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Contact-Induced Changes in the Argument Structure of Middle English Verbs on the Model of Old French

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Abstract

This paper investigates contact-induced changes in the argument structure of Middle English verbs on the model of Old French.[1] We study two issues: i) to what extent did the English system retain and integrate the argument structure of verbs copied from French? ii) did the argument structure of these copied verbs influence the argument structure of native verbs? Our study is based on empirical evidence from Middle English corpora as well as a full text analysis of the *Ayenbite of Inwyt* and focusses on a number of verbs governing a dative in French. In the first part of the paper we define the contact situation and relate it to Johanson's (2002) model of code copying. In the second part we comment on Allen's (1995) study of *please* and some other psych verbs and corroborate her assumptions that i) semantic similarity triggered change within the set of these verbs, and ii) this change has reflexes in the syntactic realisation of the dative argument as a prepositional phrase. We propose a method to identify contact-induced change beyond the verb class originally affected. More explicitly, based on further empirical evidence, we show that the argument structure of the native verb

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give, a transfer of possession verb, was also affected by these changes and that these effects are stronger in texts that are directly influenced by French.

Keywords

argument structure – code-copying – Old French – Middle English – psychological verbs – dative

1 Introduction

In his monograph on the acquisition of argument structure Pinker (1989: 45–47) discusses an interesting observation concerning double-object constructions in Present-Day English (PDE): following others he notes that dativizable verbs tend to be of native (Germanic) and not of Latin/Romance origin. This is why a verb like *give* exhibits both the double-object object form and the prepositional form whereas a verb like *donate* only exhibits the prepositional form. The examples in (1) adapted from Pinker illustrate this contrast:

(1) a. *John gave the museum the painting.*
b. *John gave the painting to the museum.*
c. *John donated the painting to the museum.*
d. **John donated the museum the painting.*

(cf. PINKER:1989: 45)

Pinker explains this contrast by taking a closer look at the development of English and by identifying two causes: the loss of case marking and language contact with French. By the end of the Middle English (ME) period the Old English (OE) case system was almost completely eroded. One consequence of this change was that the order V NP_{dat} NP_{acc}, which was more common in OE than the order V NP_{acc} NP_{dat} (cf. Visser, 1963–1973), now occurred as V NP_{Goal}[2] NP_{Theme} (and in some rare cases in the prepositional form V PP_{GOAL} NP_{THEME}), i.e. without case marking. In the fourteenth and fifteenth century many verbs copied from Old French (OF) entered ME. OF marked the GOAL-phrase with the preposition *a* 'to'. Many of these verbs became part of the lexical inventory and were assimilated into English. Often the prepositional phrase was translated in a one-to-one fashion and the preposition *to* was henceforth used to mark

2 We follow Pinker here and use GOAL as the semantic role of the indirect object.

the GOAL argument. Thus, verbs like *donate*[3] came into English and retained their French argument structure.

Much has been written on lexical borrowing (copying) in the language contact situation between Middle English and Old French from 1066 to 1400 (e.g. Rothwell, 1980, 1983; Burnley, 1992; Hogg, 2000) and many papers have described and commented on the loss of the English case system (e.g. Hogg, 1992; Mossé, 1991). Among these, Allen's (1995) seminal work is of particular interest to us because she is one of the few authors who describe semantic and syntactic changes between OE and ME within verb classes, and who also relate them in part to French influence, for example changes in the class of experiencer verbs (see section 4.1). But despite Pinker's and Allen's intriguing observations no study so far has explicitly investigated contact-induced changes on the level of argument structure in a comprehensive way, and more precisely, the copying of French verbs into English and its syntactic and semantic consequences.

In this paper, we are going to introduce a method which identifies instances of this type of copying. The questions we seek to answer by applying this method are: i) to what extent did the English system retain and integrate the argument structure of verbs copied from French? ii) did the argument structure of these verbs influence the argument structure of native verbs, and if so to what extent (for a similar approach see Holler, 2015)? Building on Johanson's (2002) notion of code-copying and on lexical-semantic theories stating that semantic verb classes share syntactic properties (Levin and Rappaport Hovav, 2005), the second question posed extends the scope from copied verbs to native verbs in order to find out whether the syntactic pattern has influenced the grammar of English independently of the copied form.

This paper discusses a small-scale study of the copying of argument structure of OF psych verbs, and we are going to focus on 'dative' arguments,[4] i.e. syntactic realisations of semantic roles like EXPERIENCER, BENEFACTIVE, or GOAL, depending on the verb class. This choice is motivated by the fact that dative case was particularly affected by the changes in the ME case system, which can be seen for example in the loss of impersonal constructions, and changes in passive constructions (the rise of the indirect and the recipient passive; cf. Allen, 1995: 1–2, see also section 3). Moreover, as we have seen above,

3 Note that according to the OED *donate* is a rather recent copy from Latin (first attestation from 1845). There are, however, quite a number of verbs of change of possession that were copied in ME times, for example *administer*, *proffer* or *transfer*. They all show the French *to*-pattern.

4 Concerning terminology, whenever we talk about dative case which is not morphologically marked, we use quotes, i.e. 'dative'.

French had an impact on the syntactic realisation of this type of argument in the English system. Furthermore, and from a broader perspective, some studies of verb copying in German (which has dative case) have shown that copied verbs disfavour dative and use prepositional case instead (cf. Holler and Scherer, 2010; Holler, 2015).

The paper is organised as follows: Section 2 provides an introduction to the definitions of relevant terms and concepts we will use to discuss our assumptions. In section 3 we will briefly describe the main facts about the loss of the English and French case systems which are needed to understand the changes that we will be dealing with in the remainder of the paper. Section 4 addresses the questions posed in the introduction: to what extent did English retain and integrate the argument structure of the verbs copied from French? Based on a discussion of Allen's (1995) study of changes in the class of EXPERIENCER verbs in subsection 4.1, a corpus study of ME texts and a full text analysis of the *Ayenbite of Inwyt* will support her assumptions in subsection 4.2, and show that the retention of the argument structure of the verb *please* had an effect on the class of native EXPERIENCER verbs. Subsection 4.3 tackles the second question posed in the introduction: a quantitative corpus study of ME texts suggests that the argument structure of native verbs like *give* was affected by the copying of French verbs. Section 5 concludes.

2 The Copying of Argument Structure and Valency Patterns in Language Contact

As mentioned in the introduction, our contribution aims at shedding more light on a well-known historical contact situation with less well-known linguistic consequences. For the description and analysis of our phenomena, we will use Johanson's (2002) model of code-copying because it is a unified model describing different aspects in language encounters, thus also including the borrowing, or copying, of argument structure. In the following, we will briefly outline his model and apply it to the contact situation under scrutiny.

Johanson refrains from using traditional and often misleading terms like 'borrowing' or 'interference' and uses the neutral and more suitable term of code-copying instead. He defines the term as the copying of linguistic units and patterns from one code, the foreign model code, to another code, the basic code (Johanson, 2002: 289). The basic code sets the basic frame or the structure into which copies are inserted. In our concrete case, at the beginning of the contact situation OF plays the role of the foreign model code and ME the role of the basic code into which codes from OF are inserted. Moreover,

Johanson makes a distinction between global and selective copying (*ibid*, 291). The process of copying units from a foreign model code can be called global copying if the unit is copied as a whole, i.e. a block of different properties (material, semantic, combinational, frequential). These units have a material shape and can be simple or complex, bound or free, lexical or functional. Selective copying takes place when only some selected structural (material, semantic, combinational, frequential) properties are copied from the foreign model code. They then serve as models for copies which are applied to units in the basic code.

Applied to our case, for OF verbs we assume global copying since obviously they were copied as such, i.e. with a material shape as well as their structural properties. At this point, however, we cannot exclude that other ways of copying argument structure existed, and so we leave open the possibility for selective copying as well. Crucially for Johanson the basis for copying is equivalence. He states that

> [...] global copies are inserted into those slots—equivalence positions, insertion points—that their "equivalents" in the basic code may fill. The decisive criterion of equivalence is the speaker's subjective assessment of what he or she feels to be close enough. Lack of real typological equivalence does not prevent insertion.
>
> JOHANSON, 2002: 294

This point is crucial for us as well: we will show in section 4.1 that equivalence can be seen as semantic equivalence if we assume that verbs copied from OF had to fill semantic slots that were available at that time. One result would have been the substitution of a ME verb with an OF verb.

