TRABAJO FIN DE GRADO

GRADO EN ESTUDIOS INGLESES: LENGUA, LITERATURA Y CULTURA

THE INFLUENCE OF FRENCH ON ENGLISH VOCABULARY: A VOYAGE THROUGH LITERARY TEXTS

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ABSTRACT

The impact the French language has had on English is rather remarkable and it has been widely studied. The incorporation of a massive amount of French vocabulary assisted in the change that English underwent over the centuries, from Old English to the Middle English to Modern English. French has seriously impacted many fields of knowledge such as legal language or trade terms. The present paper will be offering the overall historical, social, and linguistic context, which facilitated the permeation of French into the English language. It will also specifically analyse this impact on some extracts from well-known English literary pieces, dating from different centuries, in order to measure the impact of French vocabulary on this field of knowledge.

KEYWORDS

The Norman Conquest, French, English, Literature, Vocabulary, Etymological Analysis.

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INTRODUCTION, JUSTIFICATION AND OBJETIVES

The present Final Degree Project deals with the following topic: *The Influence of French on English Vocabulary: a voyage through literary texts*.

There are several thousands of languages in the world, and one thing is true for all of them: they are not static entities, they change and evolve through time with the ultimate goal of facilitating the communication process. The evolution of every language can be very clear when texts are analysed.

When it comes to the English language, we can observe the profound changes it has undertaken through time. It only takes to try to read a sentence from *Beowulf* to realize that we have in front of us is not what we commonly think of English. The diachronic changes of English are classified in three distinct stages known as Old English, Middle English, and Modern English.

Geographically, Great Britain and France are neighboring countries, so a mutual influence was expected to some extent. However, due to historical, social, and political reasons the influence of French in English is of a great reach and of major importance.

In this Final Degree Project, the main focus is going to be placed on the influence that the French language exerted on the English language, especially on the vocabulary. The purpose of this paper is to outline the impact of this phenomenon, by the means of presenting an introduction of the historical context in which French and English became in contact, as well as the social and political context. As the paper advances, the focus will be established on the analysis of several literary excerpts from texts dating from the XIV to the XVII century, in order to locate words and vocabulary influenced/changed by French, as well as one contemporary text in an attempt to measure the scope of this effect, since the amount of vocabulary derived from French can be observed through the centuries. It would also place a special focus on examples of words or word derivation that have been influenced by French.

There is not a wide array of literature available before the 14th century, besides many texts were written in Latin or French, so I prefer to search and dive into some famous works of English literature that date from later on.

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I have chosen what I think is a sample of well-known authors and texts, ranging from the XIV to the XVII centuries, which can provide a glimpse into how the use of language and vocabulary was back then. The reason behind this choice is to provide texts of different genres (poetry, epic, narrative, plays…) and from different centuries in order to have a selection to convey the goal of this paper.

The works chosen are the following:

- *The Canterbury Tales* Geoffrey Chaucer
- *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* Anonymous
- *The Book of Margery Kempe* Margery Kempe
- *Farewell, Love* Sir Thomas Wyatt the Elder
- *Macbeth* William Shakespeare
- *From Annus Mirabilis* John Dryden

Nonetheless, I'd like to remark that these pieces of literature may not reflect the oral language spoken by the people in general, and the scope of this research may be biased by its own limitations, that is, being the produce of authors who were versed, educated gentry.

How did the common rural peasant communicate with his peers in the 13th century? Was it Anglo-Norman or Middle English? How was the vernacular? Did they have access to learning French when the use of this language in England was at its zenith?

This paper will not delve into this; however, I find it important to have into consideration its own limitations.

STATE OF THE ART

Numerous articles, papers and books have been published on the matter of the development and change of the English language from Old English to the present day, it is considered an important and interesting part of linguistics study, along with the study of language contact, since many changes in any given language are due to this phenomenon. Subsequently, there are several authors who have conducted an extensive research and numerous articles, and other

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sources of bibliography are available on this topic, as it has always been a general interest of many linguists.

The differentiation of diachronic linguistics as opposed to synchronic linguistics was first introduced by Ferdinand de Saussure (1857-1913) considered by many the father of modern linguistics. While diachronic linguistics deal with the study of a specific topic of language development and change through time, synchronic linguistics focuses on a linguistic topic in a specific frame of time.

Nevertheless, Jean Aitchinson remarked in *Language change: progress or decay* how a diachronic and synchronic view complement each other, and stated regarding Saussure:

His statements about the necessity of separating the two aspects of linguistics were dogmatic and categorical: 'The opposition between the two viewpoints –synchronic and diachronic – is absolute and allows of no compromise. (Aitchinson 38).

Yet, for the first two-thirds of the twentieth century, most linguists tried to pretend that grammars could be watertight. Since diachronic linguists based their studies of language change on these watertight grammars, it is not surprising that they failed to identify changes in progress. (Aitchinson 42).

To understand the influence of French on English vocabulary it is of utmost importance to research the history of the English language. Regarding this topic, there are some works and authors I would like to mention:

Albert Baugh and Thomas Cable in *A History of the English Language*, whose first edition dates to 1951. It details the history of the English language, providing the readers with a thorough chronology of the development of the language, considering new changes included in the latest editions. There is a detailed description on how French influenced English, considering history, culture, and linguistics. According to these authors, *French influence is much more direct and observable upon the vocabulary.* (Baugh and Cable 163), a shared belief based on evidence.

The English Language: A Historical Introduction by C. Barber, J. Beal, and P. Shaw; *A History of English* by B. Strang; and *The Origins and Development of the English Language* by J. Algeo. They all provide a clear overview and detailed

information on the topic of English change through the centuries, including French influence on English in general and particularly on English vocabulary.

Another well-known author on the field English linguistics is David Crystal. Author of the *Cambridge Encyclopedia of the English Language* and of several books addressed to the general public, such as *The Stories of English* and *The Story of English in 100 words.* Of vital importance is, as he remarks, the impact of French as "*language change reflects social change*" (Crystal 132), a reminder that language cannot exist without a society and a context.

Philip Durkin focused on the loanwords incorporated into the English language alongside its history, and studies borrowings from every language in contact in his book B*orrowed words: A History of Loanwords in English.* An important remark which I would like to address can be found in this book: "*The scholarship has drawn attention to the importance of English/French /Latin trilingualism in England* (Durkin 229) *and that in many cases, we cannot say with complete confidence that a word is from French rather than Latin or vice versa.* (Durkin 236).

Overall, from all these books I gathered information on consensus about words that derived from French, usually contained within a specific field such as ecclesiastical or army vocabulary. Lists of words are analysed along with the social and historical moment where it was first recorded.

Many short articles are written on the subject as well, such as "*The influence of the French language on English in the Early Modern English period*" by Anna Skalba*, which focus on the decline of usage of French words in the early modern English period; "The French Influence On The English Language*" by Taraneh. A. Tabari which presented a historical and lexical analysis of French influence on English or "*Middle English: English or Frenglish?*" by I.M. Ikalyuk, U.T. Tatsakovych, to name a few.

However, since all these books are manuals, it is expected that these authors seemed to reiterate the same concepts, subsequently, there appears to be a general consent on the great influence that French exerted on English, especially after the Norman conquest, although some words, as Algeo exposes,

date before the Norman Conquest: "*Few loanwords unquestionably of French origin occur in English earlier than 1066, some of the earliest are (to cite their Modern English forms) capon, castle, juggler, and prison*". (Algeo 254.)

These scholars usually agree on the chronology, influence, and the important role of the French language on the development of English as we know it today.

However, as William Rothwell signaled in his paper *"Arrivals and departures: the adoption of French terminology into Middle English*" (1998), after the second half of the 20th century more corpus and dictionaries were made available to study this field, such as the Middle English Dictionary (MED) or the Anglo-Norman Dictionary (AND), which allowed for more exhaustive research.

Rothwell criticized some studies that did not consider the importance of Anglo-French and Anglo-Norman influence on English, highlighting the role of Central French influence instead. According to him, research conducted before these sources were available, such as Otto Jespersen's (1860-1963) "*Growth and Structure of the English Language*" originally published in 1905, and even Baugh's revision in his article "*The Chronology of the French Language*" in 1935, after the completion of the Oxford Dictionary, should be questioned in the light of new evidence. As Rothwell points out in the *"The missing link in English etymology: Anglo-French*" (1991): "*The relationship of Anglo-French with Middle English was one of merger, not of borrowing, as a direct result of the bilingualism of the literate classes in mediaeval England*". (Rothwell 174).

