Who *came riding* first? Le chevalier or the knight? A multiple corpus analysis investigating historical language contact

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Abstract

This article investigates contact-induced change in the historical contact situation betweeen Old French/Anglo French and Middle English and demonstrates how annotated corpora, digital resources, and new tools especially designed for historical linguistics, provide an empirical basis to gain new insights into this type of change which also have a bearing on linguistic theory. The phenomenon under scrutiny is the direct motion construction which, according to Talmy (1985), is typologically constrained: in verb-framed languages like (older stages of) French the Goal of Motion cannot be expressed syntactically in the same way as in satellite-framed languages like (older stages of) English. We show that Anglo French, the contact variety which developed between 1066 and 1500 on the British island, exhibits properties of a satellite-framed language that we interpret as instances of contact-induced change. Further, we show that linguistic influence may have been reciproal, i.e. the direct motion construction in Middle English gained "French properties". We discuss our findings in the context of theories of contact and change, and in the light of findings from research in language acquisition.

Between 1066 and 1500 Medieval England experienced a situation of intense language contact. Knowlege of Old French (OF), the prestigious foreign model code [11] which had been originally brought to England by William I and his army, rapidly spread, so that by around 1250 the population of Medieval England had changed from adult second language (L2) learners to child L2-learners and even simultaneous bilinguals [10][1]. Furthermore, the contact variety Anglo-French (AF) arose which had the status of a language used in speech and writing [10]. Ingham (2012b) has shown that AF was used as vehicle language to learn Latin in so-called 'song' schools which shows that considerable competence of AF must have been normal for those who received an education. Bilingual code switching in accounts, lay subsidy rolls and leases has provided empirical support for a picture of effective

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[1]Note that Ingham only talks about bilinguals and does not make the more fine-grained distinction made here by the authors of the article.

spoken language competence not only in education but also in French in day-to-day professional contexts, on the part of mother-tongue English speakers at this time ([9]).

Recent studies in the field of language acquisition have shown that in such bilingual acquisition scenarios, transfer of (syntactic) structures is likely to occur not only from the speakers' first language (L1) to their L2, but also from their L2 to their L1 (see e.g. [7]). In this study, we want to shed light on one such complex case of reciprocal linguistic influence which has hitherto not been discussed at all in the literature, namely that of the directed motion construction in Middle English (ME) and AF, the two languages under scrutiny in the historical contact situation mentioned above.

The directed motion construction is a perfect test case for acquisition and change because its availability is constrained by typological boundaries [16]. In the Germanic languages such as English, the Goal of Motion is usually expressed outside the verb by adverbials and particles: a "satellite" in Talmy's terms [17, 486]. Languages, which exhibit such satellites (bound affixes, free prepositions, adverbs, etc.), are thus called "satellite-framed" (s-framed). In contrast, in verb-framed, (v-framed) languages which do not exhibit "satellites", the Goal of Motion is expressed by other syntactic means, i.e. adverbial subclauses (e.g. gerundive constructions). Most of the Romance languages such as French are v-framed.

Thus, in an English sentence like (1a.) the Goal of Motion is expressed by the PP *to Paris*. In French, the same construction (1a.') can only have a locative reading ('the knight rides around in Paris').[2] In order to gain a directed motion reading, French resorts to the kind of constructions exemplified in (1b.') and (1c.').

(1) a. *The knight rode to Paris.*
     a.' **Le chevalier chevaucha à Paris.*
     b. *The knight came to Paris by riding.*
     b.' *Le chevalier entra Paris en chevauchant.*
     c. *The knight came riding to Paris.*
     c.' *Le chevalier allait à Paris en chevauchant.*

It becomes clear from these examples that, in general, v-framed constructions such as (1b.) and (1c.) are not excluded from s-framed languages. The Talmyan classification refers to the preferred syntactic option as it is used in everyday language and over a wide range of semantic notions [16, 62]. In other words, s-framed languages have a larger set of constructions that express directed motion, which implies that v-framed constructions are a subset of the constructions available in s-framed languages. This observation is crucial in the context of our investigation since bilinguals, on the one hand, tend to prefer constructions that are licensed in both of their languages [6], and, on the other, selective attention blinds the acquisition system to some degree to aspects in which the L2-sample exceeds the

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[2]The reason for this is that French does not have simple lexical elements that convey Path ([21]). *Jusqu'à* has been analyzed as part of a complex prepositional phrase by [23].