Concerning the nature of contact situations, Johanson assumes asymmetrical dominance relations between a code A which is sociolinguistically dominated (or weak) and a code B which is sociolinguistically dominant and prestigious (or strong) (for a similar model see van Coetsem, 1988, 2002). Most frequently more prestigious languages (foreign model codes) influence less prestigious languages (basic codes). He further assumes that contact situations may be more or less asymmetrical and dominance relations may change over time.

From what we know about the contact situation between OF and ME (for a current account see Ingham, 2012a) we can say that at the beginning OF (and Anglo-Norman (AN), see below) was the sociolinguistically dominant and prestigious code that influenced the less prestigious and sociolinguistically dominated ME (from 1066 to approximately the 13th century). In the course of

time speakers changed from post-childhood learners to bilinguals and therefore we can expect changes in the dynamics of the relation between code A and B.

Language contact and the dominance relations assumed by Johanson bring about two main types of convergence phenomena: adoption and imposition. Adoption implies a situation where speakers insert copies from a sociolinguistically dominant code B into their sociolinguistically dominated code A. Imposition implies a situation where speakers of a sociolinguistically dominated code A insert copies into the sociolinguistically dominant code B they are in contact with. In the case of adoption code A is influenced and changed but maintained. In the case of imposition changes in the code B occur which make code B more similar to code A.

In the case at hand both adoption and imposition can be assumed: the many OF verbs that were inserted as global copies into ME are clearly instances of adoption. The fact that OF was prestigious could also have led to imposition in a broader sense, causing the English (the dominated code) of the French speakers to show reflexes of French influence. And since they presented a socially prestigious group it can be assumed that English speakers imitated their speech. In this way an additional possibility to infiltrate English with French usage arose (for details see van Coetsem, 1988: 132).

Johanson's model accounts for synchronic as well as diachronic aspects in language contact. He notes that in the course of time code-copies may develop from being less integrated to being more integrated. This development has been called nativization. Further, when a newly adopted code is frequently and regularly used by individuals and/or groups, the term habitualization is used. As soon as this use is accepted in the speech community it is conventionalized. Looking at the copying of OF verbs from a synchronic perspective of ME speakers/writers and from today's perspective tracing their development we surely find all of these stages. The question that needs to be answered is why some copies (global and selective) reached the status of habitualization and why others did not.

Next, we are going to define Tesnière's concept of valency that we will use in the analysis of our data. In his original terminology verbs are *régissants* ('governors') of *actants* ('players') (Tesnière, 1965: ch.3 and ch.50). In logic, this relation is expressed by the relation between the predicate and its arguments. In syntactic theories this relation is reflected by mechanisms such as theta theory, requiring that a verb co-occurs with a specific number of arguments within a defined structure. Theories of argument structure can be seen as continuations of the valency concept, they establish mapping principles between the semantic and the syntactic properties, but there is no single conception of argument

structure. Crucially, our analysis builds on the assumption that the mapping of semantic roles on syntactic structure is driven by verb meaning (for a survey, see Levin and Rappaport Hovav, 2005). This is of particular importance for our historical investigation because it explains why changes of argument structure affect some verbs but not others, and it helps to understand how the argument structure of copied verbs can spread to native verbs of the same semantic class.

If we apply this definition to the copying of argument structure of psych verbs in the contact scenario under scrutiny, we assume that when speakers of the basic code, i.e. ME, adopt a verb of the foreign model code, i.e. OF, they have a specific meaning in mind. This meaning is present in the OF original (or at least assumed to be present, depending on the competence of the speakers who copy the item) and corresponds to a syntactic realisation proper to OF. In its new English context the semantic valency is maintained and expressed e.g. by its frame of semantic roles. On the syntactic level three possibilities exist:

> First, if the structures in the model code and basic code match, no changes on the syntactic level will occur and the evidence will resemble global borrowing (in traditional terms 'lexical borrowing').
>
> In the second case, there is a mismatch between the model code and the basic code, and the structure is adapted to an existing structure of the basic code. This case can be evidenced by higher frequencies of this particular structure. Here Johanson's subtype of 'frequential copying' becomes relevant, where
>
> [...] frequency patterns peculiar to model code units are copied onto units of the basic code so that the latter undergo an increase or a decrease in frequency of occurrence.
>
> JOHANSON, 2002: 292

In section 4.3 we will provide a concrete example of this case where the dative of OF verbs is marked by the preposition *a* 'to', which was copied onto the ME prepositional dative marked by *to*. We will investigate frequency changes in ME of the corresponding pattern and we will show that the question of quantitative evidence is relevant for identifying the effects of a historical contact situation. Furthermore, we assume that in a process of copying—at least of verbs—the primary motivation is semantic, and the syntactic structures will be a reflex of the mapping of the semantic roles associated with a given verb meaning onto the grammar of the basic code. Therefore, semantic roles like BENEFACTIVE are cross-linguistically stable, whereas their syntactic realisation is potentially variable.

The third case is, again, a mismatch, but contrary to the second case it leads to the adoption of a new structure in the basic code. The third case implies

a change of the grammatical system and is supposed to require a strong motivation, either due to social dominance and/or to the attractiveness of linguistic structure.

Our empirical analysis is predominantly based on syntactically annotated text corpora. The data in sections 4.2 and 4.3 are taken from The *Penn-Helsinki Parsed Corpus of Middle English Prose* (PPCME2-Release3). The PPCME2 is a linguistically annotated corpus based on the Helsinki corpus of ca 1.2 million words including 55 text samples. It is divided into four subperiods which will become relevant below: M1 (1150–1250), M2 (1250–1350), M3 (1350–1420), M4 (1420–1500). For Old French, we used the *Syntactic Reference Corpus of Medieval French* (SRCMF, Prevost/Stein:2013, ca 266 000 words) as well as the OF part of the corpus *Modéliser le changement: les voies du franais* (MCVF, Martineau:2009, ca 386 500 words). Syntactic queries were made using *CorpusSearch* (provided for the Penn corpora) and *TigerSearch* Lezius (2002). In addition we also conducted a manual full text analysis of the *Ayenbite of Inwyt* and compared it with its French original *Somme le roi* to corroborate the findings from the Middle English (ME) corpus.

3 Case Marking in Old English, Middle English and Old French

Contact influence can manifest itself in a language system at a certain point in time or in the course of time, over successive time spans. In the case at hand, for example, we observe that in ME, verbs like *plesen* 'please' were copied and added to the English lexicon. Moreover, by comparing the frequency of occurrence of *plesen* in the ME subperiods we can make quantitative statements as to its increase or decrease over time. In our study of the copying of *plesen* and the effects it had on the class of EXPERIENCER verbs and native ditransitive verbs we will comment on our findings from both perspectives.

As mentioned above, the loss of the English case system considerably changed the language on many levels, and thus also played a crucial role in the way syntactic realisations of valency patterns developed. Therefore, in the following subsections we will provide some information concerning these changes both in the basic code and foreign model code.

3.1 *The Loss of Case in Old English and Middle English*

It is a well-known fact that OE was an inflectional language displaying nominal (4-way case system, 3-way number system, 3-way gender system) and verbal (person, number, tense, mood) morphology. From late OE until the end of the ME period there is evidence for the erosion of this system, the result of which was that only the following two parameters were henceforth marked: singular

TABLE 1 *OE paradigm for* stān *'stone'* (a-*stem masc. noun, cf. Hogg and Denison, 2008*)

Case	Singular	Plural
nom	*stān*	*stān*-as
gen	*stān*-es	*stān*-a
dat	*stān*-e	*stān*-um
acc	*stān*	*stān*-as

TABLE 2 *ME paradigm for* stōn *'stone'* (*cf. Mossé, 1991*)

Case	Singular	Plural
nom	*stōn*	*stōn*-(e)s
gen	*stōn*-(e)s	*stōn*-(e)s
dat	*stōn*-e	*stōn*-(e)s
acc	*stōn*	*stōn*-(e)s

vs plural, and non-genitive vs genitive (note that personal pronouns retained inflection to some degree, see Blake, 1992: 108–117). This development becomes evident when comparing the paradigm of the OE noun *stān* 'stone' in Table 1 with its ME equivalent *stōn* in Table 2:

Concerning the development of dative case, Mossé (1991: 49) states that although the dative still shows the inflectional ending *-e*, early on there is hesitation in its use, i.e. many nouns omit the ending (see also Blake, 1992: 110); the *-e* is essentially the case of the indirect object which tends to be replaced by a prepositional phrase (*to*+NP; for a discussion see also Mustanoja, 1960: 96ff).