Nevertheless, Otto Jespersen and Albert Baugh´s immense contribution to the investigation on this field of study is acknowledged.

It is also worth mentioning a hypothesis that created a heated debate in the last decades of the twentieth century, regarding as whether should Middle English be considered a creole language, namely The Middle English as a Creole Hypothesis.

I encountered the above-mentioned debate in the work of some authors such as Joseph Piercy in *The Story of English* (2012), William Rothwell *"Arrivals*

and departures: the adoption of French terminology into Middle English" (1998), and Richard J. Watts *Language Myths and the History of English"* (2011).

The hypothesis was first presented by C. Bailey and K. Maroldt in 1977, where they argued that the simplification of English and the amount of borrowing from French could be explained by the hypothesis of considering ME a creole language. However, many authors have refuted this claim, for example Görlach in 1986, who claimed that ME did not reunite the criteria of a creole language. This debate also generated a need to clarify the features of a creole language and the correct definition of it.

There are authors, including Rothwell, who exposed the need to shift the focus: […] advise researchers into English to look at the Middle-English-as-a-creole hypothesis from both sides of the coin—from the point of view of French as well as from the point of view of English. (Watts 96).

A known fact that must be considered is that the resources to study this field are limited, since evidence-based documents available are scarce. What we can study today are the ones we already have and have remained unaltered. These works are mostly literary, legal and trade documents. There are few written documents in England from the 11th and 12th centuries that we can access today. It should be of extreme value to be able to hear a layman talking to his children in the 1300s, but given the impossibility of this, we can only infer the use of their language by common sense based on these studies.

In conclusion, as previously presented, the French influence on English has already been extensively researched. However, there is still room to investigate.

I noticed there are some gender studies on the characters of Chaucer's texts and other ME and early literary Modern English texts, but it remains a topic which can be explored. It can take many approaches on linguistics, social context, and literature, so every research can provide interesting new information, or at least confirm what has already been published.

The orality component is unknown, as we can only use common sense and gather evidence since we have no information on how people talk to each

other in the 11th century, some questions still remain answered: Did they change language or register depending on who the person was addressing? What was the command of French or Anglo French of the general population? How did people incorporate the new words? Were there a social class or a gender bias in the use of new French acquired vocabulary?

METHODOLOGY

The methodology of this Final Degree Project is established according to the objectives that have been proposed. The main objective of this paper is to present and analyze the influence of French on the English language, focused on vocabulary, by analyzing extracts from literary texts.

A qualitative approach is used, since linguistic and literature entail a more reflective method. However, a quantitative analysis is also provided, since there are several simple pie charts depicted after the analysis of every text, and a more complex final graphic, which is displayed not with the objective of a thorough numeric analysis, but with the purpose of providing a more visual tool to reflect what has previously been analysed.

Firstly, extensive reading on the matter was required; and I chose to follow an inductive method of investigation, where specific conclusions are drawn after the general knowledge has been presented. In this case, I commenced by searching and reading the general aspects of diachronic change in the English language, and information on the historical background. I consulted several sources that are well versed on the topic. The work of Baugh and Cable *A history of the English language* introduced me to the general overview of the topic itself. Afterwards, it was narrowed to the specific influence of French vocabulary on the English language, so I searched for bibliography sources that contained more detailed information. Furthermore, to delve into the literary part of the paper an even more specific search followed.

The idea of analyzing the French etymology of specific words contained in English literature came first by the book *The story of English in 100 words* by David Crystal. I found the study of word etymology quite interesting, and I decided

to incorporate it to part of the project. Many articles supported this as they are listed in the bibliography.

The idea of the analysis working with literary texts came with the reading of an article that mentioned Chaucer: "*Henry of Lancaster and Geoffrey Chaucer: Anglo-French and Middle English in Fourteenth-Century England*" written by Rothwell. Afterwards, I added more texts to read regarding this last part, in order to gather information and to have enough material to commence the research. The factors considered when electing the texts were the variety of genres and the following of a specific timeline, as well as the availability of sources.

I used the *Norton Anthology of English Literature* as well as *Ejes de la Litetarura Medieval y Renacentista* to select the authors and the texts I wanted to use to illustrate the influence of French. I have also made extensive use of the web page of the British Library on Medieval Literature where many articles and texts of great value can be found. For example, I found a great deal of information on the background of many authors, although I could not use that information in this paper, it gave me an added stimulus for learning and researching this topic.

I found several online dictionaries to be of great value to investigate the etymology of English words: The Online Etymology Dictionary, The Historical Thesaurus of English, as well as The Oxford Dictionary, only with partial access.

Other online dictionaries that I found very useful are The Anglo-Norman Dictionary and the Middle English Compendium. All these dictionaries helped me research the etymology of the words that I analysed.

All the above entailed the preparation of an index. The steps I took to elaborate the index are connected to my research, to establish a system to expose the ideas. As the result of the research and method of investigation, three parts can be differentiated in the index: the general contextualization and overview; the theory regarding the French influence; and the literary analysis as examples to prove the extent of the influence of French.

To prepare the reading, I carefully selected the bibliography. The first introduction was facilitated and guided by my tutor, Dr. Carmen Guarddon, and afterwards, I started researching on different Internet platforms.

I found very useful the web repositories access through the UNED virtual library, and I made extensive use of several platforms and databases such as JSTOR, PROQUEST or LION. I signed up to Research Gate where I could obtain access to several works published by researchers and students, and I could also specifically ask some authors to share their papers for my study. Some of them rapidly replied to my request, while others never did.

I selected the different readings and took notes on specific topics I wanted to research. I selected several books, articles and university papers needed to the development of the work.

I imported all the works on RefWorks, a bibliographic manager program used to collect and contain all the papers mentioned or used in the research. The use the Google Scholar platform was necessary to import to RefWorks and to search for specific articles as well.

To draw coherent conclusions, I compared and contrasted the facts presented on the papers based on different criteria. Firstly, the selection of readings was based on relevance on the subject matter I was researching. There were many works that provided a general overview and that were very interesting, but irrelevant to the topic. In order to select the best books to learn and quote from I confided on academic merits, for example the manual from Crystal and the one from Baugh and Cable are widely used in universities, and their prestige is well recognized. I considered the impact of the study, for example, Otto Jespersen's, which is still the base for many other studies today. I compared the facts presented by reading pro and con articles about a specific topic, for instance regarding the consideration of Middle English as creole, or I considered Rothwell's take on the role of Anglo-Norman French on English. However, I must acknowledge my own limitations as an undergraduate student, and for many of these discussions I think I lack enough knowledge to contribute with something new or vastly relevant. Therefore, the conclusions I finally drew, were based on the previous research that all these authors conducted, and these studies supported the evidence of my findings.

PART I: CONTEXTUALIZATION AND CHARACTERISTICS OF THE IMPACT OF THE FRENCH LANGUAGE ON ENGLISH VOCABULARY

1   Historical, political, social, and linguistic context.

In order to explain the impact of the French language it is necessary to go back to a turning point in history: The Norman Conquest of 1066. Until the year 1066 England was ruled by different Anglo-Saxon kingdoms that were united in the year 927, forming the Kingdom of England, and Old English was the language of its inhabitants, a language easily identifiable as pertaining to the Germanic branch.

The historical turning point event of the Norman Conquest occurred when William the Conqueror of Normandy defeated the English King Harold in the *The Battle of Hastings*, and William was crowned King at the end of the same year. The new king surrounded himself with his own people, and the English nobility was replaced by foreigners of Norman origin. Many foreigners found their place among the empty seats left by English loyal to King Harold, who were killed, deposed, or fled the country. Similarly, Norman monks were introduced in English churches, as well as Norman soldiers formed the new military (Baugh and Cable 108).

This historical and political event created a more distinctive social and linguistic schism between the ruling aristocracy, who spoke French as their native language, and the subordinate low classes, who continued to speak English. Due to this, French started to be considered a language used by people of influence and anyone who interacted with the aristocracy was compelled to have a good command of the language.

As a result of all the above, in addition to the geographical proximity, French or Norman French established itself as the language to be used among the Anglo-Norman nobility. Other fact that reinforced the role of the use of French in the upper classes was the marriage of Henry II, a successor of William I, to Eleanor of Aquitaine in 1152, uniting, thus, the domains of Normandy and England to the vast French territory through his marriage to Eleanor. (Baugh and Cable 111).

