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THE INFLUENCE OF WORDS DURING THE NORMAN CONQUEST AND MIDDLE ENGLISH 1100-1500

Medieval Literature

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Abstract

The English language, like all other languages, has evolved over time. Some of its modifications are the result of the natural process of change that all languages go through, while others are the result of language interaction. Foreign influences on English are so strong that it has evolved from a nearly pure language to a totally mixed one. French is the language that has had the most profound influence on English. The Norman conquest of 1066 brought the original inhabitants of the country into direct touch with the invaders' language, Norman French.

The Norman Conquest's impact on the English language

By the end of the Old English period, an event occurred that had a significant impact on the English language. This event was the Norman Conquest in 1066, which marked the start of the Middle English Period. The invasion was a significant period in English history, and it played a significant role in the development of Modern English. The English language that we now know and speak would not have been the same if the events of 1066 had not occurred. William, Duke of Normandy, sailed through the English Channel in 1066. In the battle for the English throne, he challenged King Harold of England. Following his victory at the Battle of Hastings, William was crowned King of England, and the Norman Kingdom was established. Norman-French was adopted as the language of the English law courts in November. Initially, only the Normans spoke French, but through intermarriage, English men quickly learned the language. Approximately 10,000 French words entered the English language during the Middle English period, and approximately 75% of them are still in use today.

The Use of Anglo-Norman language (also known as Anglo-Norman French)

The Anglo-Norman language was one of the most visible changes that occurred following the Norman Conquest. Since William the Conqueror's coronation as King of England, Anglo-Norman has been the language of the court, administration, and culture, while English has been reduced. Anglo Norman was chosen as the language of the ruling classes, and it remained so for the next three centuries. But not only the upper classes spoke French; merchants who traveled to and from the channel, as well as those who wanted to belong to or have a relationship with these groups, had to learn the language as well. These events marked the beginning of Middle English and had a significant impact on how English is spoken today. Prior to the Norman Conquest, Latin was a minor influence on English, but a large number of words entered the English language at

this time. But the English lexicon was not the only thing that changed. While Old English had been a highly inflected language, most of its inflections had now been wasted. The influence of the Normans can be seen in two words: beef and cow. Beef, which was more popular among the aristocracy, is Anglo-Norman, whereas the Anglo-Saxon commoners who tended the cattle kept the Germanic cow. Because the Normans ran the courts, many legal terms, such as indict, jury, and verdict, have Anglo-Norman roots. Many examples show this division, in which words commonly used by the aristocracy have Romantic roots and words commonly used by Anglo-Saxon commoners have Germanic roots.

- At this point, approximately 10.000 words entered the English language, and more than a third of today's PdE (Present-day English) words are related to those Anglo-Norman ME (Middle English) words.
- English pronunciation has also shifted. The fricative sounds [f], [s], [Θ] (as in thin), and [ʃ] (shin), contributed to the differentiation of their voiced counterpart [v], [z], [ð] (the), and [ʒ] (mirage), and also contributed the diphthong [oi] (boy).
- This phenomenon influenced grammar as well, particularly word order.
- While most Old English (and PdE) phrases had an Adj+N order, some phrases, such as secretary general, adopted the French word order, N+Adj.

Since French-speaking Normans took control of London's church and court, a large number of words have been borrowed by the government, spiritual, and ecclesiastical (religious) services. *State, royal (roial), exile (exil), rebel, noble, peer, prince, princess, justice, army (armee), navy (navie), enemy (enemi), battle, soldier, spy* (verb), *combat* (verb), and other terms are examples. *Music, poet (poete), prose, romance, pen, paper, grammar, noun, gender, pain, blue, diamond, dance* (verb), *melody, image, beauty, remedy, poison, joy, poor, nice*, etc., are all words borrowed from French. More of the words mentioned above differ from modern French in terms of usage, pronunciation, or spelling. As a result, the linguistic situation in Britain following the Conquest was complicated. French was the native language of a few thousand speakers, but they wielded enormous power due to their dominance over the nation's political, ecclesiastical, economic, and cultural life.

The wide use of English and French

The difficult question of how much English and French were used in England after the Norman Conquest is difficult to answer. Books and treatises, such as the Ancrene Riwle and the various thirteenth-century works on husbandry, shed some light on the issue when we know the individuals for whom they were written or, at the very least, the social class to which they belong. Something can be gleaned from court proceedings beginning in the thirteenth century, where the language in which a man testifies is occasionally noted. The appearance of manuals for teaching French around 1250 was significant. Poets and writers in the 14th century frequently prefaced their works with an explanation of the language used, which occasionally resulted in valuable observations of a more general linguistic nature. Letters public and private, acts and records of