According to Allen (1995: 213–217), the morphological realisation of dative case (the nominal dative suffix) was lost by the middle of the fourteenth century. Verbs no longer assigned either accusative or dative case to their nominal objects. This led to a system with one uniform objective case (direct, indirect). Furthermore, the nominative dative distinction was lost at that time. This change is often regarded as an important factor in the loss of 'impersonal constructions' because it is assumed that for learners it was no longer clear whether a preverbal nominal (former dative) EXPERIENCER had to be interpreted as an indirect object or as a subject. This syncretism has also been regarded as having played an important role in the rise of new passive types. In section 4 we will discuss Allen's case study of some EXPERIENCER verbs to

illustrate that changes in their argument structure may also be attributed to contact with OF.

3.2 *Old French Case Marking*

In OF, case inflection is reduced to nominative and accusative (see Table 3). The nominative derives from the Latin nominative and vocative, while the accusative derives from the Latin accusative and subsumes the other cases, including the dative. This two-case distinction gradually disappears towards the end of the OF period (around 1300). The inflection of OF clitics distinguishes between nominative, accusative and dative, e.g. 'he': nom. *il*, acc.*le*, dat. *li*. This distinction survives in the Modern French distinction of nom. *il* vs acc.*le*/*la* vs dat. *lui*.

According to Togeby (1983: §46), the noun phrases expressing Latin datives are expressed as absolute 'dative' (*il estoit Lancelot* 'it belonged to Lancelot') or as prepositional 'dative', formed by *a* plus accusative noun phrase. If the noun inflects, it normally shows accusative case. In double-object constructions the absolute dative complement tends to precede the direct object.

The absolute dative was already uncommon in OF; it occurs infrequently in the oldest texts of the SRCMF. The common realisation of the former dative argument is either a PP (*a*+NP or *a*+PRO) or a pronoun (PRO), i.e. it was formally distinguishable from the direct object. Table 4 shows the syntactic

TABLE 3 *The Old French two-case system*

	singular	**plural**	**English**
masc nominative	li bons murs	li bon mur	the good wall(s)
	li povre frere	li povre frere	the poor brother(s)
masc accusative	le bon mur	les bons murs	the good wall(s)
< Lat. gen/dat/acc	le povre frere	les povres freres	the poor brother(s)
fem nominative	la bone dame	les bones dames	the good lady/ ladies
	la povre suer	les povres serours	the poor sister(s)
fem accusative	la bone dame	les bones dames	the good lady/ ladies
< Lat. gen/dat/acc	la povre serour	les povres serours	the poor sister(s)

realisations of the 'dative' complements of *plaire* 'please' and *doner* 'give' in the SRCMF and MCVF corpora.

Having briefly dealt with the loss of case marking and the dative and dative-like constructions available in ME and OF we will now return to the discussion of which patterns we expect to find for the syntactic realisation of the dative argument of OF verbs in our concrete contact situation. For the sake of simplicity we give modern examples here, authentic corpus data will be presented in sections 4.2 and 4.3.

In section 2 we distinguished between three contact scenarios modelled in Johanson's approach. In case (1), i.e. global copying of a verb, both languages have identical structures. One example of this case is French *Il donne* [$_{NP}$ *l'épée*] [$_{PP}$ ***au roi***] and English *He donates* [$_{NP}$ *the sword*] [$_{PP}$ ***to the king***]. In case (2), i.e.the case of a mismatch, a structure of the foreign model code is adopted and its frequency in the basic code increases. One example is the preference for prepositional phrases (*to*+NP) over 'dative' NPs (*plaire* [$_{PP}$ ***à quelqu'un***]), e.g. *please* [$_{PP}$ ***to God***] over *please* [$_{NP}$ *God*]. In case (3) a structure that had previously not existed in English is added due to contact, for example the innovative reflexive uses of native verbs in ME on the model of OF (Van der Gaaf, 1904): ME *Men **feeren hem** in al the toun* 'men were afraid in the whole town',[5] analogous to OF reflexive constructions like *E pur Dieu, sire, ne **vous ennuit** pas* '… don't be annoyed'.

TABLE 4 *Realisations of 'dative' arguments (in SRCMF and MCVF)*

		***a*+PRO (prepositional)**	***a*+NP (pronoun)**	**PRO (absolute)**	**NP**
SRCMF	*plaire*	0	8	121	2
	doner	14	30	217	3
MCVF	*plaire*	0	4	62	0
	doner	1	51	185	4

5 More data on this development were presented by Richard Ingham (Birmingham City University, DFG Mercator Fellow in the BASICS project) in his talk "Change-of-state and psych verb anticausatives in Anglo-Norman: contact influence on Middle English" at the *22nd International Conference on Historical Linguistics*, Naples, 27–31 July 2015.

4 The Argument Structure of Psychological Verbs

4.1 *Allen's (1995) Study of 'please'*

In this section we take a closer look at the development of psych(ological) verbs in English. Psych verbs express the psychological state (emotion or attitude) of an EXPERIENCER with respect to a THEME. For this reason they are also called experiencer verbs. Different psych verbs express different psychological states, and they also differ with respect to their event structure (e.g. causative or not) and to the syntactic realisation of their arguments. For the sake of clarity we adopt a constant set of thematic roles for psych verbs in our analyses, irrespective of their semantic subclass (similar to the approach of e.g. Belletti and Rizzi, 1988 but different from e.g. Grimshaw, 1990). In the following we will discuss Allen's (1995) study of the development of the native verbs *cweman* 'please' and *lician* 'like' under the influence of the verb *plesen* 'please' which was copied from OF in ME times. This study provides empirical evidence for her assumptions that (i) the semantic similarity of *cweman* and OF *plaire* was the driving force in the change, and (ii) the transfer of the syntactic properties of the French verb to the native verbs made this change evident. Her findings will serve as a basis for our own study of the three verbs in section 4.2, and for developing our quantitative method of identifying foreign influence on native verbs in section 4.3.

In Old English a number of psych verbs existed. They can be classified according to the following three types (cf. Allen, 1995: 69; Fischer and van der Leek, 1983: 346, and Denison, 1993: 62):

(2) a. EXPERIENCER-dative THEME-nominative
b. EXPERIENCER-nominative THEME-genitive
c. EXPERIENCER-dative THEME-genitive

Lician 'please' is a psych verb of type (2a) which often showed the order EXPERIENCER-dative THEME-nominative (see the examples in (3)).[6]

(3) a. ac gode ne licode na heora geleafleast, …
but God-DAT not liked not their faithlessness-NOM
'but God did not like their unbelief …'

(ÆHOM_21:68.3117)

6 Allen (1995:109) notes that when the EXPERIENCER is a full noun it's more likely to occur after the THEME (noun), and when it is a pronoun it predominantly occurs before the THEME (full noun).

b. & him wel licode his wurfulnesse a.
and him-DAT wel liked his dignity-NOM then
'and he liked well his dignity then.'

(ÆLET_4_[SIGEWEARDB]:67.8)

By comparing *lician* with OE *cweman*, Allen notes that at first sight they seem to be synonymous semantically and syntactically: both are often translated as 'please' and both showed the case marking frame EXPERIENCER-dative THEME-nominative. However, on closer inspection, a number of differences can be identified which serve to explain why the two verbs developed differently, and more precisely, why it was *cweman* and not *lician* that was replaced by OF *plaire*.

By investigating the two native psych verbs, Allen found the following differences: first, the THEME argument of *lician* need not be human whereas it has to be human with *cweman*. For her the reason for this difference is that in the case of *lician* the focus lies on the reaction of the EXPERIENCER whereas in the case of *cweman* the focus lies on the THEME as 'volitional' (1995: 147).[7] It inherently bears the responsibility of the emotion on the part of the EXPERIENCER. She assumes that it is exactly this semantic difference that leads to different developments of the two verbs in ME: since the THEME of ME *quemen* is the more topical[8] argument because it has properties generally associated with the subject of a sentence (volitional, agentive), at the beginning of the ME period it occurs more and more often in the nominative and is assigned the function of the subject. In contrast, for ME *liken* it is the EXPERIENCER and not the THEME that is the more topical argument because the focus is on the reaction of the EXPERIENCER. This is why, according to Allen, the EXPERIENCER is mapped on the function of the subject.[9] She further assumes that dative case was first retained to mark non-agentivity, but was then gradually replaced by nominative case as the usual way to mark the subject.