The English nobility resembled more of an Anglo-French aristocracy, and intermarriage was a common practice, prompting the English to learn French to their own advantage. Soon, the lines of who was ethnically Norman a who was ethnically English became blurred and the fact of being able to speak French soon became a social distinction, not an ethnic one (Baugh and Cable 110). The English language was considered an uncultivated language who belonged to the inferior classes and the aristocracy and court nobility were, thus, quite indifferent towards it (Baugh and Cable 112).

2   Chronology of French vocabulary introduction and its evolution

The change in language brought by the Norman Conquest was not rapid nor sudden, it took many years and various contributing events in order to observe the huge influence and massive influx of French vocabulary that was inserted into the English language.

However, due to the geographically proximity and commercial reasons there were already some contact in between these languages with the result of word-borrowing before 1066 (Algeo 254).

Nonetheless, if the introduction of French vocabulary into English is analysed, two distinctive periods can be distinguished: The First Period, from 1066 to 1250 and the Second Period, from 1250 to 1400. In the following sections these periods will be examined along with the evolution after the year 1400.

2.1   First period (1066-1250)

In general terms, during this first period French was the language used by the upper classes and English was used among the lower ones, except for the children of mixed upper-class marriages, who were most surely able to communicate in both languages. Only when situations that required interaction between the classes was French learnt by the lower classes; for instance, knowledge of both languages was a given for merchants or people who trade goods among the different social strata. Likewise, the clergy and churchmen knew how to speak both languages, since they communicated with the

churchgoers in English, as there were many peasants and common people who did not know any French. (Baugh and Cable 111-119).

The year 1204 marks the loss of Normandy by King John, which forced him to turn exclusively to English internal affairs and forget about continental matters. This fact required the nobility to choose their loyalty to a territory, either Normandy, where they usually came from, or England, their new territory. (Baugh and Cable 123). The hostilities between these two countries increased, and a nationalist feeling was beginning to spark among the upper classes, who also bore witness to un upcoming influx of foreigners, who came to England during the reign of Henry III (1216-1272). These nationalist movement started to prompt the upper classes to use the English language as a reaction against the French, as a way to increase and exacerbate the schism among them. (Baugh and Cable 127).

2.2   Second period (1250-1400)

The main characteristic of this second period is the extensive number of French words that started to infiltrate into English, countless more than during the first period. Children of the upper classes were more native English speakers who were instructed in French than native French speakers, and by that time numerous manuals for learning French started to appear (Baugh and Cable 130). It was then that literature started to be produced in English and French became more of a second language. *"French was not the vernacular language in the 13th century England, it was the language of court and official matters".* (Rothwell qtd. in Baugh and Cable 131).

Altogether, the reestablishment of English was prompted by several factors: The animosity towards France and the rise of English patriotism, since France and England were at war (The Hundred Years War from 1337-1453); along with the factor that French spoken in England, mentioned as Anglo-Norman, Anglo-French, or insular French, was not the same French that was spoken in Paris, or the Central French dialect. Anglo-Norman French was considered to be of an inferior quality compared to Central French, so it was

sometimes shameful for English people to speak "bad French" (Baugh and Cable 135).

The rise of a middle class was also a contributing factor to the expansion of the English language. Among other reasons, this was due to the death toll that the Plague, also known as the Black Death, left in England. Its first recorded cases date back to 1348, and due to worst hygienic and living conditions, the lower classes endured a higher death toll than the aristocracy. This created a shortage of labour, and to maintain the workers, the nobility had to yield to their demands, meaning higher wages, which prompted the emergence of a middle class. (Baugh and Cable 137).

By the end of the 14th century, it can be observed how English had already conquered many sectors of public life. In 1362 The Statue of Pleading was enacted, enabling the legal procedures to take place in English, and the opening of a Parliament in English that same year (Durkin 231). In 1385 English as a vehicular language in schools was a general practice and the artificial maintenance of French of the 13th and 14th century was coming to an end.

2.3 From 1400 onwards

French started to gradually disappear, and by the 15th century English was increasingly spoken in formal affairs. By the year 1500 most significant borrowing from French had occurred (Durkin 225). During the reign of Henry IV (1413-1422) English writing and English literature was progressively becoming more popular, only competing with Latin, and not with French.

It can be said that after consolidating the changes that gave place to Middle English, French or Anglo-Norman French was no longer used, or at least no longer had the importance that it once had. It had a key role in transforming and developing the English language, but once instated, English recovered in full force to be used by all its inhabitants.

It is worth noting that commerce and affairs were still taken place in between these two countries, so there are some borrowing and loans that

continue to take place over the next centuries, such as *ballet*, *cigarette,* or *camouflage* (Algeo 257).

3   Lexical and morphological analysis

There are several recordings of the number of French vocabulary in use over a certain period of time, such as that the research conducted by Otto Jespersen in 1905 and replicated again by Baugh in "*The Chronology of French Loanwords in English"* in 1935, where the conclusion was reaffirmed and acknowledged how great the influence of French vocabulary was during the so called second period.

Rothwell argues that the exchange between English and Anglo Norman was to some extent mutual:

> *That in literally thousands of cases forms and meanings were adopted (not 'borrowed') into English from Insular, as opposed to Continental, French. The relationship of Anglo-French with Middle English was one of merger, not of borrowing, as a direct result of the bilingualism of the literate classes in mediaeval England* (Rothwell 174).

Baugh and Cable remarked the massive introduction of French words. It is theorised that English may have lacked many terms that up until then were only recorded in French; or that people tended to mix both languages; or that French words entered naturally in the speech of bilingual speakers. Nonetheless, the impact of French in rural or domestic words is barely noticeable, whereas in other areas, such as in law or the military, the borrowing is extensive (Baugh and Cable 164).

There are some differences between the borrowings from Anglo-Norman French and those borrowed from Central French. For instance, this fact can be detected in phonology and pronunciation.

For example, in the early borrowings from Anglo Norman, it can be observed the preservation of the pronunciation of the grapheme "ch" pronounced as / tʃ /, which later developed into / ʃ / in Central Modern and French. The same phenomenon occurred with the pronunciation of Anglo Norman / dʒ / and its evolution in French as / ʒ /. The pronunciation of /w/ into Central French became /gu/ and /kw/ progressed into /k/. Another singularity was or the retention of the

initial "ca-"that was transformed to "cha-" in Central French (Baugh and Cable 170). Table 1. depicts this information:

Anglo-Norman French	Central French
Cauldron	*Chaudron*
Wasp	*Guepe*
Quit /kwɪt/	*Quitter* /kite/
Chant /tʃɑːnt/	*Chanter* /ʃɑ̃te/

Table 1 (Compilation based on Baugh and Cable 170).

In Table 2. examples of French words that were incorporated into English are displayed:

From the First Period (1066-1250)	*Baron, noble, juggler, servant.*
Governmental and Administrative words	*Parliament, treason, warden.*
Ecclesiastical words	*Chaplain, abbess, prayer.*
Legal and words used in Law	*Plaintiff, judge, warrant.*
Military	*Peace, army, garrison, sergeant.*
Social life	*Crystal, plate, leisure.*
Art and Medicine	*Image, cathedral, pestilence.*

Table 2 (Compilation based on Baugh and Cable 164-169).

3.1   Assimilation, derivatives, and doublets.

The process of assimilation of new French Vocabulary into English gave place to different phenomena given the context of language contact. It resulted in different outcomes when French words were introduced and there already was an English word that conveyed the same meaning.

One consequence would be the loss of one of the words, for example OE *sibb* in favour of the word *peace.* Other possible outcome was that both words could be maintained but with a slightly change of meaning, for example OE *house* and French origin word *mansion* (Baugh and Cable 174).

The process of assimilation could be perceived in the rapid formation of derivatives from words that came from French. The adding of French suffix *-tion*

to convert verbs to nouns, or other suffixes of French origin as *-able, -ence, -ity* or French prefixes such *as -de, dis-, pre-* to form derivatives, soon became naturalised. (Cannon 97).

It is worth mentioning the formation and maintenance of doublets or even triplets in English, mostly in legal terms. It is believed that the Anglo-Norman French word was officially used, and the English term was added to clarify in case someone did not understand the French word. This practice is still currently used: *Keep and maintain, goods and chattels* (Crystal 53).

