



UNIVERSITY OF AGDER

The level of Old Norse influence on the development of Middle English

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This master's thesis is carried out as a part of the education at the University of Agder and is therefore approved as a part of this education. However, this does not imply that the University answers for the methods that are used or the conclusions that are drawn.

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1. Introduction

The part of the English language history that has been given most attention and still remains the greatest mystery is the development of Middle English. This is the form of the English language we find in records written in from the middle of the twelfth to the beginning of the sixteenth century. Poussa (1982, p. 69) calls it “[t]he great unsolvable problem in English philology”, referring to the vast extent of change that marks the transition from Old to Middle English. Old English is undisputedly regarded as a West Germanic language, and tradition also places Middle English, and consequently Modern English, on the western branch. However, Middle English did not develop in a closed linguistic environment, as is evident from the numerous examples of foreign elements that entered the language at this time. The period around the development of Middle English was marked by heavy foreign interaction. Old Norse is one of the languages that were in contact with Old English at this time, through the settling of Scandinavian Vikings in England. From the first suggestion by Bradley (1904), the role of Old Norse in the development of Middle English has been much debated and argued for. It is the extent of this role that I want to discuss in my thesis.

A forthcoming article by Emonds and Faarlund, that has been given international attention after an interview with Faarlund in the research magazine *Apollon* in November 2012, questions the traditional placement of Middle English as West Germanic. The authors argue that Middle English developed as a form of Anglicized Norse and should be relocated at the North Germanic branch of the language family tree. Besides, this is not the first time the traditional view has been challenged. In the 1980s, research into mixed languages led scholars to claim Middle English much resembled the mixed languages in other parts of the world. Poussa (1982) argued that Middle English is a mixed language (creole) evolved through interaction between Old English and Old Norse. Both these theories break with the traditional view of how English evolved and challenge the role Old Norse has been given in earlier histories of the English language. It is because of this I have chosen to reopen the discussion of the Viking language’s role in the development of Middle English in my thesis. With the new argumentation by Emonds and Faarlund the role of Old Norse is viewed from three different perspectives: the traditional view, the creole theory, and the hypothesis of Anglicized Norse. Should we still listen to tradition, or is there something in the newer theories?

In chapter 2 I start out by presenting the contact situation between Old English and Old Norse, focusing both on social and linguistic factors. This includes a closer look at the particular contact at hand as well as language contact theory in general. The main focus of the second chapter is on the linguistic factors of language contact, such as contact-induced language change and the discussion of mutual intelligibility between speakers of Old English and Old Norse. Chapter 3 is an introduction to the three languages involved (Old English, Old Norse, Middle English). This chapter also includes a closer look at some of the important aspects of the development, such as the overall simplification of Middle English and the fact that Old Norse was not the only language contact English was involved in. Chapter 4 hosts the discussion of Old Norse's role in the development of Middle English. Here I present the three theories mentioned above and include what critics have had to say about them. Chapter 5 is the conclusion, and it is here I present my findings based on the discussion.

2. Anglo-Norse language contact

The setting in Viking Age England where Old Norse (henceforth ON) was in a position to influence the development of Middle English (henceforth ME) is the topic of this chapter. Given the existence of many words of ON origin, ranging from everyday items and concepts to personal pronouns, there is no doubt that ON had at least some extent of influence. However, scholars disagree on the range of ON impact and it is the aim of this thesis to shed some light on this matter. The language contact setting is reviewed with regards to both social and linguistic factors. Section 2.1 on social factors discusses the people, the historic setting, the communities, and the reasons for interaction. My aim with this section is to paint a historical and social backdrop for the specific contact situation between speakers of Old English (henceforth OE) and ON. Section 2.2 on linguistic factors looks into how interactions between the two groups were possible. The object of the linguistic section is to create an understanding of contact-induced language change and to look into the concepts of language relationship, intelligibility, bilingualism and levels of influence. Though I in this section speak in more general terms than in the one on social factors, the topics discussed are chosen for their relevance to the topic at hand and examples will be given therefrom.

