related and previously widely spoken Provençale. The latter thus met the same fate that traditional histories of English attribute to Old Norse in England. Accordingly, the national French language might have at that time been expected to massively borrow Provençale daily life vocabulary; completely counter to reality.

[10] After Ethelred ordered the massacre of Danish adult males (1002), the Danish King Sweyn, whose sister was among those killed, undertook to conquer all England and after a decade of intermittent but fierce warfare, he fully succeeded.

[11] During the 25 years prior to the Norman invasion, the King was Edward the Confessor, who except for his deposed father's genes was a Norman. His mother Emma, of pure Danish descent, brought him up in France. When widowed, she astutely married King Canute (becoming by her marriages the queen of both English ethnicities). When Edward died in January 1066 Harold Godwinson, of another family, assumed power. Though he defeated a Danish army (Stamford Bridge, 1066), he reigned only 9 months before being dispatched by William the Conqueror at Hastings.

- Old English had a large vocabulary for *Christian practices and beliefs*. The Norse arrived without Christianity, but in the 10th c. became entirely Christian.
- Moreover, the concepts and practices of *monastic life* also required vocabulary.
- England had been *a Roman province for c. 300 years*, so Old English vocabulary for road-building, town layouts, channeling water, and building construction must have far exceeded those in Scandinavia-based Norse.
- Especially given its Roman history, *crops and food production* must have been more varied in the moderate climate of England than in colder Scandinavia. Such factors were presumably what motivated the immigration of Scandinavians in the first place.
- Since Old England had a *written culture*, it presumably had a wider vocabulary used of documents (inheritance, property, school texts) than Old Scandinavian;
- According to Mitchell and Robinson (1992: 124–131), Old England was acknowledged as advanced in *architecture, sculpture, carving, metal-working, jewellery, and embroidery (tapestries).* This doubtless led to a richer vocabulary in these areas.

This kind of contact situation, where a spoken language differs from the language of culture, learning, legal documents, literature and religion, has been well described in sociolinguistics, and is typically called *Diglossia*. It was first conceptualized in Ferguson (1959) for situations involving dialects of the same language, typically found in the Arabic speaking world, where a spoken form of Arabic, called the Low variety, co-exists with Standard Arabic, called the High variety. Ferguson explains that diglossic situations result in the development of a 'middle language' whose vocabulary draws significantly from the High variety but whose morphology and syntax are those of the Low variety. The concept of diglossia and its outcomes was later extended to situations involving different languages in Fishman (1967), who further points out that it can give rise to a situation whereby the Low variety replaces the High variety, effectively resulting in a language shift. Ouhalla (2015) argues, based on documented historical evidence, that diglossia is likely to be the situation that gave birth to the Arabic variety that developed in Spain in the 9th and 10th centuries, known as Andalusi Arabic. Ouhalla shows that Ferguson's description of 'Middle Arabic' in the modern world turns out to be a fairly accurate description of Andalusi Arabic as well, except that the syntax base is clearly Old Romance, because of typically Iberian Old Romance syntactic structures unattested in Arabic, such as the juxtaposition genitive, the prepositional genitive, and direct object marking with the dative preposition.

This type of language contact provides a plausible model of the above description of 11th c. England, explaining an increased use of West Saxon vocabulary in Anglicized Norse in and beyond the Danelaw in the period between the defeat of Anglo-Saxons (1013-1016) and the Norman Conquest (1066). By considering written West Saxon to be the High variety and Anglicized Norse the Low variety, we can understand how the two combined to give rise to a 'middle language' with a significant amount of Saxon learned vocabulary but with Anglicized Norse syntax. This middle language was in fact Middle English.

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Thie following selection will be part of an article in the *Proceedings of the Budapest Linguistics Conference 2015*, M. Hordos, M. Newson, K. Szécsényi, eds. The Proceddings will appear in the journal *Acta Linguistica Hungarica*, Budaposet: Akadémiai Kiadó (Academic Press of Hungary).

Middle English V2: a demonstrably surmountable obstacle

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Verb Second: a Saxon black sheep in the Norse herd?