In the thirteenth century OF *plaire* was copied and joined the set of native psych verbs. By providing a thorough empirical study on the semantics of ME *quemen* and *plesen*, Allen assumes that *plesen* gradually replaced *quemen*

7 We follow Allen's terminology with respect to roles, but note that Talmy (1985) and others attribute the role of STIMULUS to the subject of psychological predicates like *please*. Allen also calls this semantic role 'Target of Emotion' (p. 144).

8 Allen's criteria for the 'topicality' of the Target of Emotion are word order, animacy, and weight (pp. 145–149).

9 Allen notes that this difference may also explain why *cweman* only shows the order nominative-dative whereas only half of the examples of *lician* show the order nominative-dative.

because it was nearly synonymous, i.e. it focussed on a THEME as a Cause. ME *liken*, showing the same argument structure, was not replaced because, as we have just seen, it differed semantically by being more concerned with the reaction of the EXPERIENCER. Allen concludes that 'semantics seems to have played a more important role than syntax here' (1995: 450). Her study of the development of the three verbs is summarised in Table 5 (PDE = Present Day English).

Today, we still see this difference, as Allen demonstrates with the following examples:

(4) a. I please my family every Sunday by making pancakes.
b. *My family likes me every Sunday (because I make pancakes).

(ALLEN, 1995: 330)

The difference between *please* and *like* manifests itself not only in the reverse mapping of the semantic roles but also in the amount of responsibility attributed to the THEME (as CAUSE). Allen provides the following interpretation of the data: in (4a) the THEME which is expressed by *I* is seen as the cause of the emotion described by *please*; the THEME is thus held responsible for it. In contrast, in (4b) the THEME which is expressed by *me* is not held responsible

TABLE 5 *The development of OE* cweman/*ME* quemen*, OE* lician/*ME* liken *and ME* plesen (*based on Allen, 1995*)

period	argument 1	verb	argument 2	observation
OE	EXP_{DAT} [–hum]	*lician*	THE_{NOM}	focus: reaction of EXP; mostly EXP_{OBJ}
OE	THE_{NOM} [+hum]	*cweman*	EXP_{DAT}	focus: THE as cause (volitional)> THE_{SUBJ}
ME	EXP_{NOM}	*liken*	THE	> EXP_{SUBJ}
ME	THE_{NOM}	*quemen*	EXP	(disappears in period M3)
ME	THE_{NOM}	*plesen*	EXP	(appears in period M2)
PDE	EXP_{NOM}	*liken*	THE	*I just like it* [–volitional THE]
PDE	THE_{NOM}	*plesen*	EXP	**It just pleases me* [+volitional THE]

for the attitude of the EXPERIENCER (we don't need to have a reason to like somebody or something).

So far we have seen that the semantic similarity of OE *cweman*/ME *quemen* and OF *plaire* led to a change in the system of psych verbs which can be interpreted as contact-induced change. In the following we will provide evidence for the transfer of the syntactic properties of *plaire* to the two native verbs under investigation to complement the picture. Although Allen did not empirically investigate this aspect, she comments on it (see 1995: 300) in saying that when *please* was copied it was copied with French syntax and then adapted to English syntax. More precisely, she assumes that the French pattern where the EXPERIENCER was syntactically realised as an indirect object was transferred to English, and the marking of the indirect object by the preposition *a* was replaced by the English preposition *to*.

4.2 *How to Identify the Copying of Argument Structure*

4.2.1 Old French *plaire* and its use in Middle English: A Dictionary-Based Comparison

Before we discuss our findings from the corpora mentioned in section 2 to corroborate Allen's findings and assumptions, in this section we take a look at the dictionary entries for the French verb *plaiser* and the ME verb *plesen*. By comparing the entries we are able to identify how the verb was originally used and we get a first impression to which degree these properties may have been copied to English. This methodological approach is the basis for our corpus study where we will then check which constructions we actually find in our ME data.

In the following we compare the entries of OF *plaire* in the Tobler and Lommatzsch OF dictionary (TL, Blumenthal and Stein, 2002), Anglo-Norman (AN)[10] *plaisir* in the *Anglo-Norman Dictionary* (AND)[11] and ME *plesen* in the *Middle English Dictionary* (MED). We cross-checked the information found in the MED with the information found in the *Oxford English Dictionary* (OED). OF *plaire* derives from Latin *placere* 'satisfy' and develops into Modern French *plaire* 'please'. The AND entry of this verb is *plaisir*, the ME verb *plesen* is first attested in 1350.

10 In what follows we refer to the French spoken/written at the time of the contact situation as Old French. Since the term can be used in a broad sense covering all varieties of French including Anglo-French, Anglo-Norman, and other varieties of French it is also well suited for our analysis because sometimes it is hard to define whether the input came from insular or continental French.

11 AND1 Online edition. http://www.anglo-norman.net/D/plaisir; Accessed 11 March, 2016.

According to the TL and the AND *plaire*/*plaisir* was used transitively with the meaning 'to please, satisfy sb./sth.': *Vus m'avez, dame, fait hunir Pur vostre maveisté plaisir* 'Lady, you had me shamed to satisfy your wickedness' (TL, AND, Trist (D) 1307). The transitive use of *plesen* is also found in the MED (OED): *Wel, lord kyng, what pleseþ eþ schal nouȝ displese me.* 'Well, lord king, what pleases you shall not displease me'. (MED, a1387, Trev.Higd. (StJ-C H.1)).

Both the TL and the AND list the impersonal use with the meaning 'to please': *s'il vos plëust* 'if it pleased you' (TL): *Si vus plaist fere assise* 'if it pleases you to hold a meeting' (AND, *S Thom*ı 481). In ME, this use is found as well, the pronoun *hit* 'it' functions as the formal subject (but can also be left out), and the semantic subject can be expressed by a noun, phrase, clause or general context: *It plesi myche God whanne a man axi and preie with perseueraunce.* 'It pleases much God when a man asks and prays with perseverance' (MED, c1425 Wycl.Condord. in Spec.43, (Roy 17.B.1)).

The TL also lists the impersonal use with a *de*-clause: *mout me plaira De ce que li rois garira* 'much will it please me that the king will recover'. In the MED this use is also found: *It plesede þat þe þing were told to darie...* 'It pleased that the thing were told to lie in wait' (MED, a1382, WBible(1), 1 Esd5.5, Bod959). In many of these examples the EXPERIENCER occurs as a prepositional phrase: *i lond shal ben enhabitid, for it plesede to þe lord in þee* 'Your land shall be inhabited for it pleased to the lord in you' (you were pleasing to the Lord) (MED, a1382, WBible(1), Is.62.4, Bod959).

The TL lists the intransitive use (i.e. in their terminology with a prepositional object): *E plaisirat a Deu* (*placebit Deo...*) 'And it will please God' (Oxf. Ps. 68,36). This use is also found in the MED: *þe wordes of my mouþe shul ben þat hii plesen* [*L complaceant*] *to þe* 'The words of my mouth shall be such that they are agreeable to you' (MED, c1350 MPPsalter (Add 17376)).

The TL lists *plaire* with a bare infinitive (dat + inf): *Kar ne lui plaist vëeir* 'since it will not please him to see' (TL, Ph.Thaon Best.2194) and with the preposition *a*+infinitive (dat+*a*+inf): *Molt vos plëust a escoter* 'Much it pleased you to listen' (TL, Ferg.4, 13). In the MED and OED both constructions are found: *plesen* + bare infinitive: *Mademe... pleis wit I have spokin with my lord governour* 'Madam, please know I have spoken with my lord governor' (OED, 1543, in A. I. Cameron Sc. Corr. Mary of Lorraine (1927); *plesen* + *to* + infinitive: *...that he with his goode wille may please to forgyf me* '...that he with his good will may please to forgive me' (Will in Som.RS 16).

