**‘Bashfulnesse is banished’: passive constructions as a gateway to state-incorporation in Old French and Middle English contact**

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This talk presents the results of a diachronic corpus study on the integration of French verbal copies into the semantic and syntactic structure of Middle and Early Modern English. We test the hypothesis that the non-finite accommodation bias for French verbs reported by Shaw & De Smet (2022) is due to an overreliance on passivation of French verbs.

 We argue that the passive construction facilitates the integration of French verbal copies because of semantic and syntactic similarity. Struik, Kaltenbach & Trips (2023) show that (transitive) French verbs mostly contribute verbs which encode an end-state and add a novel way to express state in English, which was originally typically expressed by secondary predication, or one-argument predicates, such as unaccusatives or passives. Passives in Old English are ambiguous between adjectival or eventive readings, and are frequently stative in interpretation, as in (1) (cf. Toyota 2008).

 (1) Þær wæron **gehælede** [...] fela adlige menn

there were   healed many ill men

‘There many ailing men were healed.’

(ÆLS20.113, adapted from Jones & Macleod, 2016)

The use of a passive structure with French copies as in (2) is thus a good match with the native structure for two reasons: 1) it expresses a state, 2) it does so by means of a native structure, realizing an originally two-argument verb with only one argument.

(2) Al Troy is þus **destroyed**  
‘All Troy is thus destroyed’

(a1400(?a1350) Siege Troy(1) (Eg 2862)233, MED)

To support our hypothesis we rely on data from the Penn Parsed Corpus of Middle English 2 (Kroch & Taylor 2000), Parsed Corpus of Middle English Poetry (Zimmermann 2018) the Parsed Linguistic Atlas of early Middle English for Middle English (Truswell et al. 2019), and the Penn Parsed Corpus of Early Modern English (Kroch, Santorini, & Delfs 2004) for Early Modern English. We use the lemmatized versions (Percillier & Trips, 2020) and the lemma-based Manner/Result annotation by Struik, Kaltenbach & Trips (2023) to determine whether French Result verbs more frequently integrate in the passive compared to other verb types and tenses, and whether they do so at different rates compared to native verbs.

Our findings show two important things. First, French Result verbs occur significantly more frequently in the passive compared to French Manner verbs. Second, French Result verbs occur in the passive significantly more frequently than native Result verbs, whereas French Manner verbs occur in the passive at comparable frequencies to native Manner verbs. These findings suggest that the non-finite accommodation bias for loan verbs reported in Shaw & De Smet (2022) is not merely a strategy to avoid the morphological complexities of finiteness marking when using copied vocabulary, but that speakers are aware of the internal semantic and argument structural properties of both the source and donor language and that they aim to find the best structural match. Our findings furthermore suggest a diachronic consequence: the use of passives with native Result verbs, but crucially not Manner verbs, starts to increase after the Middle English period, suggesting a lasting impact of French on the native system.

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