Emonds and Faarlund (2014) discuss over 20 morpho-syntactic properties indicating that Middle English (ME) has North Germanic (NG) syntax. In oral presentations, the most disputed of their arguments for this concerns whether ME shared the Scandinavian version of Germanic "Verb Second" or whether its Verb Second patterns were more akin to that of Old English (OE). In a review of this book, Bech and Walkden (2016: Sect. 3.3.1) claim that the so-called "Verb Third" sentences through the OE and ME periods are an "insurmountable obstacle" to the claim that ME main clauses reflect Norse word order.

Emonds and Faarlund failed to observe that ME and OE share instances of pre-verbal subjects that are missing in Mainland Scandinavian (MS). Nonetheless, the critique in the review is based on a purely empiricist method; the insurmountable obstacle consists of an unanalysed surface pattern of main clauses. The analysis of these clauses below suggests that the apparent lack of Verb Third sentences in MS is due to a language-particular property of a single morpheme that was lost in "Angliczied Norse". This loss, once understood in terms of a structural analysis, turns out to be similar to two other NG properties also absent in Anglicized Norse, namely disappearance of the reflexive suffix on Vs and the definiteness suffix on Ns.

I thus grant that Bech and Walkden have exemplified a grammatical difference between MS and both OE and ME. But I will argue that the appropriate account of this difference assimilates it to a type of change in the path Norse ➔ ME duly recognized in Emonds and Faarland (2014: Sect. 6.8). As a result the similar "Verb Third" patterns of OE and ME are due to Universal Grammar, rather than to a specific (West Germanic) line of genealogical descent.

The initial position of scene-setting adverbials

Main clauses in Old and Middle English (prior to c. 1400), as in other Germainc languages, display "Verb-Second" word orders, whereby a finite verb immediately follows an initial phrase XP , whether XP is a subject or not. Since Chomsky (1986), such sequences have generally been taken to exemplify a structure (5), where V is raised out of VP in root or root-like clauses to the head position Y of a clausal CP or IP.

(5) $[_{YP}\ [_{SPEC}\ XP\ ] - [_{Y'}\ V - VP\ ]\ ]$

OE subject pronouns Spr sometimes violate this pattern and are pre-verbal, occurring in XP___V, as pointed out in van Kemenade (1987). She argues that they are then proclitics on V, as in (6). Consequently, the resulting 'Verb Third' pattern in this adjunction structure still conforms to Verb Second.

(6) $[_{YP}\ [_{SPEC}\ XP\ ] - [_{Y'}\ [_{V}\ Spf + V\ ] - VP\ ]\ ]$

It is often overlooked, however, that the sequences XP - Spr – V can exemplify *two* structures, one the preceding OE variant of (5), and the second a simple left adjunction to YP of a 'scene setting' adverbial, usually PP, as in (7). These PPs can indicate place, time, manner or instrument, and currently are often set off by commas. They can also be "bare NP adverbials," which are usually, perhaps always, best analyzed as PPs with licensed empty Ps (Emonds 1987).

(7) $[_{YP}\ PP\ [_{YP}\ [_{SPEC}\ XP\ ] - [_{Y'}\ V - VP\ ]]]$, where V has been raised to Y = C or I.

The left-adjoined structures (7) not only can appear in OE and at least sparingly elsewhere in West Germanic (K. Abels, pers. comm.), but are also very general; they occur freely in current English and other language families, e.g. Romance and Slavic.

It can be easily appreciated that sequences PP - Spr – V need not be taken as instances of (6), but can straightforwardly realize (7), containing an initial scene-setting adverbial XP and a subject, pronoun or not, in the SPEC position. The Modern English glosses of the initial XPs in the three Old and Middle English examples of this word order in Bech and Walkden (2016: 20) are *in the seventh year, thereafter,* and *through (=by means of) his manhood.* As they note, at least their two examples with non-pronominal subjects cannot be instances of van Kemanade's OE structure (6). In addition, the fact that subject pronouns can be generated pre-verbally in two ways explains why pronouns are more frequent than lexical NPs in pre-verbal position in OE. Finally, the availability of the plausibly universal structure (7) throughout ME explains why pre-verbal pronoun subjects most frequently follow PPs or adverbials (patterns also noted by Bech and Walkden).[12]