L1-system [5, 92]. By taking into account research on acquisition and language typology, we predict to find that adult L2-speakers of AF

a) take over some s-framed patterns from their dominant language into their v-framed second language even though they would not be included in the continental OF inventory.
b) significantly increase their use of otherwise dispreferred v-framed constructions in their dominant language (ME) under the influence of their v-framed second language.

Our investigation provides new insights into the field of historical linguistics and language contact by

a) using digital resources for historical corpora, syntactically annotated corpora and newly created tools and annotations[3]
b) dealing with a contact variety that has not gained a lot of attention
c) applying models of linguistic theory and results from language acquisition to contact-induced historical change

1 Directed motion in Old French and in Anglo-French

This section gives a brief overview of the constructions expressing directed motion in AF and OF. Further, it investigates the difference between OF and AF gerundive-constructions in more detail across verbs (prediction a)).

1.1 Directed motion in OF

Since French has been classified as a typically v-framed language, we do not expect to find s-framed patterns. If we do, these exceptions need to be explained. In continental OF, the expression of directed motion essentially relies on v-framed patterns. The thirteen s-framed examples that have been listed on various occasions in the literature (see [20, 111f]; [3, 42f][4]), which seem to contradict this observation, date in fact from 1333 to the beginning of the sixteenth century, that is, from the Middle French (MF) period.[5]A sample-search across continental texts in the *Base de Français Médiéval* database (BFM, [2]) for *chevauchier* revealed virtually no further examples from OF. Instead, the Goal of Motion is most frequently expressed using either a durative *tant . . . que* sub-clause as in (2), or a gerundive-construction as in (3):

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[3]The BASICS tool kit, cf. http://terrano.philosophie.uni-stuttgart.de/BASICStoolkit/.

[4]From these, we would have to exclude 1400-1410, Baye, Journal 48: *qui dansoient par la ville* and 1369, Machaut, Prise d'Alexandrie, 107: *Il monta tantost à cheval*, [...] *Et chevaucha dedens la ville*, because contexts prove that they describe atelic movement.

[5]Researchers rely on lexical and syntactic criteria in order to establish the period division between Old and Middle French, which they conventionally situate at around 1350 (Tobler-Lommatzsch and Dictionnaire étymologique de l'ancien français).

(2) **Tant** *ont chevauchié …* **Qu'il** *sont a Valedon venu.*
so much have ridden …that they are to Valedon come
'They rode until they gained Valedon.'
(ca. 1200, Renard de Beaujeu)

(3) *Arondel y* **va chevauchant**
Arondel there goes riding
'Arondel rides there'
(pic., 1st q. c13, Galeran)

Overall, the OF data from the BFM confirm typological predictions as far as the absence of the s-framed type of Goal of Motion construction as well as the use of the v-framed construction is concerned. Things change, however, when we look at AF data.

1.2 Directed motion in AF

Based on the assumption that AF is a contact variety of a s-framed Germanic and a v-framed Romance language, hypothesis a) predicts more s-framed patterns in AF than in OF. This is indeed borne out, as we find significantly more Goal of Motion constructions in AF than in continental OF: for our sample-verb *chevauchier* we find five unambiguously resultative constructions with *a* and *sus* as in (4) in the BFM, in five AF texts from the second third of the twelfth century to the middle of the thirteenth century as in (5) and (6):

(4) *Si vus a Leïrcestre peussiez chevalchier*
If you to Leicester could ride
'Could you ride to Leicester (agn., ca. 1174, Fantosme, bfm)
(agn., ca. 1174 Fantosme)