2.1. Social factors

The social factors relevant in a language contact setting are the social, political and economic situation, the reasons for interaction between the language groups and where these interactions take place. It has been argued by McIntosh (1994, p. 137) that “fundamentally,

what we mean by ‘languages in contact’ is ‘users of language in contact’”. No language can in its own power be in contact with another. Both parts are dependent on their speakers in order to create situations of communication across languages. ON and OE only came in contact through interaction between their speakers, and it is therefore important not only to look at the languages in themselves for evidence of contact, but to look at the situations of contact that existed between the two groups. In this way it is possible to understand the reasons behind the languages’ influence over each other.

2.1.1. The people and the languages

Before moving on, the usage of names must be discussed. There are many names that can be given both the people and the languages of this particular contact situation. For example, the main title of this chapter speaks of contact between the languages of the Angles and the Norse. It is clear from the context that the languages spoken of are that of the people living in England and that of the settlers from Scandinavia. But who were these people, what do their names really refer to, and which names should really be used for them and their languages?

Starting with the Angles, the name *Anglo* of course comes from the term *Anglo-Saxon*, which is a commonly used name for both the people and the language of Viking Age England. It is a combination of the names of two of the three peoples – Angles, Saxons, and Jutes – who all migrated to England during the migration period or the Germanic invasions at about 400-500 AD. These three tribes came from an area stretching from what is now Denmark (Jutes and Angles) and westward along the coast of what is now Germany (Saxons). According to Crystal (2005, pp. 16-18), the Jutes are only mentioned once by Bede in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* when describing the Germanic arrivals to the British Isles in 449. Only the names of the Angles and the Saxons survive further, which may explain the popularity of the term *Anglo-Saxon*. (Anglo-Jute-Saxon just does not have quite the same ring to it.) The term *British* (or *Brittonic*) is at this age of history often used for the Celtic population that already inhabited Britain before the invasion of the Germanic tribes. The term *Britain* will at some times come up when speaking in general terms of the British Isles and of a greater area than what is usually referred to as England, but *England* is the name most used to speak of the country where the Anglo-Norse language contact occurred. In this paper, as the main focus is on the development of language, the speakers of OE will mainly merely be called *English*, *Englishmen* or indeed *Old English speakers*. This is chiefly for reasons of simplicity and coherence (the English speak English).

It is probably quite obvious at this point that the term *Old English* will be used for the language of the Germanic invaders. This name has a much stronger status than *Anglo-Saxon*, even though this term is also found in use. The language developed, however, through interaction between Angles, Saxons and Jutes after their arrival in England. Baugh and Cable (2002, p. 52) argue that “it is impossible to say how much the speech of the Angles differed from that of the Saxons or that of the Jutes. The differences were certainly slight.” (2002, p. 51) Even though we do not know with what ease these people communicated, this is how the first branch of the English language developed and it is this first period, from 450 to 1150, that has later been labelled the now familiar *Old English*. Crystal (2005, p. 34) emphasises, however, that there is good reason to believe the language was far from uniform, with several prominent dialectal differences. Still, when speaking of the language of the abovementioned *English*, the term *Old English* will be used.

The other party in this contact situation was the speakers of Norse, who were Scandinavian Vikings. Most of the Vikings that settled in England at this time were either Danes or Norwegians, but mainly Danes. Scholars writing about the Viking Age in England use names such as *Norwegians*, *Danes*, *Scandinavians*, *Norsemen* and *Vikings* when referring to different groupings of the peoples who settled in and ruled parts of England in the ninth to eleventh centuries. I will mostly use the term *Scandinavians* when speaking of the entire group or in general terms, and it is natural to also refer to *Vikings* when speaking of the historical event of the group’s arrival in England. This is also a general term, applied to the entire group or non-specific parts of the invaders from Scandinavia. The names *Danes* or *Norwegians* will only be used when speaking of particular groupings from specific geographical areas, such as when calling the people who settled in what became known as the Danelaw *Danes*. As with the English, the Scandinavians will also often be referred to as *Old Norse speakers*.