The TL finally lists the reflexive use of the verb: *On qui se plaist, ...* 'who is complacent' (TL, Rose L 13636). The MED also lists the reflexive use: *Two places, wherin I perceyue he pleaseth him selfe ryght well* 'Two places wherein I perceive

TABLE 6 *A comparison of syntactic constructions of* OF plaire *and* ME plesen *based on dictionaries*

Syntactic construction	**OF *plaire***	**ME *plesen***
transitive	yes	yes
intransitive	yes	yes
impersonal	yes	yes
impersonal + *de*/*that* clause	yes	yes
verb + bare infintive	yes	yes
verb + *a*/*to* + infinitive	yes	yes
reflexive	yes	yes

that he satisfies himself really well' (OED, 1533 T. More). Table 6 provides an overview of the main constructions.

The AND lists the use of *plaisir en* 'to rejoice in': *jo ploi* (*Latin: complacui*) *en la tue veritet* (AND, Arun Ps 11). This construction could not be found in ME.

Concluding from the comparison of the dictionary entries we can say that all of the uses of *plaire* defined in the TL are also found in the MED for *plesen*. The AND lists some of the uses found in the MED and some additional uses that are not found for *plesen*. Although this result is valuable it is not explicit enough. This has to do with the structure of the entries and the information given in these dictionaries. Often full information about the verbs is missing (e.g. sometimes dative is given in the entries for OF, sometimes not, no consistent information about semantic roles exists). This is why a corpus-based study of these verbs is needed.[12]

4.2.2 A Corpus-Based Study of Native and Non-Native Psych Verbs

On the basis of these properties of OF *plaire* (AN *plaisir*) we will now discuss data from the ME corpus (PPCME2). As mentioned above, we are going to investigate (i) the semantic similarity of ME *quemen* and *plesen* and (ii)

12 Concerning ME *quemen* the MED lists the transitive use with the meaning 'to please somebody, gratify, serve somebody', the intransitve use with the meaning 'to be pleasing or acceptable' and the use of the verb in impersonal constructions 'it pleases somebody'. It seems that this verb could not be used in as many constructions as *plesen*, which, in addition to its semantic similarity with the OF verb, might have led to it being replaced by *plesen*.

the syntactic realisation of the EXPERIENCER (formerly dative) of ME *plesen*, *quemen* and *liken*. We hypothesise that at the beginning of the copying process the EXPERIENCER of *plesen* is syntactically realised as PP, on the model of French, and especially so in texts based on a French original. We will call this pattern the 'French pattern'. We further assume that this pattern was transferred from *plesen* to the native verbs *quemen* and *liken* because they are of the same semantic class; thus, apart from exhibiting the EXPERIENCER in the form of an NP, which we call the 'native pattern', these verbs start to realise the EXPERIENCER as a PP, again predominantly so in ME texts based on a French original. To summarise, we expect to find the following patterns: *plesen*/*quemen*/*liken* + EXPERIENCER-NP (native pattern) and *plesen*/*quemen*/*liken* + EXPERIENCER-PP (French pattern), the latter especially in texts based on a French original. Because nouns and pronouns developed differently, we will make a distinction between noun phrases (NP) and pronouns (PRO), between prepositional phrases with a pronoun as complement (*to*+PRO) and prepositional phrases with an NP as complement (*to*+NP). These differences will become relevant again in our study of *give*.

Let us first take a look at *quemen*: both the native and the French pattern can be found in the data. The fact that it no longer occurs in M3 and M4 corroborates Allen's assumption that *quemen* was replaced by *plesen*. The absolute frequencies for the verbs are given in Table 7, variation is visualised in Fig. 1 by their relative frequency per sentence (lines between data points were added for more clarity). Examples for the native pattern and the French pattern of *quemen* are given below:

(5) Ne **cwemenn** þe33 nohht alle **Godd** Wi heore rihhtwisnesse.
nor please they not all God with their righteousness
'Nor do they all please God with their righteousness.' ORM,I, 10.208, M1

TABLE 7 *Absolute frequencies of* quemen, liken, plesen

ME period	*quemen*	*liken*	*plesen*
M1 (1150–1250)	71	55	0
M2 (1250–1350)	6	16	21
M3 (1350–1420)	0	81	31
M4 (1420–1500)	0	42	68

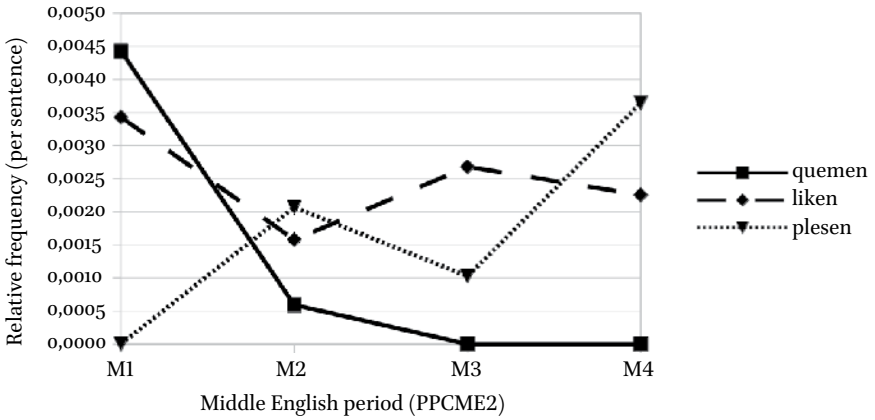

FIGURE 1 *Diachronic variation of* quemen, liken, plesen

(6) and makeþ ofte / lete þet guod to done: and do þet kuead / uor to **kueme** kueadliche **to þe wordle**.
and makes often let that good to do and do that evil for to please wickedly to the world
'… and do evil to wickedly please the world.'

AYENBI, 26.403, M2

French original:
et fait mout de foiz lessier le bien a fere et le mal pour **plere** mauvesement **au monde**.
and makes many of times let the good to do and do the evil to please wickedly to+the world

SOMME-ch32-par687

In the example in (5), which is from *The Ormulum*, written in the period of M1 (1150–1250), we see the native pattern with the NP *Godd* 'God'. The example in (6) is from the *Ayenbite of Inwyt* written in 1340 (period M2). It shows the French pattern *to þe wordle* (*to*+NP) which clearly is a one-to-one translation of the French *au monde*.

Next, we will provide data for *plesen*: in the corpus the verb starts to occur in M2 with the 'French' pattern, i.e. with the EXPERIENCER as PP, either in the form of *to*+PRO or *to*+NP. The pattern especially occurs in texts which are based on a French original like the *Earliest Complete English Prose Psalter* from

ca 1350 (examples 7), Chaucer's *Parson's Tale* from ca 1390 (example 8), and *Mandeville's Travels* from ca 1400 (example 9):

(7) a. And þe wordes of my mouþe shul ben, þat hij **plesen to þe**
and the words of my mouth shall be that they please to you
'And the words of my mouth shall be such that they please you.'
EARLPS, 21.842, M2

b. For God wasted þe bones of hem þat **plesen to men**;
for God rejected the requests of them that please to men
'Because God rejected the requests of those who please men.'
EARLPS, 63.2771, M2

(8) and eek a womman ne myghte nat **plese to many folk** at oones.
and also a woman neg might not please to many folk at once
'And also a woman might not please many people at the same time.'
CTPARS, 321.C1.1413, M3

(9) But ȝif this matiere **plese to ony worthi man** at hath gon be þat weye he may telle it if him lyke to at entent
but if this matter pleases to any worthy man that has gone by that way he may tell it if him like to that intent …
'But if this matter pleases any worthy man that has been gone that way he may tell if that intent pleases him'
MANDEV, 83.2108, M3

First instances in the corpus with the native pattern (EXPERIENCER as NP) are found in the period of M3 (examples (10), (11) and (12)):

(10) And therfore a philosophre seyde, whan men axed hym how that men sholde **plese the peple**
and therefore a philosopher said when men asked him how that men should please the people
'and therefore a philosopher said, when people asked him how men should please the people …'
CTPARS, 309.C2.907, M3

(11) Brethirne and susteryne bodely and goostely, two maner of states ther bene in holy chirch, be the which cristen soules **plesyn God** and gettyn hem the blisse of heven,

brothers and sisters bodily and ghostly two manner of states there be in holy church by the which christian souls please God and get them the bliss of heaven
'Brothers and sisters, in body and spirit, two kinds of states there are in the holy church, through which the souls of Christians please God and make them receive the bliss of heaven.'

ROLLTR, 21.481, M24

(12) and þe Fadyr of Heuen spake þus yn heryng of all: 'þis ys my dere belouet sonne at well **plesyth me**'
and the father of heaven spoke thus in hearing of all this is my dear beloved son that well pleaseth me
'and the Father of heaven spoke thus when he heard all: 'this is my dear beloved son that pleases me well."