(5) *Puis prist un batel et nagea au Roi de France*
Then took[he] a boat and swam to the King of France
'He then took a boat and sailed over to the King of France'
(c1245, Life of Edward the Confessor, anh)

(6) *Tost cort a l'us u a fenestre;*
soon run[he] to the door or to window
'She keeps running from door to window'
(mid c12, Proverbes Salomon, anh)

Five occurrences of a total of 117 AF hits for *chevauchier* amount to 4.2 % and are contrasted with one occurrence of a total of 444 hits in continental texts (0.2 %). While the limits of this article do not allow us to give detailed analyses for the other manner-of-motion verbs as well, a quick search in the Tobler-Lommatsch (TL) dictionary [19] and in the Anglo-Norman Hub database (ANH [1]) revealed additional examples with unambiguously resultative goal-constituents for the verbs previously cited in the literature [3], [20]: two with *voler* (mid twelfth century and late thirteenth century), two with *courir*[6](mid twelfth century and 1174), two

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[6]The verb seems to have been used largely as a synonym for *aller*, and pronominal *i* does repeatedly occur with it on both sides of the Channel, but full fledged PPs like the two we refer to here are comparatively rare.

with *sauter* (ca. 1190, beginning of the fourteenth century), one with *naviier* (first quarter of the twelfth century), and one with *nager* (1174). All of them are AF, and they all antedate the Middle French examples previously known in the literature.

On the other hand, the durative sub-clause given in (2), which is found with 4 % of the occurrences of *chevauchier* in OF, does not occur with *chevauchier* in the AF data at all. Thus, the data so far confirm that AF differs from OF in the expression of directed motion in the sense that AF is considerably more tolerant towards s-framed constructions than OF. Moreover, by their quantitative and chronological distribution, these results very clearly indicate an AF origin of this construction, even if we do not yet see clearly why and how it was subsequently taken over into Middle French[7].

The contrast between OF and AF becomes even more obvious once we look at the gerundive constructions which are at the center of this contribution. As to *chevauchier*-gerunds, even bare numbers indicate a significant difference between AF and OF: in OF there are 18 gerundives of a total of 444 occurences of *chevauchier* (4%), compared to 18 of a total of 117 AF occurrences of *chevauchier* (15.4%). Moreover, OF *chevauchier*-gerunds are built with *aller* in ten out of thirteen cases (76%), whereas in AF *aller* seems to be dispreferred (3 out of 13, 23%). These findings suggest that additional factors are at play. For this reason we took a closer look at the gerundive construction.

Across verbs we find a significant qualitative difference between AF and OF *venir*-gerundives. In AF, in contrast to OF,

1. *venir* seems to be largely desemantisized
2. *venir* gerundives are extended to achievement verbs
3. *venir* gerunds can be used to convey a final sense

In OF, *venir* gerunds seem to be restricted to the modal case, as 78% of *venir*-gerundives take Manner of Motion-gerundives. This suggests that *venir* has maintained its original Motion semantics in this construction. 78% in OF compare to only 63% of modal gerundives in AF. Additional evidence for AF *venir* being more desemantisized in this construction is provided by the *Life of Saint Francis* (from 1275), where the *venir* is combined with the static verb *agenoiler* 'to kneel'. We found no comparable case in the OF material.

(7)   *Devant   les pez le   roy* **vint   agenoillant**
      In front of the feet [of] the King came[he] kneeling
      'To the king's feet he came down kneeling'
      (1275, stfrancis, 5)

Moreover, as seen above, in AF as well as in OF the gerundive construction is used with Manner-of-Motion verbs in order to introduce a telicizing Goal-constituent. But crucially, in AF it is also used with punctual accomplishment verbs such as *acoster* 'to bring in (to)', *atteindre* 'to reach (sb.)', *acontrer/encontrer* 'to meet (sb.)', *retourner* 'to turn around', *survenir* 'to stumble upon (sb.)'. The only

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[7]We appeal in this context to the "precocity of the Anglo-Norman literature" ([14] and [13]).

author who applies *venir* as an aspectual modifier of a given verb is Chrestien de Troyes who uses it with *atteindre* in two instances in two of his texts.