3.2   Latin and French

The Medieval linguistic situation in England encompassed three main languages: English, Anglo-Norman French, and Latin (Baugh and Cable 119). The specific use of each language was often dependant on the socio-linguistic context. For instance: ecclesiastical matters, and many written church reports were usually found in Latin, whereas trade or courtly affairs were often found in Anglo-Norman French. It was not unusual that in those contexts a situation of diglossia or even triglossia was formed (Durkin 235).

Discovering if the etymology of a given English word, is either from Latin or from French, is something that still today could not be completely ascertained. The Latin etymology could be identifiable if we have knowledge of a word that emerged earlier in English than in French (Baugh and Cable 224), or the French etymology when the word does not exist in Latin, or if the word itself indicates French borrowing. It could also be the case that a French word, initially borrowed from Latin, has undergone some typical changes in French and English adopted this modified French word (Durkin 241).

In Table 3. an example of this situation is provided, where the English word *peace* probably derives from Anglo-Norman French *pes/paix*, rather than from Latin pax/pace, even though Latin was the source of the Anglo-Norman French word (Durkin 237). The same situation arises with the English word *course*:

Latin	Anglo-Norman French	English
Pax/Pac	*Pes/ Paix*	*Peace*
Cursus	*Cours*	*Course*

Table 3 (Compilation based on Durkin 237).

Lastly, simultaneous borrowing from both languages, Latin and French, could result in three different words which developed a slightly different meaning (Crystal 176), as displayed in Table 4:

From Latin	From Anglo-Norman French	From Old English
Interrogate	*Question*	*Ask*

Table 4 (Compilation based on Crystal 176).

In conclusion, the objective of everything that has been presented so far, is to provide an appropriate background to understand the following analysis of the excerpts of English literary texts.

PART II: Analysis of French Vocabulary in English Literature

Literature has been present in all ages of human history, and it has undergone many changes along with the trends that governed during a particular period. For instance, the Old English fashion of using the Alliterative Verse in Epic poems, started to be replaced by the trend of writing about chivalry in prose in the Medieval Romance, given the historic circumstances and societal conditions that were present after the Norman Conquest.

The second part of this paper will deal with the analysis of French words in English literary pieces from the 14th century onwards. There are two reasons why earlier works should not be used for the analysis: firstly, the wider availability of different genres and styles of literature after the 14th century; and on the other hand, it is interesting to start analysing French influence after the English language was brought back as national language (de la Concha et al. 62).

Nonetheless, it is interesting to mention the state of literature between the 11th-13th centuries. As it has already been remarked, the newly introduced Norman nobility in the 11th and 12th century spoke French, and since it was considered the language of the gentry, various works of literature during these centuries were produced in French or Anglo-Norman French. For example, the first romance about King Arthur was written by Robert Wace in Anglo-Norman French in 1155, *Roman de Brut,* which was soon translated to English by Layamon in 1190 (de la Concha et al. 47). They coexisted with the manuals written in Latin by the Church, also used as a European *lingua franca*, as well as fine pieces in Middle English (de la Concha et al. 63). Due to the orality component of traditional English literary poems of the time, we do not have access to as many written pieces as from the 14th century onwards, likewise scribes versed in the art of transcription were scarce. Nevertheless, some fine instances of Middle English pieces from these centuries can be found, such as the poem of *The Owl and the Nightingale*.

Then again, before proceeding with the analysis, two examples of written texts will be reproduced, in order to show the different languages spoken in England in the 12ᵗʰ century, and their possible interaction afterwards.

One of the authors from that period who wrote in Anglo-Norman French, was **Marie de France** (ca.1160-1215), who was believed to be a French woman who lived in England. She wrote the short romance *The Lays and the Fables* in Anglo-Norman French, following the tradition of the *Breton lai*, see fig.1 for a sample photo of the actual written text:
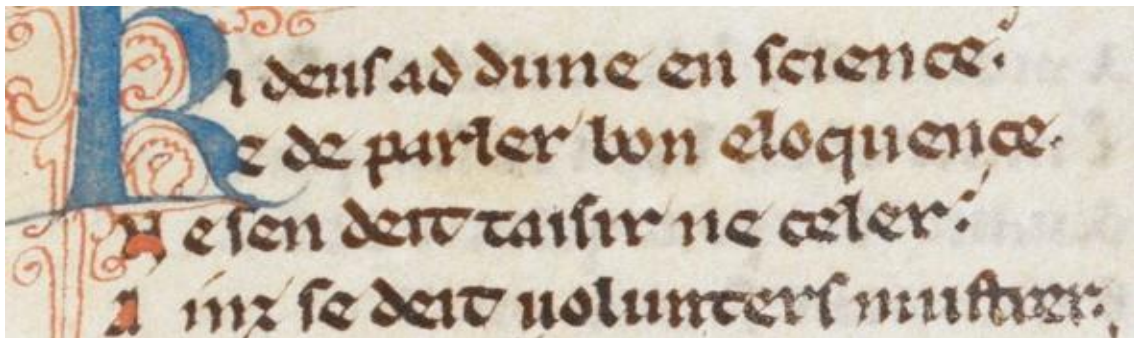

Fig. 1. The British Library; "The Lays and Fables of Marie de France" https://www.bl.uk/collection-items /the-lays-and-fables-of-marie-de-france

Ki Deu ad dune escïence
E de parler bon' eloquence
Ne s'en deit taisir ne celer
Ainz se deit voluntees mustrer

[He to whom God has given knowledge
And the gift of speaking eloquently
Must not keep silent or conceal the gift
But he must willingly display it][1]

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[1] The British Library; "The Lays and Fables of Marie de France" https://www.bl.uk/collection-items /the-lays-and-fables-of-marie-de-france

On the other hand, ***The Peterborough Chronicle***, a continuation of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle,* produced in the 12th century and written in Middle English is a fine example of a written Middle English text (Guarddon 131):

Ða þe king Stephne to Englaland com, þa macod he his gadering æt Oxeneford.
And þar he nam þe biscop Roger of Sereberi, and Alexander biscop of Lincol and te canceller
Roger, hise neves, and died ælle in prison til hi iafen up here castles.

[When King Stephen came to England, he held his council at Oxford. And there he arrested Roger, Bishop of Salisbury, and Alexander, Bishop of Lincoln and Chancellor Roger, his nephews, and he put them all in prison until they surrendered their castles.]

1 A voyage through literary texts from the XIV-XVII centuries.

In the following section, literary texts from the 14th to the 17th centuries are going to be analysed, with the aim of finding the words that derived from French, to examine the impact that this language had on English vocabulary in these examples of literature. The procedure is as follows: a randomly selected paragraph will be reproduced, and the French words will be identified and marked in bold characters. Then its origins will be investigated. In order to carry that task, some online dictionaries have been used: The Etymological Online Dictionary, The Anglo-Norman Dictionary, The Oxford English Dictionary (with limited access) and the Middle English Dictionary. Consequently, all the information provided on each word comes from these sources. Lastly, if there are words that are not easily discernible in Modern English, their modern form and their evolution will be revealed. This phenomenon occurs in the first three texts, since a translation is shown in order to facilitate the understanding of the excerpt.

1.1 *The Canterbury Tales* Geoffrey Chaucer

The Canterbury Tales was written by Geoffrey Chaucer (ca. 1342-1400). It is a collection of stories written over a period of fourteen years and it is considered a masterpiece of English medieval literature. The fact that was written in English, specifically in Middle English of a London dialect, is of significant

relevance to this project, since it allows the analysis of the vocabulary that was in use during that time. The chosen excerpt is taken from *"The Miller's Tale"*. The excerpt will be analysed in the original Middle English and the modern translation will be provided to aid the overall understanding of the text.

*Whan that she may hir **leyser** wel **espie**.*
*"Myn housbonde is so ful of **jalousie***
*That but ye **wayte** wel and been **privee**,*
I woot right wel I nam but deed," quod she.
*"Ye moste been ful deerne, as in this **cas**."*

When she may well espy her opportunity.
"My husband is so full of jealousy
That unless you wait patiently and are secretive,
I know right well I am as good as dead," said she.
"You must been very secret in this matter."[2]

To proceed with the etymological analysis of the words from the excerpt, firstly words from French origin must be identified, then its etymology is analysed and if the word is still in use in Modern English, its evolution will be indicated:

- **Leyser:** Noun, meaning opportunity, occasion as well as leisure. It can also be found as *leisir, laisir, loiser*, etc. According to the Anglo-Norman Dictionary it was first recorded in 1121-25. It is a word derived from Old French *leisir*, variant of *loisir.* Its modern English word would be *leisure*; however, it does not carry the meaning of *opportunity* anymore. The evolution of the written word was probably due to the analogy with similar words such as *pleasure* and *measure*, the *u* was added in the 16th century.