The most important point in relation to the topic of my thesis, however, is not where the Scandinavians came from, but that they all spoke the same language, or a variation of it. The term *Old Norse* is most widely used for the language of the Scandinavian peoples at this time and is the term used in this paper. Other names, such as *Norse* and *Old Scandinavian*, are also found, and the latter is often used to make a point of the language not only being spoken in Norway. Faarlund (2004, p. 1) argues that the term *Old Norse* covers “the language used from the early ninth century till the late fourteenth century in Norway, Iceland, and the Faroes, and in the Norse settlements in the British Isles and Greenland”. He further argues that ON is the West Nordic branch of the North Germanic languages in medieval times, with the East Nordic

branch covering the languages of Denmark and Sweden. It was established earlier in this chapter that the main group of Vikings who settled in Britain during the Viking Age were of Danish origin and would according to Faarlund's categorisation not be counted as a people speaking Old Norse. However, the language spoken in the Norse settlements in Britain is by Faarlund himself is named ON. Even with the division argued for by Faarlund, there is reason to believe that the languages had not yet developed very far apart. Faarlund (2004, p. 2) argues that "over a period of almost 600 years and in a geographical area stretching from eastern Norway to Greenland, there must of course have been great linguistic variety. Still, the written sources that we have are uniform and stable enough to justify the concept of 'one language'". Faarlund's description does not, as already noted, cover the language spoken by the Danes, but there is agreement among scholars that the languages of Scandinavia at this time were very similar and can perhaps even be viewed as dialects of the same language (Haugen, 1976; Townend, 2002). In this thesis the language of the Vikings will be viewed as one, under the term *Old Norse*.

2.1.2. Historical setting

Vikings are first recorded arriving in England in an entry in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* dating from the year 787 AD. The relationship that would have such an impact on the island dwellers' language came off to a rather rocky start, as is evident from the very hostile nature of their first encounter. Translated into modern phrasing by Townend (2002), it happened something like this:

"787. In this year King Beorhtric married Offa's daughter Eadburg. And in his days three ships came for the first time; and then the reeve rode there and wanted to take them to the king's will because he did not know what they were; and he was killed. They were the first ships of Danish men that came to the land of the English people" (from the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, translated by Townend, 2002, p. 1).

Thus began the Viking Age in England. As we see from this record, the Vikings on the first ships came to plunder and rampage and steal. The most infamous raid by Vikings in England is the sack of Lindisfarne in 793. Raids of this kind continued sporadically over a period of almost a hundred years, until about 850 (Baugh & Cable, 2002, p. 93). Mugglestone (2006, p. 66) reports that there is evidence of Scandinavians settling in Britain from 870 onwards.

The people who came across the sea from Scandinavia were mostly Danes who settled in the eastern parts of England. After having conquered East Anglia and captured York, the Danish

Vikings pushed further west towards Wessex. King Alfred of Wessex defeated the Danes in 878, and the two sides signed a treaty defining a line, from Chester to London, to the east of which the Danes were allowed to dwell. This area thus became subject to Danish law and would later be referred to as the Danelaw. A smaller but considerable group of Norwegian Vikings made their homes mostly in the north-western parts of England in the area of Cumbria. The regions conquered by the Vikings spanned over a large geographical area, but it is unknown how large a number of Scandinavian invaders settled in England, and this is a topic of much controversy (cf. Holman, 2007; Härke, 2002). Stenton (1947, pp. 406-408) warns about “the ‘serious risk’ of underestimating their numbers, and states that ‘the Domesday book shows in 1066 landowners bearing Scandinavian names in every part of England’” (cited in Poussa, 1982, p. 76). Though it is impossible to know the exact number, the impact that the Scandinavians had on the English language testifies to widespread, long-lasting and influential language contact.

As we see from the first mention of Vikings in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* above the first instances of contact were of a hostile nature. Contact between the two languages was, however, not limited to war cries and treaty signings. Townend (2002, p. 3) emphasises that we find records of many “peaceful encounters between English speakers and Norse speakers” in Anglo-Saxon texts from the ninth to eleventh centuries. He further argues that in the areas of Scandinavian settlement it is “clear that the native Anglo-Saxon population [...] was by no means driven out or otherwise suppressed; and so in the tenth and eleventh centuries Anglo-Saxon England is more properly to be regarded as Anglo-Scandinavian England, with the two peoples, similar but distinctive, in close and persistent contact” (2002, p. 2). Pyles (1971) goes even further, claiming that the Scandinavians who settled in England had, by the time of the Norman Conquest (1066), “become one with” the English (1971, p. 152). A scenario of how this could have happened so quickly is offered by Poussa (1982, p. 74):

“The [English] civilian population of the East Midlands, caught between two Danish armies [Halfdan in the Kingdom of York and Guthrum in Mercia], consisting largely of women and children and men too old to have served in the levy, must have been in complete disarray. The settlement of the area by the Danish army and later arrivals must have involved intermarriage with the local women on a large scale”.