Finally, there are three instances where the *venir* gerundive is used to convey a final meaning, instead of the infinitive construction we would typically expect in OF. This is a strong indicator in favour of influence from ME, since only English but not OF can use the participle to express a final meaning. It is probably an instance of global copying, in the sense that the AF final gerundives reflect the ambiguity of the English *-ing*-form (modal vs. final, see below).

(8) a. *Gudmod* **vint maneçant** *kar fel iert e tiran.*
      Gudmod(Akk.) came [to] threaten because mean was he and [a] tyran
      'He came to threaten Gudmod, because he was a mean and tyrannical man'
      (ca1170, Horn)

    b. *Si me mand cum ad nun e quei il* **vient querant**
      So to me confide how has name and what he comes [to] ask
      'So tell me what your name is and what you came to ask me for'
      (ca1170, Horn)

    c. *Iceaux del front* **vindrent envaïssant**
      These from the front came [to] attack
      'They came to attack at the front side'
      (4th q. c12, Thomas de Kent)

2 The *come riding* construction in the history of English

This section briefly discusses possible s-framed and v-framed constructions in Old English (OE) and Middle English (ME) which were the systems that the OF speakers got in contact with. Further, we will investigate assumption b), which are expected frequency effects in ME in terms of the dispreferred v-framed construction *come + riding*.

2.1 Old English

Since OE is a Germanic language, we expect to find s-framed constructions where Manner or Cause are conflated in the Motion verb and Path is expressed by an adverbial. This prediction is borne out (see example (9)), it is the unmarked (most frequent) case[8].

(9) *Ða* **rad** *se æþeling Eadmund* **to Norðhymbran** *to Vhtrede eorl.*
    then rode the atheling Edmund to Northumbria   to Uhtred eorl
    'Then the nobleman Edmund rode to Earl Uhtred to Northumbria.'
    (ChronE_[Plummer]:1016.17.1949)

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[8]In our small-scale study of *ridan* this construction occurs 140 (90%) times of a total of 155 cases. 15 instances (9.7%) show the present participle *ridende* of which 5 instances (33.3%) show the *cuman + ridende* construction.

Two other constructions are possible: (i) the Motion verb *cuman* is followed by a bare infinitive expressing the Manner of Motion of the finite verb (see (10a.); (ii) *cuman* is followed by a present participle expressing the Manner of Motion of the finite verb (see (10b.)), cf. [4], [15].

(10) a. *þa **com** þærto **ridan** sum cristen man sona ...*
          then came thereto ride   some Christian man soon ...
          'Then soon some Christian man came riding to this place ...'
          (ÆLS_[Maurice]:90.5734)

      b. *& þær **com** þa **fleogende** Godes engel scinende swa swa sunne.*
          and there came then flying   God's angel shining   like the sun
          'and there God's angel came flying shining like the sun.'
          (cathom1,ÆCHom_I,_31:445.177.6221)

In the third volume of [22] the construction *cuman + present participle* is found among the constructions of slight subordination with verbs of inchoation (§1793 (d) verbs of motion). Visser notes that it occurs very frequently in all stages of English and he provides a number of Old English (OE) and Middle English (ME) examples. By taking a closer look at the examples extracted from the *York-Toronto-Helsinki Parsed Corpus of Old English Prose* (YCOE), however, we found that (i) this construction does not occur very frequently (9.7%), (ii) it predominantly occurs with an interpretation that is not the interpretation of the AF v-framed construction *venir + participle*.

Concerning the latter observation, two types of construction exist: one type where the participle does not modify the Motion verb (final), and one type where it does (modal). The meaning of these two constructions can be paraphrased as 'come in order to do sth.' and 'come by doing sth.', respectively.