- **Espie:** Verb, but it could also be a noun, etymologically derived from Anglo-French or Continental French *espier*, meaning to observe. Also written *aspie*. It was first recorded ca. 1335. Its modern form is *to spy*: the initial *e-* was lost and the final *-ie* changed to *-y*, probably due to the spelling reforms that occurred in the 16th century, maybe by influence of the works of Richard

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Mulcaster, who claimed that when the i sound was loud it should be spelled -*y*. (Baugh and Cable 210).

- **Jalousie:** Noun, with multiple different written forms such as *jelousi, geloussie,* etc, from Old French *jalos/gelos.* First recorded ca. 13th century, in the context of romance. J*ealousy* also carried the meaning of spying through blind without being seen. However, this definition is no longer in use. In its modern form *jealousy*, the final -*y* probably changed as explained in the previous word.

- **Wayte:** Verbal form of *wayten*, also *gaiten,* meaning to keep watch. From Old North French *waiter* and Old French *gaiter*. It was first recorded ca. 1200. Its modern verbal form is *to wait.* It seems that the final -*e* could have been lost with the spelling changes that took place with Caxton's introduction of printing in England, since the French influence made that "e" silent, and thus unnecessary. This final -*e* was, nonetheless, most likely pronounced at the early stages of Middle English.

- **Privee:** Adjective, meaning secret, concealed, first recorded in the 12th c. from Old French *privé* according to the AND, but also could derive from Latin *privatus*, according to the Etymological Dictionary. Its modern form is *privy,* even though it has been widely displaced by the synonym *private,* since privy's other meaning is *toilet*, probably because of the secrecy that involved the treatment of the bodily affairs.

- **Cas:** Noun, from early 13th c., meaning situation or state of affairs, from Old French *cas*, or from Latin *casus*. Its modern form is spelled *case*, probably this change of spelling was brought by the change in pronunciation from the Great Vowel Shift, where the long vowel /ɑː/ changed to the diphthong /eɪ/. The final -e was probably added with the spelling reforms in the 16th century, where it was recommended to place an -*e* at the end of the word to indicate the presence of a preceding long vowel.

The rest of the words from the text are mostly derived from Old English: adjectives (*wel, ful*), verbs such as the form *woot* derived from *witen*, and the noun *housbonde*.

As we can observe in this excerpt, most single words are still from Old English. However, we can see the influence of French on the text, since out of thirty-three words, not counting repeated words, six were of French origin. But if we were to focus only on nouns, adjectives, and verbs, that number and percentage would clearly increase. See Fig. 2:
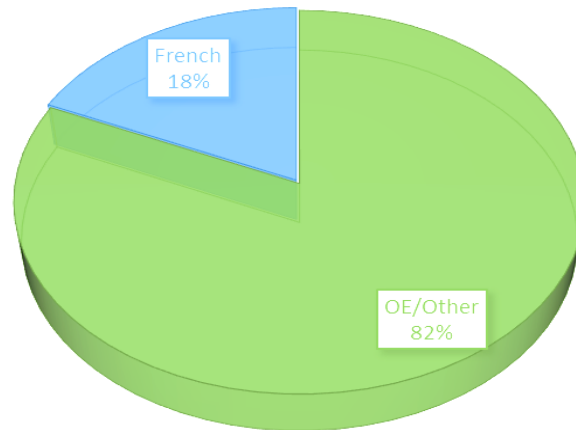

Fig. 2

1.2   *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* Anonymous

Sir Gawain and the Green Knight was written ca.1375-1400 by an unknown poet, and it is a romance poem belonging to the Alliterative Revival. The following extract is originally in Middle English, and a Modern English translation is provided:

<div align="center">

Passus I

*SIÞEN þe **sege** and þe **assaut** watz **sesed** at Troye,*

Þe borȝ brittened and brent to brondeȝ and askez,

*Þe tulk þat þe **trammes** of **tresoun** þer wroȝt*

*Watz **tried** for his **tricherie**, þe trewest on erthe[3]*

Since the siege and the assault was ceased at Troy,

The *walls* breached and burnt down to brands and ashes,

The *knight* that had knotted the nets of deceit

</div>

---

[3] Sir Gawain and the Green Knight
https://quod.lib.umich.edu/c/cme/Gawain/1:1?rgn=div1;view=fulltext

Was *impeached* for his perfidy, proven most true

- **Sege:** Noun, from Old French *sege/siege* meaning seat, throne and Latin *sedes*. To besiege, to siege are verbs that come from the same root, and the noun in the excerpt carries that meaning. First recorded in early 13th c., possibly from Old Northern French *segier*. Its military use comes from the idea of an army sitting down before a fortress. The current form of the word is *siege*, since *seat* in English derives from Old Norse *sæti,* even though it is possible that both words influenced each other.

- **Assaut:** Noun meaning attack, from Old French *assaut /asaut*, from Vulgar Latin *adsaltus*. Its modern form carries an "l", which according to the Etymological Online Dictionary was restored in the 16th c., probably in imitation of Latin, even though the "l" remained silent until the 18th century. Modern form is written *assault* and pronounced /əˈsɔːlt/.

- **Sesed:** Verb form in past participle, also written *ces, seys, sesse*, it comes from Old French *ces/cesse*, which means to stop, its modern form would be *ceased*. I would like to note that since the modern translation also uses this verb, I believe the meaning to be the one explained above, however, I doubted that it may be meaning *to seize* from Old French *seisir* meaning to take possession.

- **Trammes:** Plural form of the noun *tram* or *tramme*, from Old French *traime/trame* which according to the Middle English Dictionary means nautical gear or mechanical device. It could also derive from Old French *trammail* meaning fishnet. Its Modern English word today would be *trammel*, which is seldom used.

- **Tresoun:** Noun also recorded as *treisoun, traisun*, etc. It means betrayal or dishonesty. It comes from Old French *traison* and Anglo-French *traisun*. It was first recorded in the 13th century. Its modern written form is *treason,* the spelling probably changed to adapt to new writing reforms after the Great Vowel Shift, that made the vowel sound in the first syllable a long one.

- **Tried:** Past participle of the verb *trier*, meaning to examine, to try (as modern noun *trial*), from Old French *trier, triier* and Anglo-French *trier, triher, treier.* It has been in use since the 13th century with the meaning of *to choose*, and later, in the 14th and 15th centuries started being used with a legal meaning in court. Nowadays, *to be tried at court* maintains the same spelling in the past and past participle, however the infinitive takes the final *-y*, *to try*, probably due to the changes in spelling rules in the 16th century.

- **Tricherie:** Noun, meaning deceit or disloyalty, also written as *trecheri, t*reicherie, trischerie*, from Old French *tricherie, trecherie* and Anglo-French *treicherie, trischerie*. It has been recorded since the 12th century. Its Modern English form of the word is *treachery*. The spelling was probably changed in the 16th century, after the Great Vowel Shift and the spelling reforms. The modern translation uses the word *perfidy*, which also derived from French *perfidie* and Latin *perfidia*.

In conclusion, in this excerpt seven words of French origin are found, out of a total of twenty-eight words (not counting repeated words or proper nouns as Troya). Once again, this proportion of total French origin words increases if only adjectives, nouns or verbs are counted. Fig. 3 displays the percentage of the French etymology words out of the total sum:
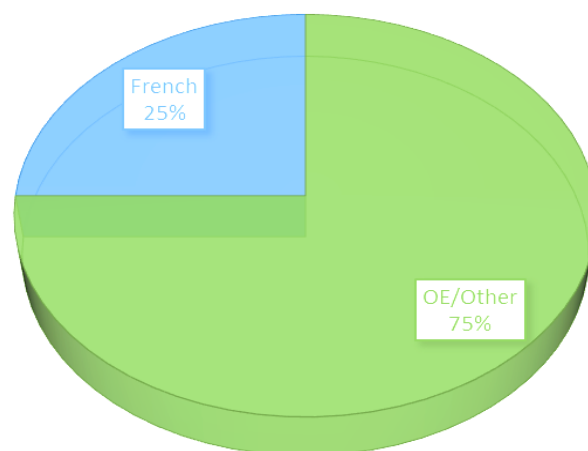

Fig. 3

1.3 *The Book of Margery Kempe* Margery Kempe

Margery Kempe, born ca. 1373-1438, was an Englishwoman whose record of her life are one of the first autobiographies preserved in the English language. The excerpt is taken from Book I part I:

*It befel upon a Fryday on Mydsomyr Evyn in rygth hot wedyr, as this **creatur** was komyng fro Yorkeward beryng a **botel** wyth bere in hir hand and hir husbond a cake in hys bosom, he askyd hys wyfe this **qwestyon**: [4]*

It befell upon a Friday on Midsummer Even in right hot weather, as this creature was coming from Yorkward bearing a bottle with beer in her hand and her husband a cake in his bosom, he asked his wife this question:

(Greenblatt et al. 385)

- **Creatur:** Noun, meaning person. Its modern form is creature. The word was introduced from Old French *creature* or Latin *creatura. Creature* is the current form of the word.