MIRK, 51.1449, M3

The data may be taken to indicate that the copied verb *plesen* brings along its native argument structure and this is why the EXPERIENCER is syntactically realised as a PP (see section 4.2.1). When it becomes integrated into the English system it starts to occur with an EXPERIENCER-NP (either an NP or a pronoun).

Concerning the native psych verb *liken*, it occurs as expected with the native pattern, but also as early as the M2 period with the French pattern as the examples in (14) and (15) illustrate:

(13) a. is is min loue sune þet **me** wel **likeð**.
this is my humble son that me well likes
'This is my humble son that pleases me well.'

LAMB1, 141.280, M1

b. The kynge **lyked** and loved **this lady** wel
the king liked and loved this lady well
'The king liked and loved this lady well.'

MALORY, 2.12, M4

(14) þet is þe zoþe uayrhede / hueruore þe zaule **to god like** / and **to þe angles**
that is the true beauty wherefore the soul to God likes and to the angels
þet yze þe herte.
that see the heart
'This is the true spiritual beauty because of which the soul pleases God.'

AYENBI, 81.1576, M2

French original:
C'est la veraie beauté par quoi l'ame plet **a Dieu** et es anges
this is the true beauty by which the soul pleases to God and to the angels
qui voient le cuer.
who see the heart

SOMME-ch47-par16

(15) bote yef he ne wende et hit **likede to him** et hit hyer.
but if he neg thinks that it liked to him that it hears
'but if he did not think that it pleased him who hears it.'

AYENBI, 256.2378, M2

French original:
se il ne cuidoit que il pleut **a celui** qui l'ot.
if he NEG thought that it pleased to him who it hears

SOMME-ch59-par201-202

The example in (13a) from the *Lambeth Homilies* (M1) displays the native pattern with a pronoun to the left of *likeð* and *wel*. The example in (13b) from Malory's *Morte Darthur* (M4) displays the native pattern with an NP. Interestingly, *lyked* is coordinated with *loved* which indicates that at that time the argument structure EXPERIENCER-nominative/THEME-objective had become an option.

The examples in (14) and (15) are again taken from the *Ayenbite of Inwyt* from the M2 period. In (14) the EXPERIENCER is realised as *to*+NP as in the French original, but in the English text it precedes *likeþ* whereas in French *a Dieu* follows the verb *plet*. In (15) the order of elements is identical, the syntactic realisation of the EXPERIENCER is *to*+PRO in both the English and the French text. Allen (1986: 387) comments on similar cases in OE. She notes that the pattern EXPERIENCER-nominative/THEME-PP is only found in texts which are word-for-word glosses or translations from Latin:

(16) ðu eart sunu min leof on ðe ic wel licade.
thou art son my beloved in thee I well liked
'Thou art my beloved son, in thee I was well pleased.'

In this example the Latin *in te complacui* is glossed as *on ðe ic wel licade* so it is closely tied to Latin syntax (as is also true of the ordering of elements within the NP). She concludes "… that an English speaker trying to stick as close to

a Latin original as possible would use the English verb with the syntax of the Latin, since this construction was in fact found in English with semantically similar verbs" (Allen, 1986: 387f).[13]

Coming back to the examples from the *Ayenbite of Inwyt*, which can be dated to 1340 and which is a direct translation of the French text *Somme le Roi* (1279), we see that looking at such texts is insightful because the syntax of the original text is copied to the English text almost one-to-one. And since the edition of the *Somme le roi* has become available recently, we are in a position to systematically investigate how Dan Michel, the author, translated the French verb into English. This is why we conducted a full text analysis of this text, which we will briefly discuss in the following subsection. We quote the French original from the edition by Laurent (2008).

4.2.3 The Translation of of Plaire in the Ayenbite of Inwyt

By looking at the translation of OF *plaire* (AN *plaisir*) in the text, what is striking at first sight is that both native verbs–*quemen* and *liken*–are used. Relating this finding to Allen's study this could mean that both verbs are used to disambiguate the differences in meaning described above (see below). What is more, instead of the verb *plesen* the author resorted to the use of the ME verb *paien* which derives from OF *paiien* 'please sb., satisfy, content'.[14] It occurs nine times in the text with an object, which is either realised as an NP directly following the verb (five occurrences) or as a pronoun preceding the verb (four occurrences) which is illustrated with the examples below:

(17) þes meyster huer-of ne is non drede: **payþ** moche **þe dyeule** /
this activity whereof NEG is no doubt pays much the devil
'This activity therefore, without doubt, pleases the devil much.'
AYENBI, 85.1665, M2

French original:
Cist mestiers donques, n'est pas doute, **plet** mout **au deable**
this activity therefore NEG-is NEG doubt pleases much to+the devil
SOMME-ch39-par146

13 We would like to thank one of the anonymous reviewers for drawing our attention to this example.

14 The first senses of OF *paiier* given in the *Tobler Lommatzsch* OF dictionary [Blumenthal and Stein(2002)] are 'befriedigen' ('to content sb') and 'versöhnen' ('to reconcile sb'). Further senses are 'pay' in a concrete (pay sb, pay sth) and a figurative (pay a service) sense.

(18) and al þat God deþ to his bodye: he yelt thonkes and **hym payþ**.
and all that God does to his body he gives thanks and him pays
'and all that God does to his body he thanks and pleases him.
AYENBI, 85.1665

French original:
que de quanque Diex fet a son cors, graces li rent et mout **li plet.**
that of all that God does to his body thanks him returns and much him pleases
SOMME-ch47-par142

Interestingly, whenever the author uses an NP the French original displays a PP, see (17). So in these cases he deviates from the French argument realisation. Obviously, he must have understood that semantically *paien* is similar to *plaire*/*plaisir* but on the level of syntax he made a difference.

The verb 'please' is translated by *quemen* twelve times with the native pattern (NP) and four times with the French pattern (*to*+NP). The verb *liken* is only found four times with various syntactic realisations (preceding pronoun, following pronoun, with an NP, and with a PP). The differences in the semantics of the two verbs corroborate what Allen found in her work: whenever the focus lies on the THEME as volitional cause *quemen* is used, and whenever the focus lies on the reaction of the EXPERIENCER *liken* is used. This contrast is illustrated with the following examples (example 19a=14):

(19) a. þet is þe zoe uayrhede / hueruore þe zaule **to god like** / and **to** þe **angles** þet yzeþ þe herte.
that is the true beauty wherefore the soul to God likes and to the angels that see the heart
'This is the true spiritual beauty because of which the soul pleases God.'
AYENBI, 81.1576, M2

French original:
C'est la veraie beauté par quoi l'ame plet **a Dieu** et es anges qui voient le cuer.
this is the true beauty by which the soul pleases to God and to the angels who see the heart
SOMME-ch47-par16

b. yef ich wylle **queme to þe uolke** of þe wordle.
if I will please to the folk of the world
'if I desire to please the people of the world.'
AYENBI, 228, The fifth book of Chastity

French original:
Se je voloie, fet il, **plere es genz** dou monde ...
If I wanted said he please in the people of the world
SOMME-ch58-par495

In (19a) the THEME of *liken* is *þe zaule* ([-human]), in (19b) the THEME of *quemen* is *ich* ([+human]) followed by *wylle* 'want' which stresses the 'volitionality' (referring to Allen's study discussed in section 4.1) on the part of the THEME.

The finding that requires an explanation is why in addition to using the native verbs *quemen* and *liken* to translate OF *plaire* the author decided to use the verb *paien*. He had a good enough command of OF to make subtle semantic differences in his translation by using both native verbs, but there is no contextual motivation for his lexical choice. According to the OED the first attestation of ME *plesen* is dated 1350 but *paien* had been copied long before, the first date given in the OED for the meaning 'to satisfy someone' is 1170. The *Ayenbite of Inwyt* was completed in 1340, so probably before *plesen* entered the ME lexicon. Dan Michel is thought to have been an old man at the time he translated the French text which might explain why he resorted to use the older copying (which was rather used as a native verb, otherwise the French syntactic construction would occur). The verbs he could use were thus *paien* and the two native verbs *quemen* and *liken*, and that is exactly what we see.