(11) a. *and siððan þæs on mergen **com** to Basilie **biddende** fulluhtes.*
          'and afterwards in the morning (he) came to Basil to ask to be baptised.'(ÆLS_[Basil]:163.560)

      b. *him **com** ða **ridende** to sum arwurðe ridda sittende on snawhwitum horse.*
          'Some honourable horseman came riding to him sitting on a snow-white horse.'(ÆCHom_II,_10:82.30.1631)

The example in (11a.) does not mean that the Agent of the sentence comes by baptising but that the Agent comes in order to ask for being baptised. In (11b.) and (11c.), however, this is exactly the meaning that is conveyed: the horseman comes by riding (not in order to ride).

The final type 'come in order to do sth.' has a token frequency of 33 and a type frequency of 22. The modal type 'come by doing sth.' has a token frequency of 26 and a type frequency of 10. We can conclude that in OE the *cuman + present participle* construction is not very frequent and it is more likely to occur with a participle that does not modify the Motion verb *come*.

2.2 Middle English

Exploiting the lemmatised version of the *Penn-Helsinki Parsed Corpus of Middle English* (PPCME2 [12]) qualitative and quantitative changes can be observed: (i) the construction with a bare infinitive is basically lost; (ii) the construction where the Motion verb *comen* is modified by a following verb of Manner of Motion is increasingly found (47 occurrences of this type vs. 28 occurrences of the type 'come to do sth.', overall 4.1% in the whole corpus). Relating these observations to OF and AF, the loss of the bare infinitive may be connected to contact with French since this type of construction did not exist (i.e. we may assume a priming effect towards other possiblilites; but also note that at this time the *to*-infinitive develops in ME, see [15]). Concerning the construction *comen + Manner of Motion verb* we saw that although it occurs both in OF and AF, it is only in AF that it occurs with a wider range of verbs, also denoting accomplishment. This is exactly what we find in ME. In our small-case study of constructions with the Manner of Motion verb *riden* 26 occurrences of the present participle were found 17 instances (65.4%) of which occurred in the *comen + ridinge* construction. Here an increase from 33.3% in OE can be observed. Interestingly, about a fourth of these instances can be attributed to one text, *Malory's Morte Darthur* (1469) which is based on OF/AF sources.

(12) *Thenne afore hym he sawe **come rydynge** oute of a castel a knyght,*
       'Then before him he saw how a knight came riding out of a castle.'
       (MALORY,68.2300)

In recent studies a number of authors have investigated interference effects in contexts of language contact through translation [18],[8]. Since translators activate their competences in two languages, this process can be seen as a specific case of language contact. Haeberli (to appear) shows in two studies of the placement of object pronouns in ME texts and their OF/AF bases that statistical interference effects occur which may even lead to syntactic innovation. In our case, we may assume that the ME writers increasingly used the (modal) *come + verb of Motion* construction because (i) they recast the OF/AF text, and (ii) the construction was already one option to express Motion in ME. It is likely that these writers also used this construction even in non-translated texts more frequently because of syntactic priming effects known from language acquisition [7]. In this way, OF/AF may have had an impact on the frequency of this v-framed construction.

3 Conclusion

Concerning our findings, we can say that when speakers/writers of French got in contact with ME, a language that exhibited v-framed constructions as part of their s-framed grammar (OE and ME), they came across a construction that they were familiar with from their French inventory, namely the gerundive construction. What the speakers/writers added to their grammar was a new way to express Motion, i.e.

the construction with *venir*. Speakers/writers of continental OF were less exposed to ME and therefore they did not develop these constructions in the same way. In ME qualitative and quantitative effects in favour of the AF *venir+participle* construction can be observed which may be due to language contact through translations. So we may interpret our findings as reciprocal contact effects: from ME to AF and from OF/AF to ME. Our study suggests that whenever a v-framed and a s-framed language get in contact, it will be the v-framed properties of the s-framed language that will be copied and strengthened in the verb-framed language. Further studies are, of course, needed to corroborate this hypothesis.

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