towns, society, and the central government were all written in French in the 15th century. English was preserved in some monasteries for a long time. Knowledge of English was not uncommon at the end of the 12th century among those who normally used French; among churchmen and men of education, it was even expected, and among those whose activities brought them into contact with both upper and lower classes, it was quite common. Even when English was the mother tongue of the knightly class, French appears to have been cultivated. Recent sociolinguistic insights into the structures of pidgin and creole languages have prompted some linguists to wonder whether Middle English was a *creole* (creole - a mother tongue formed from the contact of two languages through an earlier pidgin stage.) A pidgin is a language used for communication between speakers of different languages, typically for business purposes between speakers of a European language such as Portuguese, French, or English and speakers of an African or Asian language over the last five centuries. If the simplified language is then learned as a first language by a new generation of speakers, and its structures and vocabulary are expanded to meet the needs of its community of speakers, the language is known as a *creole*. The linguistic situation in England during the 12th and 13th centuries had some external parallels with that of today's Caribbean or South Pacific, where languages are frequently in contact and pidgins and creoles emerge. To call Middle English a *creole*, however, is stretching the term beyond its usefulness. Manfred Görlach (most of his books include English in Nineteenth-Century England) finds a lack of texts that could justify the assumption that a stable pidgin or creole English was in use in 13th century households. He believed that the English-speaking majority did not forget their language after the arrival of French, nor did they intentionally modify its structures to fit the French pattern, as Renaissance writers did with Latin. The impact of French on inflections and syntactical structures cannot be proven. However, based on what we know about Middle English bilingualism, it appears unlikely. However, based on what we know about Middle English bilingualism, it appears unlikely. There were a few who spoke only French before the loss of Normandy in 1204 and many more who spoke only English.

At the end of the 13th century, there was a reaction against foreigners and a rise in national sentiment. “These aliens are not merely foreigners; they are England’s worst enemies,” said Bishop Grosseteste (an English statesman, scholastic philosopher, theologian, scientist, and Bishop of Lincoln). They do not understand the English language, neglect soul-curing, and impoverish the kingdom. The 13th century must be viewed as a period of shifting emphasis on England's two official languages. The upper classes maintained their use of the French language, but for different reasons. The French language evolved into a cultivated tongue, aided by social custom as well as business and administrative convention. Meanwhile, English made steady progress. While the English nobles’ interests in France were being separated, English was becoming a common language among the upper classes. It is during this time that the incorporation of French words into the English language takes on significant proportions. When people who know French and are used to using it try to express themselves in English, they experience word transference. The educated class, including those who were unable to read Latin, read French.

French knowledge was sometimes lacking during this time period. According to one author of a French poem, it was difficult for him to write the language because he was never in Paris, and the spread of English among the upper classes was steady. French was then treated as a foreign language. The church and universities made some efforts to stem the decline of French. The Hundred Years' War fuelled a growing sense of hostility, culminating in a long period of open hostility with France. Because French was an adversary language, English was widely adopted in the 14th century.

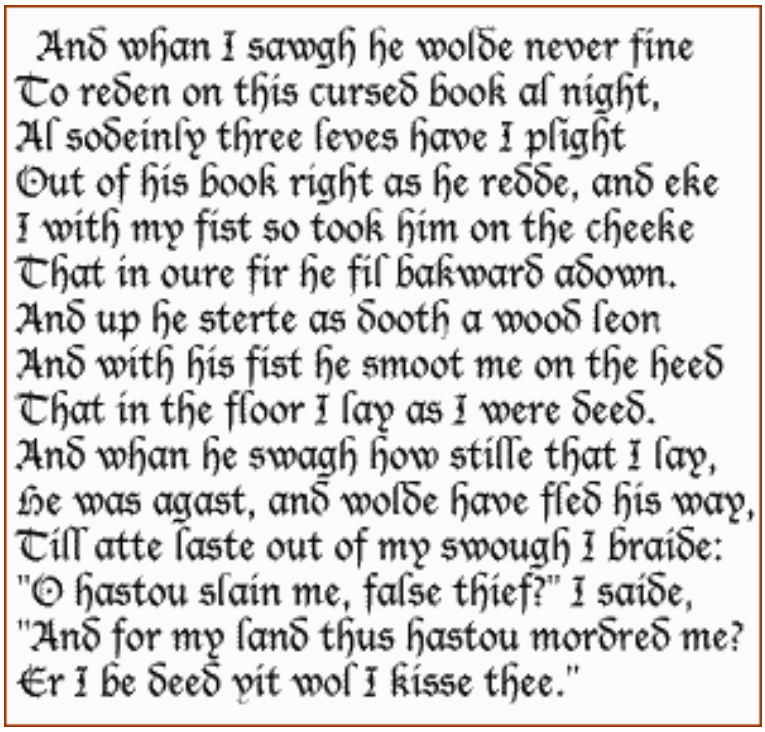
Then, in 1363, English was restored to its dominant position as the country's official language and began to be used in the Law Courts. It was also taught in schools and other institutions, and by the 15th century, there was a growing ignorance of French, despite the fact that it remained a language of culture and fashion.