4.3 *Copying Effects on Native Verbs*

4.3.1 The Extension of Copied Structures to the Native Grammar

We now extend our study to a more far reaching consequence of the language contact situation under scrutiny: the transfer of the construction of copied (French) verbs to native (English) verbs of a different semantic verb class. In the case at hand, we hypothesise that the syntactic realisation of the French dative of psych verbs also affected native verbs belonging to other semantic verb classes and thus raised the overall frequency of prepositional realisations of 'dative' arguments. We expect to find a disproportional increase of existing realisations, i.e. a statistically significant deviation from the expected diachronic development. It should manifest itself in a peak at the time when contact was most intense, instead of an S-curve (see for example Kroch, 1989: Yang, 2000)

which models gradual change whereby one form (the old dative form) is replaced by the new form (the *to*-PP). Such quantitative evidence is similar to Johanson's notion of 'frequential copying' (as defined in section 2), and detached from the original form, i.e. from the verb which originally licensed the pattern. For our study, we selected *give* because it is the prototypical representative of the class of possession transfer verbs which select a GOAL, and because it is sufficiently frequent to allow us to identify such tendencies.

As noted in section 1 there is a contrast between native verbs in double-object constructions which exhibit both the double-object form and the prepositional form, and 'Latinate' verbs which only exhibit the prepositional form. According to Pinker (1989: 45–47) double-object constructions of the copied verbs can only be rendered grammatical if stress is shifted to the first syllable (e.g. *DOnate*; capitals for stress) which makes them sound native on the level of prosody. He also states that it is exactly the different stress patterns that can explain how learners acquire the difference between both verb types. But regardless of these prosodic differences, it is the syntactic realisation of the GOAL phrase with the preposition *a* that was transferred to English with verbs of French origin. In this scenario, we then expect French verbs to be distinguishable from native verbs by their syntactic constructions.

Measuring the degree of French influence is difficult because the 'dative' object is also affected by other changes, as we have seen, independent of French influence. In order to factor out these independent changes, we divided the PPCME2 into two subcorpora: one with texts based on a French original, the other with texts which are not influenced by French (we use 'French-based' and 'other texts' and abbreviate with 'F-…' and 'O-…' in tables and figures). We identified thirteen French-based texts and contrasted quantitative findings in these texts with our findings in the non-French-based texts. For the queries for particular verbs we either used disjunctions of graphical forms reflecting the inflectional and graphical variation as well as our partial lemmatisation of the PPCME2 verb forms. Since we are interested in predicates we indicate frequencies relative to the total number of sentences in the ME periods M1 to M4. Table 8 shows the thirteen texts which were classified as 'French-based' according to the information given in the PPCME2 bibliography (see the identifiers *trinit* etc. listed in the rightmost column).

Regarding the syntactic realisations of the 'dative' argument (i.e.NP-OB2 in the PPCME2 annotation), as mentioned in section 4.2.2 we make a distinction between noun phrases (NP) and pronouns (PRO), and between prepositional phrases with a pronoun as complement (*to*+PRO) and prepositional phrases with an NP as complement (*to*+NP). An example for each case is given in (20) where the verb is *give* and the role of the argument in focus is GOAL:

TABLE 8 *Sentences in the PPCME2: total and in 'French-based' texts*

period	sentences	"French-based" texts (PPCME2 identifiers)		
M1 1150–1250	16033	2522	17,4%	trinit
M2 1250–1350	10151	7426	78,0%	ayenbi, earlps, kentse
M3 1350–1420	30238	10123	33,1%	boeth, brut3, ctmeli, ctpars, mandev, vices4
M4 1420–1500	18648	5903	26,9%	edmund, malory, aelr4
total	75070	25974	34,6%	13 texts

(20) *a.* *to+PRO:* And **to þeme** he **yafe** monny ryalle ornamenttus.
and to them he gave many royal ornaments
SIEGE, 92.701

b. *to+NP:* and **gaf** the scawberd Excaliber **to her lover**.
and gave the scabbard Excaliber to her lover
MALORY, 59.1973

c. *PRO:* He hath **yevyn you** beaute…
he has given you beauty
MALORY, 655.4476

d. *NP:* and **gaff kynge Idres** the horse
and gave king Idres the horse
MALORY, 22.675

4.3.2 Syntactic Realisations of the GOAL of Give

In OE, *give* assigned a GOAL role to its dative complement. We expect the quantitative differences between the syntactic realisation of the GOAL as NP or PP to correlate with our distinction between 'French-based' and 'other' texts.

We counted the frequencies of *give* with PP-GOAL and NP-GOAL, both for lexical and pronominal heads. Table 9 shows the frequencies, absolute and relative to the subcorpus size, i.e. divided by the number of sentences in each subcorpus.

In Figure 2, *to*-PPs are represented by solid bars (grey for pronouns, black for NPs), NPs are represented by hatched bars (horizontally for pronouns, diagonally for NPs). For each period (M1 to M4), the stacked bars show the total

TABLE 9 give: *forms of* GOAL *in French-based (F) and other (O) texts, periods M1-M4, absolute and relative (per sentence) frequencies*

	to+PRO	*to*+NP	XXXPRO	XXXNP	*to*+PRO	*to*+NP	PRO	NP
F-M1	0	0	25	10	.0000	.0000	.0099	.0040
O-M1	0	5	116	44	.0000	.0004	.0086	.0033
F-M2	19	35	36	6	.0026	.0047	.0048	.0008
O-M2	4	11	19	3	.0015	.0040	.0070	.0011
F-M3	5	77	82	4	.0005	.0076	.0081	.0004
O-M3	45	99	159	30	.0022	.0049	.0079	.0015
F-M4	0	5	43	6	.0000	.0008	.0073	.0010
O-M4	7	40	102	12	.0005	.0031	.0080	.0009

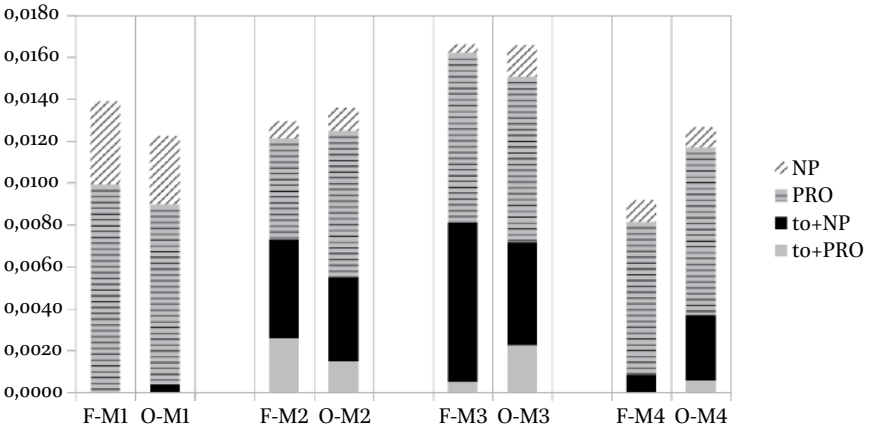

FIGURE 2 *GOAL of* give *in French-based (F) and other (O) texts, periods M1-M4, absolute and relative (per sentence) frequencies*

frequency of 'dative' arguments, the left bar for 'French-based' texts (F-M*n*), and the right bar for the other texts (O-M*n*).

As expected, 'dative' NPs (NP) have significant frequencies only in M1. Their numbers become insignificant in M2. Prepositional 'datives' (the solid bars of PRO and NP taken together) develop in M2. The frequencies in 'French-based' texts are significantly higher (χ^2 $p < 0.05$) compared to the other texts, and they show a frequency peak in the periods M2 and M3. PPs of the type *to*+PRO have a frequency peak in the 'French-based' texts of M2, followed by a peak in the other texts of M3. They decrease in M4. PPs of the type *to*+NP also appear in

M2 and reach peak frequencies in M3, where the frequencies in French-based texts double. In M4 their frequencies slightly decrease.

In order to strengthen our claim that the prepositional realisation is due to language contact, we have to rule out the possibility that the higher frequencies are due to the position of the GOAL argument, since Mustanoja (1960) observes that *to*-PPs have a preference to occur in post-verbal position, after the THEME:

> The *to*-periphrasis is generally used when the indirect object is separated from the verb by the direct (accusative) object or by some other word or words. This general principle is observed in late ME prose; [...]
>
> MUSTANOJA, 1960: 96

This correlation was scrutinised. In our data, however, the order of THEME and GOAL is irrelevant: M3 shows a high number of pronominal PPs, and about half of them appear before the THEME and are nevertheless prepositional, as in example (21).