After these useful observations about OE and ME main clause word order, these authors launch into a discussion about how van Kemanade's (1987) account of the OE data has been superseded by more "refined" syntactic models (which remain undescribed) and by "a much better understanding of the facts due to the large electronic corpora that have been made available." This author's work, at least in 1987, "does not study

[12] These authors note that southern ME texts continue to exhibit frequent examples of the structure (6).This is not surprising, as speakers might have remained bi-lingual in Saxon (OE) and Anglicized Norse (ME) or been in a community that switched their first language to Anglicized Norse at a later date.

empirical data systematically." To avoid such errors, readers are then referred in quick succession to nine alternative publications dated between 2009 and 2015. Although Emonds and Faarlund (2014) is faulted for not using these developments, the reviewers don't say how they use them either; their summary of the issues simply trails off: "English word order has such an unruly history that agreement has still not been reached on the matter of exactly how to account for it in syntactic terms." (Bech and Walkden 2016: 22). [13]

In contrast to their method, this and the following section present an explicit proposal about Verb Second and Verb Third orders in OE, ME and MS. Van Kemanade's account of the peculiarity of OE subject pronouns still has validity for aspects of OE (as stated in Emonds and Faarlund 2014 it is not a property of ME or North Germanic). Otherwise, with a variation in MS to be seen below, all three languages exhibit the common cross-linguistic, perhaps universal phrase structure (7).

Scene-setting adverbials in Mainland Scandinavian

At first glance, it indeed appears that the "scene-setting structure" (7) is not available in Mainland Scandinavian, even though ME has it (as seen in the preceding section). Thus, corroborating the claim that MS excludes sentences of this type, A. Holmberg (pers. comm.) reports: "Translations [into Swedish] of the sentences above are grossly ungrammatical without V2." J.T. Faarlund (pers. comm.) confirms these judgments: "those PP-S-V structures from ME are totally ungrammatical in Modern Scandinavian, even with a clear comma intonation, and I have never come across anything like it in Old Norse, either."

Tellingly however, Holmberg observes further: "There is an interesting quirk, in that they are very commonly constructed with a kind of expletive proform *så* 'so' between the initial PP and the finite verb" He provides a Swedish translation of one of the review's examples (shortened):

(8) a. *Därefter (så) talade biskopen med jarl Robert.*
Thereafter (so) spoke bishop-the with earl Robert.

b. $[_{YP}$ PP $[_{YP}$ $[_{SPEC}$ *så* $]$ – $[_{Y'}$ V … $]$ $]$ $]$

I propose that the version with *så* realizes the "missing structure" (7) of MS; keep in mind that these adjoined PP structures are cross-linguistically optional, e.g. in Modern English, Romance, Slavic, etc. Consequently, nothing prevents the variant without *så* from realizing the smaller structure (5).[14]

In this analysis, there is no special construction common to OE and ME but missing in MS. Rather, there is a universal or at least unmarked optional structure (7) in all the languages under consideration. The language-particular MS property, absent in Anglicized Norse, then concerns the lexical entry for the grammatical item *så* 'so' of category SPEC(CP), for which there is one context which *tolerates no other element*, namely PP-$[_{CP}$ ___V…]. This formulation accords with Borer's Conjecture (1984: 29), to the effect that particular grammars, here MS, reduce to lexical entries for inflections, currently extended to include other purely grammatical function words such as Articles, Modals, etc.

It is then perfectly possible that, in the language-particular lexical entry for the adverbial *så,* one of the contexts for this morpheme can be diachronically lost i.e. through 'imperfect first language learning.' Some examples of similar losses:

- In several current English dialects, the grammatical item *whether* is being or has been lost.
- Just a few generations ago, so have others such as *hither, whither,* and *shan't.*
- The epistemic use of *shall* (that is, as a pure future marker) is being lost.

[13] In scientific discourse, explicit analyses such as van Kemenade (1987) are considered to stand, unless replaced by better ones, but the reviewers apparently consider that data alone suffices to reject her proposal.