Middle English, a time of great chance (1100–1500)

The Middle English period (1100-1500) saw significant changes in the English language, changes that were more extensive and fundamental than those seen before or since, and Old English became Middle English. Some of the changes were the result of the Norman Conquest and the conditions that arose in the aftermath of that event in 1066. Others were a continuation of tendencies that had emerged during the Old English period. The changes that occurred during the Middle English period had an impact on both the grammar and vocabulary of English. They were so numerous in each department that determining which group is more significant is difficult. The changes in grammar transformed English from a highly inflected to an extremely analytic language, while the changes in vocabulary resulted in the loss of a large portion of the Old English word-stock and the addition of thousands of words from other languages. In 1399, King Henry IV became the first English-speaking king of England since the Norman Conquest. By the end of the 14th century, the London dialect had established itself as the standard dialect of what is now known as Middle English.

Chaucer (c.e 1300)

By the late 1300s, when Chaucer wrote the Canterbury Tales, Norman French words made up more than half of the English vocabulary. Geoffrey Chaucer (1343–1400), writer, poet, and intellectual, is widely regarded as the Father of English Literature. The wonderful Canterbury Tales, written around 1387 and published in 1400, the year Geoffrey Chauser died, is his most famous work. Chauser's written Middle English is shown below.


And whan I sawgh he wolde never fine
To reden on this cursed book al night,
Al sodeinly three leves have I plight
Out of his book right as he redde, and eke
I with my fist so took him on the cheeke
That in oure fir he fil bakward adown.
And up he sterte as dooth a wood leon
And with his fist he smoot me on the heed
That in the floor I lay as I were deed.
And whan he swagh how stille that I lay,
He was agast, and wolde have fled his way,
Till atte laste out of my swough I braide:
"O hastou slain me, false thief?" I saide,
"And for my land thus hastou mordred me?
Er I be deed yit wol I kisse thee."

Chauser's written Middle English

Despite having recently passed the 600th anniversary of its publication, the book continues to be of interest to modern students for a variety of reasons. The Canterbury Tales is widely regarded as the first book of poetry written in the English language. Prior to Chaucer's time, even English poets wrote in Italian or Latin, which meant that poetry was only understood by the wealthy, educated class, while English was considered low class and vulgar. The Canterbury Tales contributed significantly to its acceptance as a legitimate working language. All of the great writers who came after him, from Shakespeare to Dryden to Keats to Eliot, owe him a debt of gratitude for this work. Because Chaucer wrote in English, there is a written record of the ancestors of the modern language. Contemporary readers may find his words nearly as difficult to understand as a foreign language, but scholars are grateful for the opportunity to compare Middle English to the language as it is spoken today and to study its evolution.

The Great Vowel Shift (1400

During the Renaissance (1400s and 1500s), Latin became an important language in England, particularly in the church and medicine. As a result, many Latin words entered English during this time period. Spelling was also affected by the mix of English and Latin. Late Latin, for example, developed the practice of substituting "o" for "u." Come, some, monk, son, tongue, wonder, honey, above, done, and love are now words. Another, and perhaps the most significant, change that has occurred linguistically over many years is the Great Vowel Shift.

The Great Vowel Shift

The Great Vowel Shift (GVS) was a major linguistic rearrangement that occurred in English during and after Chaucer's lifetime, possibly between 1350 and 1550. The Great Vowel Shift was possibly the most significant process in the transition from Middle to Modern English. Essentially, the long vowels shifted upwards; that is, a vowel that was previously pronounced in one place in the mouth would now be pronounced in a different place, higher up in the mouth; examples are given below.

[a:] became [o:]

ME		**> ModEng**	
Stan	[sta:n]	stone	{sto:n]
Hlaf	[hla:f]	loaf	[lo:f]
Rap	[ra:p]	rope	[ro:p]
Halig	[ha:li:g]	holy	[holi]

[u:] became [au]

ME		**> ModEng**
Mouse	[mu:s]	[maus]
House	[hu:s]	[haus]
Out	[u:t]	[aut]
South	[su:th]	sauth]
Our	[u:r]	[aur]

[i:] became [ai]

ME		**> ModEng**
Mice	[mi:s]	[mais]
Like	[li:k]	[laik]
wide	[wi:d]	[waid]
sight	[si:t]	[sait]

[e:] became [i:]

ME		**> ModEng**
geese	[ge:s]	[gi:]
bee	[be:a:]	[bi:]
beet	[be:t]	[bi:t]
me	[me:]	[mi:]

The French influence on the English language

Although the invasion of the country by the Normans was planned and deliberate, their impact on the English language was unintentional and the result of the environment. Because of this significant influence, the English language as it existed after the Norman Conquest differed significantly from that of the Anglo-Saxons. The French language has a significant influence on many aspects of the English language, including vocabulary, pronunciation, spelling, grammar, and affixes.