(21) and he ȝaf **to hym** power to make doom
and he gave to him power to make doom
'and he gave him the power to pass a sentence'.

CMNTEST, 5, 20J.411

So there is no correlation between the occurrence of *to*-PPs and the order in which the arguments appear. Therefore, under the language contact hypothesis, these figures can reasonably be interpreted as a passing influence of French, leading to higher frequencies of prepositional datives in periods M2 and M3. In M4 prepositional datives decrease because double-object constructions become more frequent, and pronominal prepositional datives almost disappear.

This diachronic tendency is highlighted by the following examples, showing in period M1 (22a) the pronoun in the double-object construction GOAL-THEME, in period M2 (22b) the pronominal PP (GOAL-THEME), and in period M4 (22c) the structure with postposed pronominal PP (THEME-GOAL) reflecting the preferred order in Present-Day English.

(22) a. & ȝef **ham** hare bonen
and gave them their requests
'and gave them their requests.'

ANCRIW-1,II.122.1547

b. Ha God þat ȝeueþ **to me** uengeaunces…
ha God that gives to me vengeances
'Ha, God who gives vengeance to me.'

EARLPS, 20.79

c. many oþer seyntys þat ben in Hevyn, whech ȝevyn gret worshep **to me**
many other saints that are in heaven which give great worhsip to me
'Many other saints who are in heaven and which give great worship to me.'

KEMPE, 51.1146

The syntactic realisations of the arguments of *give* indicate that the 'French pattern', which we observed with verbs of French origin like *plesen* (examples 7 and 8) even spread to native verbs belonging to other verb classes. The fact that frequencies in 'French-based' texts are higher support the hypothesis that French served as model language, and the fact that the effect was also visible in the other texts supports the hypothesis that contact influence was not limited to the specific context of translation. Naturally, our corpus does not allow us to conclude that the effect went beyond the domain of writing. For a limited time span, then, and to a limited extent, the syntactic peculiarities of verbs of French or Latin origin that Pinker had observed seem to have affected the structure of native verbs. At the end of the contact situation French influence tailed off and the transfer of French structures to native verbs also disappeared. Nevertheless, the English system as such was affected without doubt since the contrast between verbs like *donate* and *give* prevails.

Before we conclude we will briefly mention two independent facts which seem to strengthen our assumptions, without however elaborating on them in this paper.

First, work on language acquisition 9Schmitz, 2006) has shown that in a situation of bilingual German/French acquisition dative is a labile category. According to Schmitz, dative case is acquired later than other cases, regardless of the language combination and of the dominant language, and is more affected by interferences than the accusative. Schmitz assumes that this is because 'dative case is lexical and acquired in a way different from the structural accusative' (Schmitz, 2006: 259). What can be observed is that bilinguals tend to overmark the GOAL using prepositional phrases with *zu*. German children produced structures like *ich geb das zu sie* (lit. *I give this to her*, *ibid*, p. 258), which clearly deviate from the expected structure *ich gebe es ihr* 'I give it her'. These structures are strikingly similar to the structures we found in ME texts,

particularly in those influenced by French (see Ingham (2012b) on the bilingual status of speakers in ME). If the observed frequent marking of the GOAL of *give* with *to* was an effect of bilingualism, it is not surprising that it ceased after the bilingual period (cf. section 1), because native verbs do not provide any phonetic clues allowing monolinguals to perceive them as a class apart. Hence, in period M4 native verbs lost *to* as a GOAL marker, yielding the modern double-object construction *he gave him a book*, whereas verbs of (phonetically perceivable) French origin did not develop the double-object construction and retained the prepositional *Goal* phrase: *donate the painting to the museum* (vs. **donate the museum the painting*, cf. Pinker's examples quoted in section 1). This explanation is further strengthened by Pinker's observation that the double-object construction is acceptable as soon as the stress pattern changes: "Latinate verbs that have been assimilated to the native stress pattern do generally dativize" (Pinker, 1989: 46).

Second, our data is compatible with diagnostics indicating contact-induced change put forward in Heine (2009). They express situations which favour the assumption of grammatical replication, relating a property P_R of the replica language to a property P_M of the model language. They can reasonably be applied to the code-copying framework we adopted in section 2: Heine's *model language* corresponds to Johanson's *model code*, OF; his *replica language* corresponds to Johanson's *basic code*, ME. Heine's diagnostics D2 and D7 point in the right direction, although they are not completely met:

> D2: Genetic patterning. P_R is not found in other dialects or languages closely related to R, while the corresponding category P_M of M does not show such restrictions.
>
> HEINE, 2009: 35

> D7: Relative degree of grammaticalization: P_R differs from P_R used by R speakers or speakers of languages closely related to R that are not, or less, exposed to language contact by being more grammaticalized.
>
> HEINE, 2009: 43

Obviously the English *to*-PP has analogues in other Germanic languages, but English appears to be the only Germanic language where the prepositional 'dative' is expressed by only one preposition, *to*. Abraham (2006: 8) states that

> [...] there is no English-like semantic equivocation between preposition Case and indirect object function, on the one hand, and verb-proximity and direct object function, on the other, in the rest of the Germanic languages.

German, for example, can mark GOAL-like arguments with several prepositions, e.g. *zu* or *an*. Likewise, Abraham raises the question 'what the trigger is for Norwegian and Dutch assigning different prepositions' and mentions 'the total grammaticalization English has undergone in designating no more than one single preposition, *to*, to indirect Case' (*ibid*). In our language-contact perspective and in view of the diachronic data discussed above, the particular status of the English *to*-PP, i.e. the fact that no other English prepositions competed with *to* as a GOAL marker, can be explained by the fact that French *a*-phrases were copied to English.

Finally, Heine's diagnostic D5 fits nicely with the quantitative differences between the 'French-based' and the other texts:

> D5: Frequency of use. P_R occurs more frequently with speakers of R being in contact with speakers of M than in speakers of R who are not or less exposed to contact with language M, and M has a property P_M that is equivalent to P_R.
>
> HEINE, 2009: 41

5 Conclusion

Results gained from historical data must be interpreted with caution. The findings presented here will have to be confirmed by the investigation of the argument structures of other verbs, in isolation as well as in the context of their semantic verb class. Our mixed approach of global quantitative analyses combined with in-depth studies of selected texts or text pairs will further be pursued, and socio-historical facts revealing more details about the situation of bilingualism and language acquisition must be shown to be compatible with the results of linguistic analysis. We nevertheless think that we have established the following facts:

1 We investigated argument structures with a French dative and showed how a language that gave up formal case distinctions (Middle English) copied the pronominal and nominal 'dative' arguments of the foreign model code (Old French).
2 First we focussed on *please* and by presenting further empirical evidence from the PPCME2 and the *Ayenbite of Inwyt* we corroborated Allen's (1995) assumption that the semantic properties of *please* triggered a change and replaced *quemen* (but not *liken*). We also showed that French 'dative' arguments were generally copied in the form of English PPs with *to*, which temporarily led to structures of the type *please to him/to God*.

3 We presented evidence for contact-induced change which went beyond the direct influence of French loan verbs. The typical copying of datives by PPs seems to have been responsible for a clear increase of GOAL PPs even with the native verb *give*. In Present-Day English *give*, unlike *please*, still governs a PP, but in Middle English the use of the PP was unrestricted, independent of complement order and verb adjacency, which constrain the *to*-PP *vs* the double-object construction today.

4 Even the small amount of quantitative data presented here has shown that our distinction between 'French-based' and 'other' Middle English texts, based on language-external facts alone, is a useful method for identifying the potential effects of historical language contact. The present study as well as other studies we have conducted so far exhibited quantitative differences between both groups of texts, and the in-depth comparison of the *Ayenbite of Inwyt* with its French source has confirmed our approach.

5 The diachronic analysis speaks in favour of contact-induced influence in all of these cases. Effects occur mainly in the periods M2 and M3. They tend to have frequency peaks that can be interpreted as deviations from the regular course of internal change. They also show significant differences between 'French-based' and 'other' texts. This finding is in line with findings from studies on the copying of the suffix *-able* (Trips and Stein, 2008), on left dislocation [Trips and Stein(2016)], and of cleft sentences (Trips and Stein, 2018) in the ME period.

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