[14] If there are Old Norse texts that systematically lack this *så,* variants with a meaningless expletive are/ were perhaps considered bad style. While spoken French constantly uses left-dislocated subjects with expletives in subject position (*Ma soeur, elle dépense trop pour les parfums* 'My sister, she spends too much for perfumes'), French written style minimizes such use of expletives.

Kroch et al. (2000) cite a 15th c. writer in Northern England who seems to regularly use the structure (6), strict Verb Second, and not (7), where Verb Third is possible. It seems strange to attribute this to Old Norse influence, if that supposedly different language had not been spoken in England for centuries. Rather, that writer was either avoiding (7) for stylistic reasons, or had replaced *så* with a null allomorph, a possible step on the way to this context for *så/ so* being lost altogether.

The MS requirement is/ was that SPEC(CP) in the universal structure (7) *be filled with an expletive*. When *så in* Anglicized Norse lost the ability to satisfy this, the language's SPEC(CP) could then accept other YP such as a lexical subject, yielding the review's examples.

It would be pointless to insist that such losses result from "language contact." As the use of *så / so* in (8b) presumably doesn't appear in ME, Anglicized Norse lost it earlier, perhaps (or not) reinforced by Saxon speakers not learning it.[15] This kind of loss groups naturally with the ME loss of two Norse inflections, the reflexive suffix *-sk/-st* and the definiteness suffix *–et/-en*, both discussed in Emonds and Faarlund (2014: Sect. 6.8). These lost grammatical function morphemes, or in the case at hand, a context for one, are the only phenomena that set off the grammar of Norse from that of ME. When MS lost the requirement that *så* fill SPEC(CP) in the universal structure (7), Anglicized Norse "re-entered the fold", so to speak, of the many languages, including OE, in which SPEC(CP) in (7) can contain a range of constituents, including subject NPs. Since it is not only OE and ME that allow such subjects, there is no need to speak of ME inheriting from OE either Verb Third structures or the absence of individual MS morphemes. Rather, ME still had the syntactic structures of North Germanic, but had lost a context for inserting a specific grammatical morpheme.

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Anglicized Norse, or Anything Goes?
Joseph Emonds and Jan Terje Faarlund

The journal *Language Dynamics and Change* is preparing an issue in 2016 where *English: the Language of the Vikings (*Emonds and Faarlund 2014) is summarized, then several linguists present their opinions of the book, and the authors respond to these opinions. The book is available at http://anglistika.upol.cz/vikings2014/ What follows here is the last section of our response, focusing on the issue of 'language contact'. The earlier part of our response contains our main hypothesis:

(1) **North Germanic Grammar of English**. ME grammar developed without major change from the grammar of Norse, and not from that of OE.
(2) **The OE-ME Split.** No syntactic properties, outside of some absent inflections, link ME to OE rather than to Scandinavian.

Syntactic Change through Language Contact

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These advocates of syntactic change under contact gloss over a major empirical discrepancy between the development of ME and the changes in the many languages that have been attributed to contact. Syntactic changes due to contact (outside the history of English) tend to involve pairs of languages in a quite asymmetric sociolinguistic relation, between what we can call a 'dominant language' and a 'contracting' language spoken in the same area. Some pairs discussed in the literature are English: Irish, English: Amerindian languages, Spanish: Amerindian languages, French: Breton, Norwegian: Saami, etc. In these situations, most young adult speakers of the contracting languages are bilingual, and the contracting language is 'losing ground' to the dominant one. What then often happens is that younger speakers of the contracting languages start producing syntactic patterns of the dominant language. But in contrast language contact *only rarely changes the dominant language*: French is not acquiring Breton syntax, nor Spanish Nahuatl syntax, nor Norwegian Saami syntax. In this we agree with Kroch, Taylor and Ringe (2000):

[15] The use of English *so* in (i) may be a vestige of Norse *så* in the SPEC(CP) of root clauses :

(i) *I will go swimming today, and (on Sunday) so will Ann.*
Mary finally succeeded, and (through his labors) so has John.
Tag = $[_{CP}\ [_{SPEC}\ so] - [_{C'}\ [_{C}\ V\ ]\ \ldots\ ]]$

We notice the optional initial scene-setting PP, and the presence of a modal or auxiliary in C, as in (8b). In this English usage, unlike MS *så* in e.g.(8a), *so* is obligatorily an anaphor of an antecedent VP in a preceding clause in the discourse.