- **Botel:** Noun, first recorded in the 14th century, from Old French *boteille, botele.* In vulgar Latin it was named *butticula.* The modern written form is bottle. Its modern spelling is *bottle,* the doubling of the t was probably added to preserve the short pronunciation of the preceding vowel.

- **Qwestyon:** Noun, recorded since the 13th century, from Anglo-French *questiun* and Old French *question,* and Latin quaerere meaning to ask, seek. Its modern form is spelled *question*; however, it preserves the original Anglo-Norman pronunciation of */kw/: /ˈkwɛstʃən/.*

In this excerpt only three words from French origin are found out of a total of thirty-three words, which is one of the excerpts with less French origin words from all the texts. This may be due to the fact that the excerpt, written in a diary form, highlights life routines, which tend to be words with Old English roots.

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[4] The Book of Margery Kempe: Book I, Part I. Robbins Library Digital Projects (Rochester.edu): https://d.lib.rochester.edu/teams/text/staley-book-of-margery-kempe-book-i-part-i
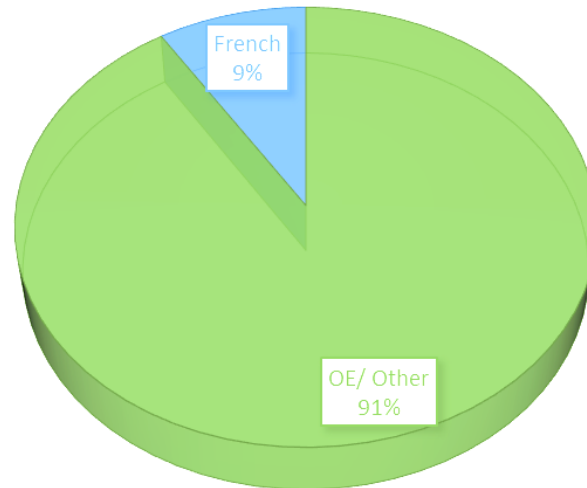
Fig. 4

1.4 *Farewell, Love* Sir Thomas Wyatt the Elder

Sir Thomas Wyatt the Elder (1503-1542) was a poet who lived and worked around the court of the unpredictable King Henry VIII. Wyatt was credited with introducing the sonnet into English (NA 593) and the following lines belong to the beginning of the sonnet "Farewell, Love":

Farewell, Love, and all thy laws forever,
Thy baited hooks shall tangle me no more;
Senec and Plato call me from thy lore,
*To **perfect** wealth my wit for to **endeavour.***

(Greenblatt et al. 596)

- **Perfect:** Noun, meaning flawless. It derived from Old French *parfit, parfet, parfait*, *perfect* and/or Latin *perfectus*. According to the AND it was first recorded as *parfit* in the 12th century, and in the 15th century it underwent a classical correction of the Middle English term *parfit*.

- **Endeavour:** Noun, meaning an effort to attain something, which according to the Etymological Online Dictionary, was first recorded in the early 15th century and derived from the Old French phrase *mettre en deveir* (to put in duty) from Old French *dever* and Latin *debere.* Endeavour literally means "in duty".

In this first stanza of the poem, we only encounter two words of French origin, whereas the majority derived from Old English or Old Norse such as *baite.* As shown in fig.5, it can be observed how in these lines the French influence in vocabulary is scarce. Out of twenty-four words (not including repeated words or proper nouns) only two are of French origin.
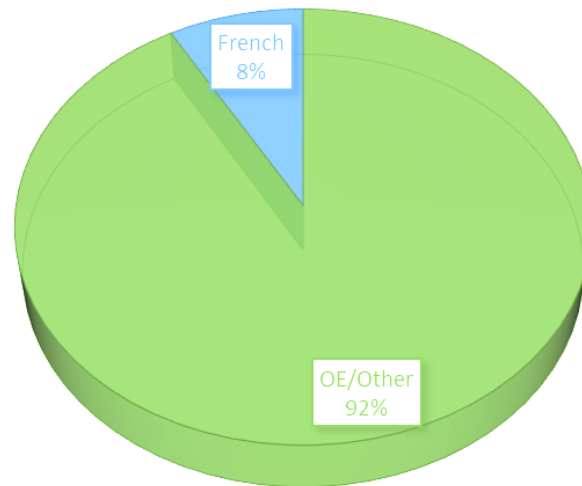
Fig. 5

1.5   *Macbeth* William Shakespeare

William Shakespeare (1564-1616) needs no introduction. It is the most well-known playwright worldwide, and most of his plays are still being represented in theatres on a regular basis. Mostly known by works such as *Romeo and Juliet* or *Hamlet*, he also wrote countless sonnets. Shakespeare is credited with the introduction of many words in the English language. The next excerpt belongs to the play *Macbeth*:

<div align="center">

MACBETH
*Into the **air; and what seem'd **corporal** melted*
*As breath into the wind. Would they had **stay'd**!*
BANQUO
Were such things here as we do speak about?
Or have we eaten on the insane root

</div>

- **Air:** Noun, meaning atmosphere gases that surround the Earth, taken from Old French *air, aire*, and from Latin *aer,* which at the same time came from the Greek word *aer* meaning haze, or clouds, and later atmosphere.

- **Corporal:** Adjective, meaning physical or belonging to the body. It was first used in the late 14th century. It derived from Old French *corporal/corporel* and from Latin *corporalis*, from *corpus* (body).

- **Stay'd:** Verb in past tense of infinitive to stay, meaning to cease going forwards. It comes from Old French *estare* meaning to stay or to stand, and from Latin *stare*. First used around mid-15th century. Nowadays, the written form is to add *-ed* to form the past or past participle of verb to stay (stayed). However, in Shakespeare's time it usual to mark with an apostrophe instead of using the letter *e*, probably to signal that the -e was not to be fully pronounced.

- **Reason:** Noun, meaning the intellectual capacity, originally from Old French or Continental French *raison, raisson, reisson, resson, reson* and Anglo-French *resoun, raisun*. According to the AND first used in the 12th century.

- **Prisioner:** Noun, meaning a captive person, first recorded in the 13th century. It derived from Old French *prisonier* and Medieval Latin *prisonarius.*

The word *insane* is found in the text and deserves a special mention, since at first sight may seem a word derived from any form of French. However, according to the Etymological Online Dictionary, the etymology is of Latin origin *insanus.* In order to count only the words from French origin, this word would not be counted as from French origin. However, it is important to highlight that it comes from Latin. In this text, out of thirty-three words, five were of French origin mostly adjectives, nouns, and verbs.

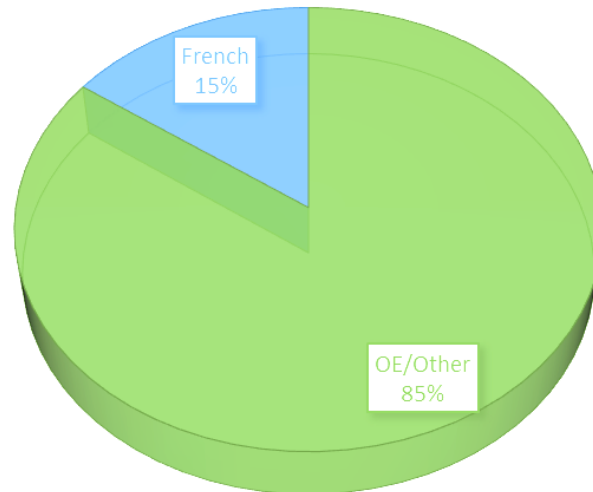[5] Macbeth: Entire Play (mit.edu) http://shakespeare.mit.edu/macbeth/full.html

1.6   *From Annus Mirabilis* John Dryden

John Dryden (1631-1700) was poet and playwright, when England was under the historical moment of the Interregnum and the Restoration of the Stuart Monarchy in 1660. His poems are known to be social and ceremonial character, written not for the self, but for the nation; and they usually depicted public, important events for the society in which he lived. (NA 2083). The following excerpt is taken from the beginning of the poem Annus Mirabilis (1667):

> *Yet London, **empress** of the northern **clime**,*
> *By an high **fate** thou greatly didst **expire**;*
> *Great as the world´s, which at the death of time*
> *Must fall, and rise a **nobler** frame by fire.*

(Greenblatt et al. 2085)

- **Empress**: Noun, meaning a female ruler or consort of the emperor. The word was first used on record as of mid-12th century Middle English and Anglo-Norman *emperice* or *emperesse,* from Old French *emperesse* or *empereris*.