Vocabulary

The overuse of French words in English was the most significant impact the French language had on the English language. Also worth mentioning is that one of the characteristics of Old English was its ability to grow its vocabulary, primarily through the use of prefixes and suffixes as well as the blending of native elements into self-interpreting compounds. But in Middle English, this custom was somewhat weakened. When a new word could have been easily invented based on a native model, it was frequently replaced with a French word. Additionally, English speakers borrowed words from other languages from which they already had native equivalents.

McMahon (1994) states, "*The unifying factor underlying all borrowing is probably that of projected gain; the borrower must stand to benefit in some way from the transfer of linguistic material. This gain may be social, since speakers often borrow material from a prestigious group or it may be more centrally linguistics, in that a speaker may find a replacement in her second language for a word which has become obsolete or lost its expressive force. However, the most common and obvious motive for borrowing is sheer necessity; speakers may have to refer to some unfamiliar object or concept for which they have no word in their own language".* (p.201)

One of the factors in borrowing words, as we have seen, is prestige. In close contact situations, the two languages may not hold the same position within the speech community in which they are spoken. The language with the most powerful speakers will be considered more prestigious. Typically, the less prestigious language borrows from the most prestigious, with the borrowing concentrated in semantic fields where the most prestigious speakers have the most influence. That is why, following the Norman Conquest, there is a massive influx of French vocabulary into English, primarily related to religion, army, art, government, and administration. It should be noted, though, that not all French loan words fall into these categories. The middle class and lower classes of Englishmen, in particular, enjoyed being able to converse with their superiors. They also thought it was elegant or refined to be able to converse in French and to pepper their English speech with French words and expressions. In this way, numerous non-technical words also entered the English language. As was previously mentioned, the Conquest did not immediately result in the French language having an impact on English. Before 1100, there

were allegedly not more than 900 loan words, and even fewer still before 1250. The most words were produced between 1250 and 1400.

The upper classes, which had been used to speaking French, started switching back to English after 1250. They frequently used French words to help them express themselves because they didn't fully understand English. As a result, an astonishing number of words related to government, administration, law, religion, army, fashion, food, social life, art, learning, and medicine were introduced into English by the upper classes in this way. Half of the French words that entered the English language during this 150-year period. We must also keep in mind that the West Saxon dialect, which had been the norm for spelling and pronunciation throughout the 10th and 11th centuries, was quickly abandoned after the Norman Conquest. Between 1100 and 1300, hardly anything in English was written down; it was only used orally. Along with the influence of the French ruling classes during this lengthy period, French literature also had an impact. An enormous body of French-language literature was created in England starting in the 12th century. Therefore, when books started to be written again in English, those English words that weren't used in everyday speech were forgotten. The language of the upper classes, who for the past two centuries have dominated art, science, and law, contains the majority of the terms available to express ideas above those of daily life. As a result, a significant number of French words were adopted to replace the lost English ones. Chaucer had a significant impact on how the two languages were combined. It has been calculated that he used slightly more than 8000 words in his writings, of which just over 4000 were of Romance origin and more than 1,000 had their origins in his writing. Since 1250, many words from the Central or Parisian dialect have been incorporated into the English language, having previously served as the language of the French court and French literature. It's interesting to note that there was a case where a word was borrowed from both central French and Norman French. Furthermore, a number of doublets such as catch, chase; warranty, guarantee; reward, regard; goal, jail entered English in the same way. The first is from Norman French, and the second is from Central French. Furthermore, despite the fact that the introduction of French words into English resulted in the extinction of many Anglo-Saxon words, many English words continued to be used in the language alongside their French equivalents. However, some differences between the synonyms emerged at the same time. Native words are always more popular and fundamental than French words; they are more popular and fundamental, whereas French words are often more formal, polite, refined, and less emotional. For example, amity denotes a formal friendly relationship between nations or states and thus lacks the warmth of friendship; similarly, help denotes greater dependence and deeper need than aid.