> Now almost universally, even when massive lexical borrowing is under way, native speakers maintain their grammars. Though speakers changing their language often impose not only content words but also grammatical features of their native languages on the language they are learning…. these effects ordinarily disappear in subsequent generations, but not always.[16]

In the traditional view of 12th c. English, the dominant / contracting pair was English: Old Norse. Judging by what usually happens in these situations, pre-contact OE should not have been significantly influenced by Norse as the latter died out, but in fact [advocates of the traditional view] insist on massive change in the primary language *in the direction of the contracting language Norse*. This is a most implausible scenario, but one that deriving today's English from OE cannot do without.

According to Emonds and Faarlund (2014), the 12th c. contact pair was Anglicized Norse: West Saxon (OE), and what should have happened did happen. Late OE shows the typical syntactic changes of a contracting language, the 'early signs' of changes in the direction of ME, e.g, in word order, post-verbal particles, etc. (Emonds and Faarlund: Sect. 1.1). Doubtless, early OE speakers helped denude Norse of its inflection and spoke it imperfectly, but eventually their children acquired the unchanged syntax of the Norse speakers around them.

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This essay is to appear in *Structure and Order in Syntax* (in preparation by Language Sciences Press).

Theoretical Limits on Borrowing through Language Contact; not Everything Goes

Joseph Emonds

1. A-theoretical perspectives on Language Contact

Middle English (ME), in contrast to Old English (OE), has many words of Scandinavian origin, conventionally attributed to language contact and borrowing. However, recourse to such an account doesn't stand up to even moderate scrutiny. Traditional scholarship, e.g. Campbell 1959 and Strang 1970, locates the great bulk of this borrowing from c. 1170 onwards, starting with the ME period, while in the OE period, hardly any Scandinavian words were borrowed (Baugh and Cable 2002: 99). Yet, the Scandinavian language in England, of which there are no records in the OE period, is taken to have died out by 1150 (Thomason 2016; Baugh and Cable 2002: 96), before serious borrowing from it even started. Hence this borrowing can't be ascribed to contact, at least contact with the living.

This inconsistent dating has been a fertile source for creative sociolinguistic scenarios, although no facts actually confirm these speculations in the contact literature. [17] A centre piece in such thinking is usually some kind of 'spoken Old English' (there are no texts) which must have borrowed extensively from Scandinavian before the latter died out. Subsequently, these extensive borrowings, including much grammatical and daily life vocabulary, suddenly came to light in written Early ME.

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[16] This view was also held by authorities such as A. Meillet and E. Sapir. We do not claim that second language communities *never* manage to impose an aspect of their grammar onto a language. Anglo-Normans adopting English in the 14th c. began to introduce Wh-pronouns as relative clause markers, alongside invariant *that*. This change in the dominant language, effected by the literate elite, centuries to fully take hold.

[17] One variant (Thomason and Kaufman 1988, 286-287) proposes that when Norse died out in various areas, Anglo Saxon speakers introduced numerous aspects of Norse grammar and phonology into (unattested) OE dialects such as 'East Mercian' and 'East Saxon'. These 'packets' of dozens of 'Norse grammatical elements' then spread southward and westward to the whole country, ultimately resulting in 'Norsified English' (i.e. Early ME). The authors devise this otherwise unattested scenario of contact to account for why, 200 years later, these diverse Norsification features first appear as a group in written ME: "These features of Simplification and Norsification … did not appear gradually; *they appear in the earliest Middle English documents of the Danelaw."* (op. cit. 278–279).

In place of elaborate contact scenarios, Emonds and Faarlund (2014) claim that ME but not OE was a North Germanic language Norse, eventually learned as a second or first language by all Anglo-Saxons. Consequently, much ME grammatical vocabulary and morphophonology was Norse.