- **Clime:** Noun, from late 14th century, shortening form of *climate*, that originated from Old French *climat*, meaning region or part of the Earth, from Latin *clima*, and Greek *klima*, also meaning region.

- **Fate:** Noun, meaning destiny, from Old French *fate* and directly from Latin *fatum* in its singular form and *fata* in its plural form. This term was first recorded in late 14th century.

- **Expire:** Verb, first recorded around the beginning of the 15th century, meaning *to die*. It derives from Old French *expirer* and from Latin *expirare/exspirare*.

- **Nobler:** Adjective in a comparative form. Its usage is recorded since the 13th century, and it means of distinguished birth. From Old French *noble* and Latin *nobilis*.

In conclusion, out of twenty-eight words (excluding proper names as London, and repeated words), five words were of French origin. Fig. 7 depicts these percentages:

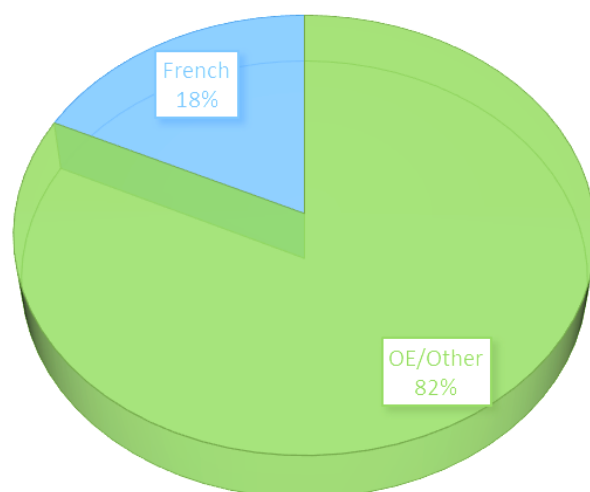French
18%

OE/Other
82%

Fig. 7

2   A contemporary literary text

After this remarkable voyage of the analysis of literary texts from the 14th to the 17th, I would like to analyse an extract from a piece of contemporary English literature. I have chosen the narrative book *How to be both*, written by Ali Smith and published in 2014. It was the winner of the 2015 Women's Prize for Fiction.

Smith was born in Inverness in 1962, and her style has been defined as challenging and unconventional, as it is well appreciated in this book.

The purpose of analysing a contemporary text is to corroborate if the French influence in vocabulary is still as present in literature as it was in the other analysed texts. The following excerpt was randomly selected, and it is reproduced as in the original:

> *There's an **advert** on **TV** right now for life*
> *assurance and someone's dressed up as a plague*
> *<u>victim</u> in that, **because** the **advert** wants to <u>suggest</u>*
> *that its life **assurance company** has been **around** for*
> *<u>centuries</u> and that nothing's not **insurable**.*

(Smith 139)

- **Advert:** Noun, shortening of advertisement for the print abbreviation. It has the original meaning of a public notice, and it comes from the Old French word *avertissement*, from *avertir* meaning to make aware. It was later respelled as *advertissement*, it is recorded since the 15th century.

- **TV:** Noun, shortened form of television. The first time it was spelled as TV is set on 1948. Television comes from the French *télévision* (1907), a compound word formed uniting tele- + vision.

- **Assurance:** Noun, from Old French *asseurance* from *asseurer* to render sure. Middle English forms include *assuraunce* and *aseuraunce*. It has been recorded since the 13th century.

- **Dressed:** From ca. 1300, from the Old French verb *dresser/ drecier*, meaning to arrange or set the table/food. The sense of decorate is from the late 14th century and dress up as meaning to put on one's best clothing dates from 1670s. In the text, the meaning is that of putting on a costume, which is more recent.

- **Plague:** Noun, dating from the 14th century meaning calamity or evil, from early 15th century meaning disease, from Old French *plage*, from Late Latin *plaga*.

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- **Plague:** Noun, dating from the 14th century meaning calamity or evil, from early 15th century meaning disease, from Old French *plage*, from Late Latin *plaga*.

- **Because:** Conjunction, formed from *bi + cause*, modelled after the French *par cause*. It dates from the late 14th century.

- **Company:** Noun, used since the mid-12th century, from Old French *compagnie* from late Latin *companio*, meaning a group of people. By the year 1550 it developed a commercial sense of business association referring to the trade guilds.

- **Around:** Adverb formed by two elements: prefix *a-* of Germanic Old English origin and adjective *round,* from Anglo- French *rounde*, from Old French *roont*, from Latin *rotundus.* Around is rare to find before the 1600s.

- **Insurable:** Adjective formed by the verb *insure* from Anglo-French *enseurer*, from Old French *ensurer* meaning to make sure (*en-+ seur, sur*). It was also spelled in the 15th century as *insuren* or *ensuren*. The commercial meaning to ensure against a loss is from the mid- 17th century. The added suffix -able is a common to form adjectives, which adds the meaning of capability. This suffix comes from the French *-able* and Latin *-abilis.*

In this contemporary text, it is extraordinary the number of words of French origin. It is also relevant that three words, which are underlined, derive etymologically from Latin (victim, suggest and centuries). It leaves this small excerpt with a smaller percentage of Old English words than usual, and these are the ones pertaining to the grammatical category of pronouns or auxiliary verbs. Out of thirty-four words, excluding repeated ones, nine are of French origin and three of Latin origin. Fig. 8 displays this proportion:
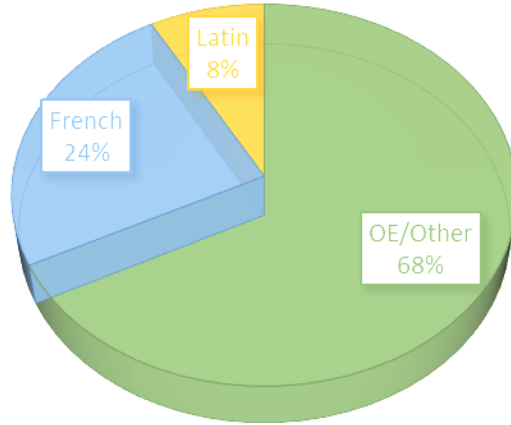
Fig. 8

CONCLUSIONS

As stated in the introductory section of this paper, the main objective of this final degree project was to prove and display the impact of the French language on English vocabulary, focusing on literary texts from different centuries.

First of all, it is important to acknowledge its own limitations. The literary extracts that have been analysed are very short in extension and therefore, it may not be completely representative of the whole literary piece. Secondly, these are literary texts, and as it has already been explained, French had a more meaningful impact on some fields of vocabulary, such as law, trade, or military so if this Final Degree Project would have analysed legal text, the percentage of the final results may have varied. And lastly, as it has been remarked, usually only the privileged had access to literary education and writing, thus, it may not be entirely representative of the kind of vocabulary the general masses were using in that particular moment in history.

Despite that, I think it is safe to affirm that some clear conclusions can be drawn regarding the influence of French in Middle English. Languages do not change in a course of a year, and French or Anglo-Norman needed some time to start infiltrating all social strata of English society. Therefore, the evident change from Old English to Middle English is not a clear-cut one, but the introduction of Anglo-Norman French due to the Norman Conquest accelerated the process of change that Old English was experimenting.

Literary works in English dating from the 11th to the 13th century are scarce, this is due to the possibility of them not surviving to the present day and also because the literature written in England in those centuries was most certainly written in French or Anglo-Norman French.