The list of some of the synonyms

English Words	French Loans	English Words	French Loans
darling	favorite	folk	people
deep	profound	go on	continue
lonely	solitary	happiness	felicity
rise	mount	holy	saint(ly)
ask	question	wish	desire
goodness	virtue	friendly	amicable
fast	firm	heartily	cordial
fire	flame	fight	battle
fear	terror	kingdom	realm
holy	sacred	thief	robber
time	age	weapons	arms
begin	commence	might	power
hide	conceal	feed	nourish
look for	search	ask	demand
kingly	royal	shun	avoid
child	infant	seethe	boil
meal	repast	freedom	liberty
sound	safe	do	perform

The first French words that the English lower classes adopted were interjections and exclamations such as *alas*, sure, *adieu*, and possibly *verrai* (later very). Aside from this, the English language has borrowed nouns, verbs, and adjectives. Despite this, all but one of the English function words are of Old English origin. The complex preposition because of, which is the English version of par cause de, is the only indication of French influence. It is also worth noting that some of the words borrowed by the English language have become obsolete in their native country, some consonants have been dropped, and the sounds of others have been changed. For example, in many words like beast and feast, which are bête and fête in Modern French, English retains the |s| that French lost. The French influence on the English language was so broad that it altered the English vocabulary to the point where nearly half of it is French. According to Baugh (1963), "the total number of French words adopted during Middle English was slightly more than 10.000, of which approximately 75% are still in common use" (p.215). The French influence was so strong that some scholars questioned whether English vocabulary can be considered typical of a Germanic language. It should also be noted that, despite the large number of French loan words, the common core of the English vocabulary and the majority of everyday words are still English.

The List of Some of the French Loan Words

Words associated with administration *include authority, bailiff, chamberlain, chancellor, constable, coroner, council, court, crown, duke, empire, exchequer, government, liberty, and majesty as well as manor, mayor, messenger, and minister. Other words include noble, palace, parliament, peasant, prince, realm, reign, revenue, royal, servant, sir, sovereign, squire, statute, tax, traitor, treason, treat*

Religion-related terms like: *ceremony, baptism, Bible, prayer, lesson, preach, relic, miracle, disciple, abbey, clergy, etc.*

Lawyer-related terms include: *advocate, complaint, summons, court, accuse, bill, act, tax, lease, assets, embezzle, and disclaimer. Other legal terms include: felony, larceny, judge, jury, justice, estate, sue, fee, plea, defendant, prison, and suit.*

Words that have to do with Government include: *people, parliament, crown, reign, treaty, council, cabinet, city, minister, nation, village, domicile, etc.*

Military terms, such as: *army, navy, enemy, battle, defense, retreat, soldier, guard, spy, sergeant, manor, chattel, captain, corporeal, etc.*

Titles and offices related terms include: *duke, marquis, baron, constable, count, lieutenant, mayor, prince, viscount, vicar, dean, chancellor, countess, etc.*

Science and Art related terms include: *alkali, sulphur, arsenic, calendar, clause, copy, metal, noun, ointment, pain, plague, pleurisy, poison, pulse, sphere, squiggle, poetry, painting, sculpture, music, beauty, figure, image, tone, literature, poet, romance, story, chronicle, tragedy, prologue, preface, title, volume, chapter, paper, treatise, study, logic, geometry, grammar, no*

Architecture related terms include: *cathedral, palace, mansion, chamber, ceiling, cellar, chimney, lattice, tower, porch, column, pillar, base, brick, storey, attic, tile, lintel, etc.*

Abstract terms include: *sense, honor, glory, fame, color, dignity, chivalry, piety, science, nature, etc.*

Social life and domestic economy related terms include: *curtain, couch, chain, cushion, screen, lamp, lantern, blanket, towel, basin, parlor, wardrobe, closet, chess, recreation, leisure, fool,* and *minstrel.*

Fashion related terms include: *fashion, dress, habit, gown, robe, garment, cape, cloak, coat, frock, collar, veil, train, chemise, trousers, lace, embroidery, buckle, button, plume, kerchief, boots, galoshes, etc.*

There are many words that have to do with food and drink, such as *appetite, bacon, beef, biscuit, clove, confection, cream, cruet, date, dinner, feast, fig, fruit, fry, grape, gravy, gruel, herb, jelly, lemon, lettuce, mackerel, mince, mustard, mutton, olive, orange, oyster, pigeon, plate, pork, poultry, raisin, repast, roast, salad, salmon, sardine, sauce.*

Natural Scenery: *valley, mountain, river, torrent, fountain, gravel.*

Color: *blue, brown, vermilion, scarlet, violet, crimson, mauve.*

Jewelry: *Jewel, ivory, enamel, brooch, turquoise, amethyst, topaz, garnet, ruby, emerald, pearl, diamond, crystal, coral, beryl.*

General nouns: *Action, adventure, affection, age, air, city, coast, comfort, country, courage, courtesy, cruelty, debt, deceit, dozen, envy, error, face, fault, flower, forest, grief, honor, hour, joy, labor, manner, marriage, mischief, mountain, noise, number, ocean, opinion, order, pair, people, person, piece, point, poverty, power, quality, rage, reason, river, scandal, season, sign, sound, spirit, substance, task, tavern, unity, vision.*

General adjectives: *Active, amorous, blue, brown, calm, certain, clear, common, cruel, curious, eager, easy, final, foreign, gay, gentle, honest, horrible, large, mean, natural, nice, original, perfect, poor, precious, probable, real, rude, safe, scarce, scarlet, second, simple, single, solid, special, strange, sudden, sure, usual.*