Moreover, this (allegedly borrowed) Scandinavian vocabulary was not limited to content words, counter to normal contact situations such as the massive influx of French words into Late ME when French speakers in England all switched to English as their first language (14th c.). The fact is, not only did hundreds of daily life terms in ME have a Scandinavian origin, so also did roughly half of its grammatical lexicon. Something other than "borrowing through contact" must have transpired, not only because of dating but also because of the types of 'borrowed' words and morphemes.

2. The importance of Middle English syntax

Yet a third discrepancy between OE and ME is the key to understanding these lexical puzzles. If one assembles the data patterns of ME syntax, the language groups typologically with North Germanic (NG), while OE has unmistakable West Germanic (WG) syntax (Gianollo, Guardiano and Longobardi 2008: 133). Based on such patterns, Emonds and Faarlund (2014) argue that ME shares with Mainland Scandinavian more than twenty syntactic properties that OE and other WG languages lack. They conclude (9):

(9) **English as North Germanic.** Middle English was a direct descendent of the Mainland Norse spoken by Scandinavian settlers in England.

The presence of Scandinavian daily life and grammatical vocabulary and Old Norse morphophonology in ME is thus explained. The familiar facts that this hypothesis now makes strange is the daily life and grammatical vocabulary of OE found in ME; because of this factor, Emonds and Faarlund call Early ME by the name "Anglicized Norse.". Under this view, in the realm of syntax there is basically nothing to explain, since ME does not share any syntax or morpho-syntax with OE that is not common to Germanic languages in general.

In this new perspective, there remains no reason why the earliest ME texts must follow the last OE texts. Indeed, a British Library webpage concludes that the first text in ME, a translation of a Latin homily, dates from c. 1150. http://www.bl.uk/learning/timeline/item126539.html This dating is suspiciously late (possibly to reconcile its language with the notion that it must post-date OE texts). The fact is, Robert d'Escures's original must have pre-dated his debilitating stroke in 1119 (d. 1122). https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ralph_d'Escures Though traditional histories of English don't acknowledge any dating overlap, works arguably in OE, e.g. the poem *The Owl and the Nightingale*, were written at least until close to 1200.[18]

When Anglicized Norse began to be written extensively c. 1200 (e.g. the book *Ormulum*), it was considered to be a version of English, what is now called the East Midlands dialect of ME. This dialect is widely taken to be the forerunner of Modern English, which therefore descends from Norse, not from OE. The latter became the Southern and Western dialects of ME, which eventually ceased being written/ spoken.

This paper proposes to strengthen the hypothesis (9) by arguing on theoretical grounds that *several of NG syntactic properties of ME could not have entered ME by borrowing*. They must have resulted from internal developments in Anglicized Norse. That is, the paper proposes a limit om the t*ype* of morpho-syntax that can be borrowed. It is of course not disputed that changes are sometimes simply internal to a language (e.g. in Modern English, the sharply differing syntax of Modals and lexical Verbs, the development of the progressive). My proposal here is that Early ME has several syntactic properties that must have developed 'internally'. If these properties are moreover typical of NG, it must be that Early ME is also.

3. Borrowable Syntax: the Lexical Entries of Borer's Conjecture

Emonds and Faarlund (2014) discuss over 20 morpho-syntactic properties indicating that ME has NG syntax. Some 15 of these can be formally expressed, without much difficulty, as single entries in its Grammatical Lexicon. According to Borer's Conjecture (Borer 1984:29), now widely adopted in generative studies, such entries are the essence of language-particular grammars.

As a result, it is possible in principle that a rapidly evolving OE could have borrowed (or lost) such properties/ entries through contact with Scandinavian speakers. Nonetheless, as argued in Emonds and Faarlund (2014), the sheer number of these entries and the short interval in which they were borrowed or

[18] This poem is said to be in the 'southern dialect' of ME, again to preserve the idea that OE 'changed' diachronically into ME in a short period around 1150. Historians of English allude to a long hiatus in written English to allow for this 'development' but in fact the two written languages appear to have briefly co-existed.

disappeared (leaving aside speculations about a distinct 'spoken OE'), constitutes a strong argument in favour of the Anglicized Norse Hypothesis (9).[19] A list of the changes that can be associated with individual grammatical morphemes is as follows:

(10) **Single entries in (or lost in) the ME Grammatical Lexicon** (attributable to Norse) [20]