What can be concluded from this is that language contact between speakers of OE and speakers of ON came in many forms as the two groups became more and more mixed. What started as interactions in the arena of negotiations and treaties between armies came to also

include interactions of business between neighbours in communities and even everyday interactions between members of the same family. Speakers of ON and OE lived together until either one language died out or the two languages merged. The result of this continued contact is that they all, English and Scandinavians, became speakers of the same language.

2.2. Linguistic factors

This section takes a closer look at the linguistic factors of importance in the contact situation between speakers of OE and ON in Viking Age England. The previous section aimed to answer the questions *who*, *when*, *where* and *why*, leaving this section with the question *how*. As mentioned, this section will include more general theory on the concept of language contact, while focusing on aspects that are relevant for the contact between OE and ON and mostly using examples from this particular situation. Such aspects include genetic relationships between languages, mutual intelligibility, bilingualism, and the level of influence one language needs to have in order to affect the structures of the other language. The main questions are: *How did the speakers from the two language communities communicate?* and *How did the language contact with ON affect the structures of OE?*

2.2.1. Language contact

Language contact can be defined as the use of more than one language in the same area at the same time. Thomason (2001, pp. 1-2) argues that such a simple definition has two major flaws, the first concerning the importance of actual communication, the second concerning today's possibilities of language contact with distance both in space and time. The second flaw is very current in these technological days, but it is the first flaw that is most relevant for my thesis. A contact situation without communication is what Thomason calls the "trivial" type, and McIntosh (1994, p. 137) argues that language contact fundamentally means 'users of language in contact'. Milroy (1992, p. 22) agrees, emphasising that "although linguistic changes are observed to take place in *linguistic systems*, they must necessarily come about as a result of the activities of *speakers*". For the situation at hand this basically means that there had to be communication between speakers of OE and speakers of ON for there to be opportunities to influence one way or the other.

The term "language contact" has traditionally been used for the type of contact Weinreich describes in his book from 1953 by the same name. His focus is contact between speakers who are mutually unintelligible, and Weinreich therefore emphasises the role of bilingualism. However, the conditions of language contact are not always those of two mutually

unintelligible languages. Many of the world's languages share a common origin, i.e. they are genetically related, and will therefore also enjoy different degrees of mutual or one-sided intelligibility with one or more languages. It is even possible to speak of contact-induced language change within a language as different dialects come in contact with each other. The boundaries between what can be viewed as two dialects of the same language and what are two different languages are sometimes what Thomason calls “fuzzy” (2001, p. 2). Because of this, “language contact” can also refer to what Trudgill in his book *Dialects in contact* from 1986 calls “contact between varieties of language that are mutually intelligible at least to some degree” (1986, p. 1). Both genetic relationship and mutual intelligibility will be discussed in following sections and will be taken up again in section 4.

Lastly a distinction must be made between short-term and long-term language contact. Throughout history, most of the world's languages have experienced language contact of some kind, but not all these conditions have been of the enduring kind. Some contact situations only happen over a brief period of time as groups come in contact with another through travel or war, while others can last for thousands of years as groups live in close enough proximity to enjoy mutually beneficial trade without the people melting together and sharing language. Short-term contact may logically be seen as leading to fewer changes than long-term contact; however, time is not the only factor which plays a role. Great changes can happen over a short period of time in one situation, while small changes can take very long time in another. The only certain thing, as described by Thomason (2001, p. 10), is that the most common outcome of language contact is “change in some or all of the languages: typically, though not always, at least one of the languages will exert at least some influence on at least one of the other languages”.

2.2.2. Contact-induced language change

Changes in a language that can be traced back to interaction with one or more other languages fall under the category of *contact-induced language change*. Thomason (2001, p. 262) defines this phenomenon as “any linguistic change that would have been less likely to occur outside a particular contact situation”. What is important to remember here is that not all language changes occur due to contact. Even isolated languages will evolve over time, but through interaction changes can happen that would otherwise have taken longer or not happened at all.