General verbs: *advice, allow, arrange, carry, change, close, continue, cry, deceive, delay, enjoy, enter, form, grant, inform, join, marry, move, obey, pass, pay, please, prefer, prove, push, quit, receive, refuse, remember, reply, satisfy, save, serve, suppose, travel, trip, wait,* and *waste.*

Pronunciation

Pronunciation is the production of language by utterances in spoken form, which is the primary and most common way language is used. Changes in pronunciation occur as well; the introduction of many French words into English causes some changes in the language's sound system. For example, in the Old English period, the phonemes /f/ and /s/ had allophones [f] and [s] that were used initially and finally, and [v] and [z] that were used medially between voiced sounds. However, the introduction of a number of Norman French borrowed words with initial [v] and [z], such as veal, victory, zeal, and zodiac, introduced [v] and [z] into contexts where they had not previously appeared. As a result, [v] and [z] evolved into distinct phonemes. Furthermore, the French diphthongs /o/ and //, which were used in the French loan words, were adopted by the English.

Spelling

Spelling, like in other fields, has evolved. In the middle of the thirteenth century, English reappeared as a written language, and church writers began to copy texts in English. During this time, these writers, who had studied in France and were fluent in French, gradually replaced the Anglo Saxon forms of Latin letters with French ones. The change was minor, as most of the French letters were similar to those previously used in Old English. |ae|, a useful Old English letter, was the first to be dropped from the English alphabet. Old English word patterns include *æfter, æsc,* and *græs*. Also, during the Old English period, letters like [þ] and [δ] were used to denote the sounds [θ] and [δ] indiscriminately. Before 1300, the letter [δ] had almost completely disappeared, and [δ] denoting either sound had been in use for much longer. It wasn't until the end of the Middle English era that 1400 [*th*] was officially adopted. The scribes frequently replaced the Anglo-Saxon vowel |c|, which originally had the sound [k] in all positions, with |k| before the front vowels |e|, |i|, and |y|, but left it alone before the back vowels |a|, |o|, and |u|. On the other hand, the French |c| was used with words of Anglo-French origin like certain and city and had the [s] sound before a front vowel. These words' introduction to the English language caused some pronunciation confusion. Thus, the French method was used to create a regular and consistent system. The letter |c| was pronounced [k] before a front vowel and [s] before a back vowel, and it was used in place of |c| in native words where the letter was pronounced [k] before the front vowel. As a result, *cene* became *keen* and the Anglo-Saxon *cyning* became king. The letter |ċ| was used for /tʃ/ in Old English, but after the Norman Conquest, the French spelling |ch| took its place; for example, the original Old English *ċild* became child in Middle English. Furthermore, in shield and sheep, which were written *sċield* and *sċeap* in Old English, the Old English |*cw*| for / gradually became | sh | or |sch|. In addition, Anglo-Saxon |cw| was changed to |qu|, and thus Old English cween became queen. The sound of the first letters in which was turned into |wh| was given by |hw|. The digraph |*gg*| replaced Old English |*cg*| which act as /dʒ/ in medial and final positions, after it was written as |*dg(e)* | as in modern *edge*. This sound did not happen initially in Old English until French loans introduced it. The marks that show vowel length were also discarded in Middle English. To address this issue, the word |gu| was coined, and the words gild and gest were changed to guild and guest. After being written as |g| as in modern edge, the digraph |gg| replaced Old English |cg|, which acted as /dʒ/ in medial and final positions. This sound did not occur in Old English until French loans introduced it. Old English back vowels [u:] (long) and [u] were written with the letter |u| (short). However, French scribes changed the long |*ū*| to |ou| as in "hoom" (*home*), so that *hous* and *mous* were written instead of *hūs* and *mūs*, respectively. Old English only used the vowels [u] and [y] as vowels, but in Middle English, they also started to be used as consonants, the former with the sound [v] and the latter with [j]. However, |*h*| insensibly came to be pronounced in all but a few words, such as *honour, honest, hour* and *heir*, for example in England the word *hotel* is pronounced with and without /h/. Similar to how the sound | j |was spelled as |ʒ| in Old English, it became |y| due to French influence (for instance: ʒieldan, yield). Old English had the letters |ʒ| for the sounds /j/ and /g/.