Due to this fact, the analysis of the texts starts from Chaucer in the 14th century. The analysis of the number of words derived from any kind of French (Old French, Anglo-Norman or Continental) in the literary excerpts that were presented, leads to the conclusion that French impacted mostly on lexical categories that carry most semantic content such as nouns, adjectives, and

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verbs. French has shown to have little impact in auxiliary verbs, pronouns and adverbs in the analysed extracts, whose etymology is usually Germanic (Old English/Old Norse). It is also worth noting that nouns and verbs used to describe the basic and most familiar words, like those relating to daily activities, weather, home items, family, and body parts, were basically English.

For instance, in the text of Margery Kempe, words relating to the categories above mentioned, can easily be found: *husbond, wyfe, cake, bosom, Fryday*. Words in equal circumstances can be observed in the rest of the excerpts: *Erthe* in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight;* we encounter *housbonde* again in Chaucer's text; Dryden's mention of *northern clime, death*; Shakespeare's *wind, eaten* or *speak*; or the words *forever* and l*ore* in the poem *Farewell, Love*, can all support the premise aforementioned.

In order to obtain a more visual depiction of the influence of French on English on these texts, figure 8 displays this situation in a multi-variable graphic where the first column displays words from Old English or other etymological sources and the second one those from French. The colour orange refers to the words belonging to the categories of nouns, adjectives, and verbs (excluding auxiliaries), and the yellow colour depicts all the other categories:
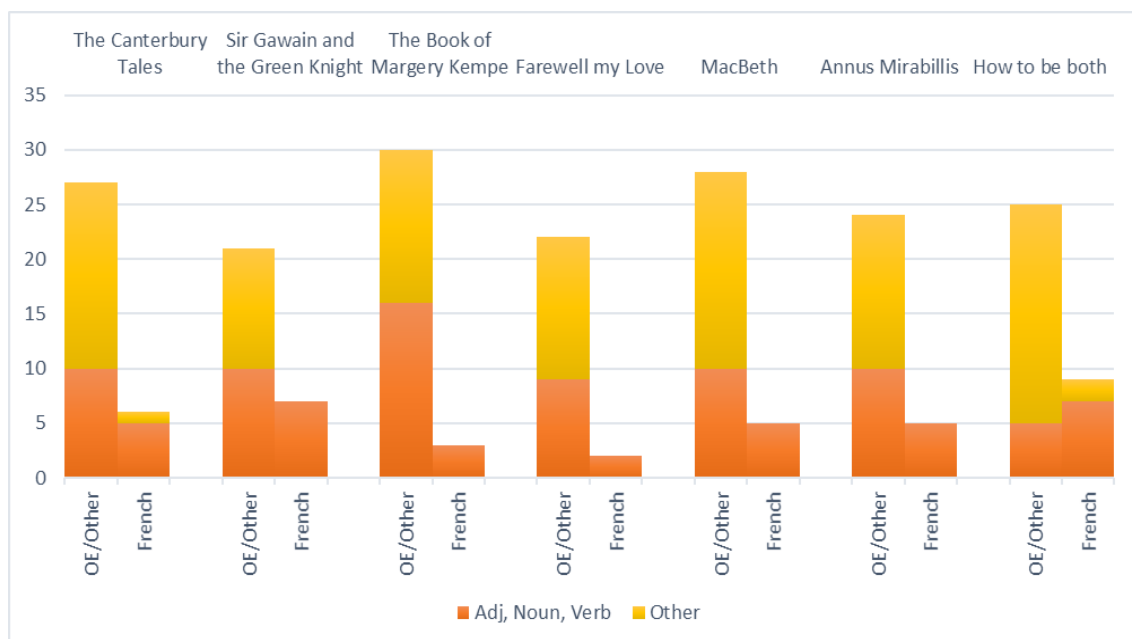

Fig. 9

As it can be seen more specifically on this graphic, and all along this Final Degree Project, French proves to be quite an important source of etymological origin on English vocabulary overall. It can be observed in all those texts from the 14th to the 17th century and even in contemporary literature, that words derived from French is a constant in all the texts and it has been maintained through the centuries. This is especially visible on the last text, which belongs to a contemporary literary writing from 2014, where words derived from French can still be identified proving that the mutual influence has never stopped.

To conclude, the impact of French on English vocabulary is well reflected in these short excerpts, and if these data that was obtained is to be extrapolated to vocabulary found in any general text, we may find slightly different results but overall, the same conclusion.

I would like to end with a quote that I think that wonderfully interprets this final graphic, which is that albeit French is proven a very important source of vocabulary, it should not be forgotten that "*The language that the Normans and their successors finally adopted was English (…) and (..) its predominant features were those inherited from the Germanic tribes that settled in England in the fifth century".* (Baugh and Cable 179).

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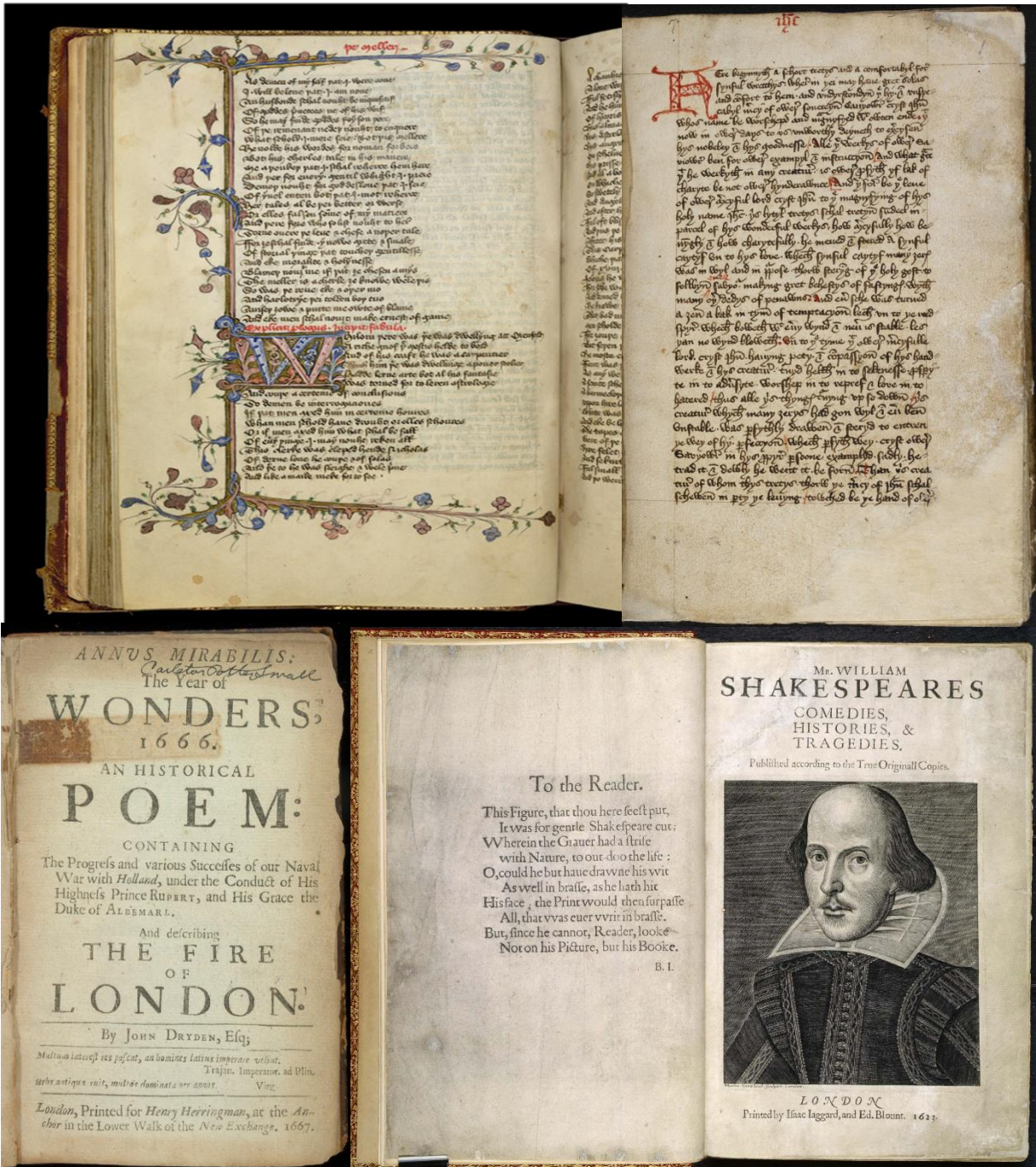
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ANNEX: Photos from analysed literary works