- As in NG, certain modals start to express the future tense in ME. In contrast, OE uses present tense and Modern WG uses non-modal (agreeing) auxiliary verbs.
- The ME infinitival *to* is a free morpheme like Old Norse *at*; both can be split from V. WG uses only bound prefixes (Dutch *te*, German *zu*), including OE *to* (S. Pintzuk, pers. comm.).
- No passive/ past participle prefix is the general rule in Old Norse and ME. But in WG, OE and German the prefix *ge-* is frequent and sometimes obligatory.
- NG languages including ME have perfect infinitives *to have V+en*. OE does not (Fischer 1992: 336).
- Like NG, ME expresses sentence negation with free morphemes that are initial in VP (Norse *ikke*, ME *naht*). OE uses a pre-verbal bound morpheme *ne-*.[21]
- As in Old Norse, ME had complex subordinators like *now that, if that, before that, in that, etc.* while OE and WG don't use general subordinators (*þe, dass*) this way (Fischer 1992: 295; Emonds and Faarland 2014: 143).
- The OE "correlative adverbs" *swa…swa, tha…tha,* etc. are unknown in Mainland Scandinavia and disappear in ME (Fischer 1992: 285-86).
- Early ME loses OE relative pronouns that display case or gender (*se þe;* Mitchell and Robinson 1992). As in Old Scandinavian, Early ME relativizers are invariant.
- ME, like NG, grades long adjectives analytically (*more, most)*. OE does not.
- As in Mainland Scandinavian, the ME subjunctive is no longer used to mark indirect speech, as it could in OE (Fischer 1992: 314).
- Subject pronouns could be pro-clitics on second position V in OE, but not in NG languages. ME came to resemble NG in this regard (Kroch, Taylor and Ringe 2000).
- Copulas can select infinitive complements in ME and NG, but not in OE (Fischer 1992: 336-37).
- OE genitive case appears on the head *and* pre-modifiers in a possessive phrase. But in both ME and NG a single enclitic *–s* follows a possessive phrase, whether its head is final or not.
- The derived nominal suffix in OE is *–ung* (like German). NG also allows *–ing*, and in ME the latter form is the only possibility.
- The general pacronymic suffix in NG for new families is *–son;* it replaces OE *–ing* in c. 1200.

For exposition, I grant that at least singly, these Norse features of ME could have been borrowed through contact. Individually they can all be taken to conform to Borer's Conjecture, and plausibly, most changes in particular grammars probably involve borrowing single entries in Grammatical Lexicons.

Looking through the list (10) one by one, *no single one of these properties is in itself implausible* as "contact borrowing in syntax" from Norse into an evolving OE.[22] Thus, a rather transparent interpretation of

[19] Because the traditional view (OE → ME) must locate this avalanche of changes inside a single century.

[20] These constructions are all discussed separately in Emonds and Faarlund (2014). I don't formalize these entries here because specific notations might be controversial and/ or difficult to grasp at a glance. It is unfortunate that three decades of lip service to Borer's Conjecture have produced so few actual proposals for formalizing these entries, the sine qua non for truly generative grammars. Emonds (2000) is one approach.

[21] Early ME puts together OE *ne-* and the post-verbal free morpheme *noht* (i.e. 'double negation'), but eventually drops *ne-*, and so syntactically adopts the NG pattern.

[22] But taken together, as noted above, it is fantastically implausible that the long list in (10) could be

Borer's Conjecture is that changes in particular grammars are simply changes in the lexical entries of individual functional category morphemes, and as such, they can be borrowed (or dropped) through contact.

4. Language-particular architecture: syntax which cannot be borrowed

In addition to the constructions in (10), Emonds and Faarlund (2014) discuss six NG constructions in ME that *cannot be expressed as lexical* entries for single morphemes. That is, these constructions are generalizations that lexical entries may reflect, but the entries themselves do not suffice to express them in single statements. Because of their more general nature, I call them 'architectural' rather than lexical properties. The first four in the list (11) are well attested in earliest Mainland NG as well as ME; the last two are easily found only in the modern period. Discussion and references for each property are given in the sections indicated from Emonds and Faarlund (2014).