Grammar

Old English, as we all know, was an inflected language, but during the Middle English period, it lost the majority of its inflections and became more straightforward. All languages undergo a process of development known as simplification, but after the Norman Conquest, the English language underwent a more rapid process of simplification. It is well known that written language is where grammatical accuracy and purity are most often preserved. As we mentioned above, English had remained largely a spoken language up until the year 1200. English also lost its gender structure during this time. The fact that French had a different gender system was the most important aspect that contributed to the loss of gender. The same thing that was feminine in English may have been masculine in French, or vice versa. Consequently, using the natural gender was the simplest option. Additionally, English was exposed to French syntactic patterns like phrases with nouns followed by adjectives. For instance, heir male, letters patent, attorney general, court martial, fee simple, and proof positive. Old English used thou for the second person singular, ye and you for the second person plural, with the distinction of number separating the two. The plural forms were subconsciously extended to singular use under French influence while still retaining the plural forms. While you forms were neutral and polite, the goal was to use thou forms as marked forms indicating either intimacy or contempt. Early on in the Middle English era, *Þe (the)* and *Þæt (that)* were used to begin relative clauses before *Þæt* gradually took their place. The old forms of *who*, *which*, and other Modern English relative pronouns were immediately introduced to be used as interrogative pronouns. It's possible that French had some influence as well. Because the interrogative pronouns *qui* and *que* are also used as relative pronouns in French, it is possible that Latin influence encouraged the adoption of the wh-relatives and French influence strengthened its use.

Affixes

The French affixes entered English as a result of the language's extensive borrowing of French words. The French loan words also acquired the English suffixes. This kind of word hybridization is relatively common in most languages. However, the hybrid of the other type, which consists of a native stem and a foreign ending, is less common in most languages than in English. Examples include bearable, breakage, hindrance, murderous, and bakery. Here are a few French affixes that have made their way into English: (Some of the affixes used in French are translations from other languages.)

Prefixes: con-, de-, dis-, ex-, pre-, en-, pro-, trans-.
Suffixes: -ee , -ance, -ant, -ation , -ment, -ism, -ity, -able, -al , -ous, -fy, -i

Borrowing

Words taken by speakers of one language from another, known as the source language, are referred to as borrowings, also known as loanwords. The act of speakers incorporating words into their native tongue from a source language is referred to as borrowing. Because there isn't a concrete lending process, the terms "loan" and "borrowing" are metaphors. Simply put, the words start to be used by a speech community that does not speak the language in which they were first used. The sociolinguistic process of borrowing is one that not all members of the speech community fully understand. Some nations have a tendency to keep their languages "pure," and word borrowing is not permitted. For instance, France has attempted to forbid the use of English words in French by law. All languages incorporate vocabulary from other tongues. During the period of occupation that followed the Norman Conquest in 1066, English borrowed a staggering amount of lexical items from French. Legal occupation implied the influx of court, legal, and property-related terms into English from French. Norman French loanwords entered English first, while Central French loanwords arrived later. Many words from the language of the conquerors made their way into the English language, including terms for administration (such as government), the military (such as captain), religion (such as abbey), law (such as crime), entertainment (such as cards), and the arts (such as color), among many others that we will see in the following.

Later Borrowings

The influence of French on English is not limited to the two or three centuries following the Norman Conquest; English has always borrowed words from French, though not as many as during the Middle English era. The Renaissance, a period of intellectual awakening in Europe, reached England around 1500. Although still significant, French influence was not overwhelmingly prevalent during this time. Examples of words borrowed at this time include *portmanteau, genteel, fricasseé, cache, moustache,* and *machine*. There was a civil war in England in the middle of the seventeenth century, when the common wealth was in effect, and the court was located in France. As a result, many French words and expressions entered the English language during the Restoration, including *parole, rendezvous, envelope, critique, memoir, tableau, routine,* and many others. Many French words for revolution were imported into English as a result of the French Revolution, which took place in the last years of the eighteenth century. Examples include *regime, guillotine, aristocrat, democrat, revolution, royalism, terrorism,* and *despotism,* among others. The largest inflow of French loans after the Middle English era occurred in the nineteenth century. Since English liberalism was in full swing at the time, it was only natural for the population to develop a fresh interest in the nation that gave birth to the ideals of freedom, equality, and fraternity. Numerous words related to art, food and drink, fashion, home decoration, social graces, and social pastimes entered the English language as a result of improved travel facilities and an increase in travelers to France for both business and pleasure. Some examples include: *ballet, souvenir, cuisine, moquette, liqueur, route, canteen, bureau, baroque, rococo, cliché, resumé, blouse, acrobat, restaurant, chef, fiancée, prestige,* and the phrases like

coup d'état, savoir fair, hors d'œuvre, etc. French was still widely regarded as a prestigious language more than a century ago; it was the international diplomatic language and enjoyed significant popularity in literary and scientific circles. The late nineteenth century saw a gradual decline in its fame, which was still very high. Therefore, there were fewer loans made in the twentieth century. Examples include: *revue, garage, limo, camouflage, enfant terrible*, etc.