(11) **North Germanic architectural properties of ME,** not part of OE:[23]

a. *Head-initial word order within VPs* is unmarked, in both main and dependent clauses (Sect. 3.1).

b. A system of *post-verbal directional and aspectual free morpheme particles*, contrasted with WG systems of pre-verbal separable prefixes (Sect. 3.2).

c. *Subject raising*, both into subject and object positions after epistemic verbs. These are absent in in both OE and WG generally (Sect. 3.3-3.4).

d. *Preposition stranding*, at first in relative clauses and eventually even in sluicing constructions (*who with, what for*, etc. Sect. 3.7-3.8)

e. Freely formed *parasitic gaps;* these appear widely only in NG, and are restricted or absent in WG languages (Sect. 6.4).

f. *Tag questions* based on syntactic copies of Subject and Tense in NG but not in WG (Sect. 6.5).

These constructions all seem to be language-particular properties of NG languages. For example, *there is no widely accepted evidence that any of them were in Indo-European*. This suggests that all must have developed *internally* in NG languages during the Germanic phase of their history. There is no evidence, outside the issue at hand (the relation of OE to ME) that any of the six constructions in (11) have ever been borrowed by contact *either into or from* neighbouring West Germanic, Celtic or Slavic languages.

There are 36 ways one of these 6 properties could have been borrowed from one of these four language families into another. While I cannot categorically state that none have ever occurred, the number of such borrowings is minuscule, compared to the implication of traditional histories of English, namely that contact with dying Norse (or pure accident) caused Middle and Modern English to acquire all 6 NG properties, 4 in the space of at most 200 years..[24]

Given these considerations, I wish to strengthen the hypothesis that ME is Anglicized Norse (9), by proposing that *the NG syntactic properties in* (11*), or at least most of them, could not in principle have been borrowed into late OE from NG*. They must have resulted from internal developments in Norse, most of which we know predated or was simultaneous with Scandinavian settlement in England. That is, I suggest a restrictive and historically justified hypothesis that limits the t*ype* of morpho-syntax that can be borrowed via language contact. Under this hypothesis, the NG syntax of ME cannot in principle be due to "OE + contact with Norse speakers".

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borrowings effected within a century. And sociologically, why would monolingual Anglo-Saxon speakers borrow so copiously from the supposedly dying language of their former adversaries?

[23] These generalizations that describe these language-particular configurations cannot be adequately expressed formally by single lexical entries, e.g. P-stranding is not a property that different Ps accidentally have in common. To remain contentful, either Borer's Conjecture or the notion of lexical entry will have to be modified in some way. However this is to be accomplished, the reference in (12) below to 'lexical specifications of only single functional category items' should remain unchanged.

[24] There is one problematic instance that might require some revision in (12). Current research appears to point to a relation between Celtic and NG languages in the syntax of tag questions. When the import of this research becomes clearer, we can re-assess its relation to (12(12).

To formulate this hypothesis, the morpho-syntactic properties that distinguish ME from OE (and group it with NG) need to be divided into two types. As explained above, I coin the contrasting labels "lexical" and "architectural" for language-particular properties, according to which the second group has properties that cannot be reduced in a trivial way to the first.

(12) **Restricted Borrowing Hypothesis.** Under language contact, a language L_1 can borrow from L_2 lexical specifications of *only single functional category items*. That is, lexical properties can be (sparingly) borrowed under contact, but architectural properties cannot be.

It follows that properties (11a-f) could not have entered ME even in a rapidly evolving OE (a fortiori, essentially simultaneously) through language contact of OE with Scandinavian. The ME properties (11a-f) testify rather to *an unchanging NG character of ME*. That is, changes in patterns that we here call a particular language's syntactic "architecture" can only arise through internal developments, not through contact with different adjacent languages.

I note in conclusion how strongly this view contrasts with the traditional claim that OE → ME, and that the properties in (11) developed in a very short time, at least four of them in the 12th and 13th c., via language-contact with a language which had died out (c. 1150) before evidence of the borrowing is attested (after 1170). The traditional view, when one reflects on its actual claims, violates the canons of both restrictive diachronic reasoning and common sense.

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