Idioms

Idioms are a type of borrowing, and the English language has taken some French idioms as well. Some of these idioms, including *au contraire, force majeure, à la mode, vis à vis*, and *repondez s'ilvous plait*, are also used in French. However, English translations are provided for the other borrowed idioms. Comment *fait vous* is another word for how do you do; that should go without saying for *celava sans dire*, etc. It's me for *c'est moi*.

Doublets

It should be noted that some French words, including saloon, chief, and chef, have been borrowed twice from English over the course of the language's history. The French language has undergone changes since the Middle Ages, which explains in part why these words' pronunciation and accent positions differ. For instance, the French letter ch was pronounced [tʃ] as in chief in Old French, but [ʃ] as in chef in Modern French. The other, equally important reason for this phenomenon is that, up until 1650, French loan words were completely naturalized and adhered to English pronunciation and accent rules, whereas later borrowings (unless they have gained significant popularity) make an effort to pronounce them in a French manner.

Spelling and Pronunciation

Because English speakers tend to pronounce words in a French-influenced manner, the pronunciation of late borrowings is not consistent. Some words, such as garage, are pronounced differently, such as ['gæra:dʒ], ['gæra:ʒ], [gə'ra:dʒ] and [gə'ra:ʒ] which preserve French pronunciation characteristics with varying syllable stress, and ['grid], an anglicized form that has adopted the village ['vilidʒ] pattern. A number of long-established and naturalized words' pronunciations and spellings were altered as a result of this tendency. As a result, although its pronunciation has not yet changed, the word *biscuit*, which in the form *bisket* is found as an old English word, has recently changed to conform to French spellings. The accent of some old words has also changed for the same reason. Old English words like police and marine underwent pronunciation changes as a result of French influence.

Anglo-Norman and Central French

As we mentioned, the French words that the Norman Conquest brought into English frequently appear very differently from how they do in Modern French. This is primarily because

of the subsequent changes that have occurred in the two languages. The OE feste thus became Middle English's *feste*, from which it evolved into Modern English's *feast*, whereas in French, the "S" vanished before other consonants at the end of the 12th century, giving rise to the form *fête*. The same distinction can be found between the words *forest-forêt, hostel-hotêl, beast-bête*, and many others. While the spelling may not always fully convey the difference, the pronunciation usually does. Thus, the French words judge and chant in modern French retain the early French pronunciation of "J" and "CH," which was softerened to "Z" and "S" in the 13th century. Therefore, we can identify words like: *charge, chance, chamber, chase, chair, chimney, just, jewel, journey, majesty, gentle*, and many others as early borrowings, while words like *chamois, champeron, chiffon, chavron, jabot, rouge*, and similar words indicate a later arrival in the language by the sound they make. The early word *chivalry*, which should be pronounced with a [C] sound, has been influenced by words like chevalier and modern French. Words like police and ravine, where the "I" is pronounced in the French way, are examples of similar cases. If these words were early borrowings, they should be pronounced similarly to how *nice* and *vines* are. The Anglo-Norman or Anglo-French dialect spoken in England differed significantly from the language of Paris (Central French), which is a second reason why English words differ from their French equivalents. Carriage, case, and carry were frequently retained in Anglo Norman, whereas in Central French they became CHA and CHI. Carriage and case also have corresponding words in the Parisian dialect. Early on, the |W| sound was avoided in Central French, both alone and in combination with other consonants; English *wicket*, which represented the previous Norman French *wicket*, became *giuchet* in the Paris dialect. Similar to how waste (A.N. waster) appeared in Central French grammar, *orgaster* (Mod. F. *gater*). Other words in the language include *wasp* (F. *guepe*), *warrant* (F. *garantier*), *reward* (F. *regarder*), *wardrobe* (cf. Guardian from Central French), *wait* (cf. warden), *wage* (F. warren), and *wince*. The labial element was also dropped in the combination *que-* Central French, but it was kept for a while in Anglo-Norman. This is why we pronounce words like "*quit*," "*quarter*," "*quality*," "*question*," "*require*," and other words with the sound "*kw*," as opposed to the French "*k*." (*quitter, quartier, qualite*, etc.).

Conclusion

As we've seen, the Norman Conquest and the French language had a significant impact on English. Numerous French words have been incorporated into English. Old English spelling was altered, and new French phonemes entered the English sound system. The majority of the Old English affixes were also replaced by a large number of French ones. French also hastened English's grammatical simplification. One wonders if the majority of these changes were caused by English speakers' propensity to use this esteemed language or if they were all inevitable outcomes of the circumstances in which the English people found themselves.

The English language does not, however, have a special penchant for appropriating foreign words and phrases. It has appeared frequently throughout the development of languages. Dr. J.A. Sheared (1962) stated it succinctly: "The acquisition of loan words from another language shows that the borrower feels that there is something superior in the foreign language, or in the people

who use it. For we may suppose that no reasonable being would deliberately use foreign words if he felt that his own language possessed words that did the job better." (pp. 26-27)

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