Table 2.1 below (p. 12) is an attempt to illustrate and categorise the different types of contact-induced language change. There are two types of contact-induced language change: those that

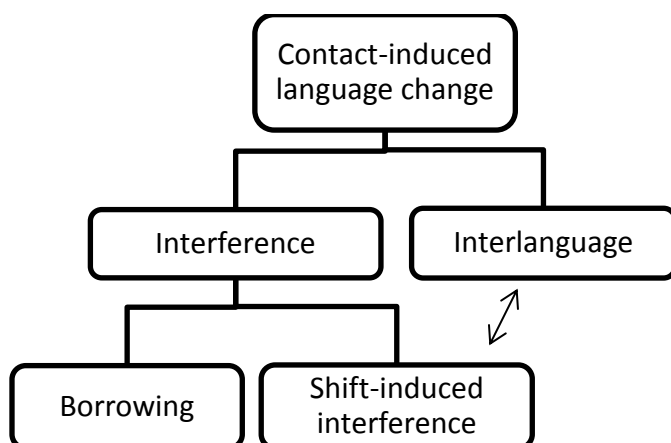
include the transfer of linguistic material from one language into another, called *interference* (Thomason, 2001, p. 61); and those that do not include the transfer of linguistic material from one language into another, called *interlanguage* (Hock & Joseph, 2009, p. 357). Interference is by Thomason defined as “contact-induced change that involves the importation of material and/or structures from one language into another language” (2001, p. 267). This category covers any instance where one language takes in a word or a sound or any part of another language as speakers use more than one language interchangeably. There are two directions that this kind of transfer can go, where the difference is in the role of *imperfect learning*; either the transfer is into the native language of the speaker (no imperfect learning) or into the second language the speaker is learning (imperfect learning). The first direction or sub-category of interference is called *borrowing*. This is where “the people who introduce interference features into the receiving language are fluent speakers of the receiving language and know at least the relevant aspects of the source language” (Thomason, 2001, p. 259). The source language in such cases of contact-induced language change is often called a *superstrate language*. This is the term used for a language which is socio-politically superior to the target language, and where borrowing happens because of factors like pressure and prestige. However, not all scenarios of borrowing have a clearly socio-politically superior superstrate, and the term source language is more widely used these cases.

The other direction or sub-category of interference is called *shift-induced interference* and covers changes that speakers learning a second language bring into it through imperfect learning, often as an entire group shifts from speaking one language due to the external pressure from the speakers of the target language. The speakers are here fluent in the source language and bring elements from the source language into the target language that they are learning/shifting to. This phenomenon is also called *substratum interference*. A *substratum* is the language of a shifting population that is “socio-politically subordinate to the people whose language they are shifting to” (Thomason, 2001, p. 75). However, just like not all source languages of borrowing are superstrates, not all shifting groups are substrates. Socio-political inferiority is after all not a criterion for a group of speakers to shift their language. The two sub-categories of interference show how linguistic material can be transferred by speakers both into a language they are fluent in, a language they are learning, a language that is subordinate and a language that is superordinate.

Interlanguage is the term used by Hock and Joseph (2009) for modifications that happen in second-language learning that do not result from interference, i.e. it does not include the

transfer of linguistic material. They argue that some changes arise as language learners formulate their own rules and systems to account for the target language. The formulation of these will be influenced “not only by the speaker’s native language but also by their – correct or incorrect – assumptions about the nature of the target language” (2009, p. 357). This category is of course very similar and heavily linked to shift-induced interference (thus the two-headed arrow between them). A dividing line between them would be very vague in practice as it is very difficult to determine what changes are influenced by the speaker’s native language or not. In theory, however, this division is a reminder that not all changes can be directly traced back to a certain contact situation through direct and obvious similarities between the native language of the speakers who introduced the material and the result in the target language.

Table 2.1



2.2.3. Borrowability, influence and attitude

Not all elements of a language are as easily subjected to change as others. Winter (1973, p. 144) argues that “no component of a natural language is totally immune to change under the impression of outside languages. However, not all components appear to be equally susceptible to such changes.” What makes some elements more likely to change as the result of language contact is explained through the term *borrowability*. Matras (2007, p. 31) defines borrowability as “the likelihood of a structural category to be affected by contact-induced change of some kind or other”, or in other words with what ‘ease’ a category can be affected and changed through interaction with another language.

Matras further claims there are two types of hierarchies determining borrowability. The first is *frequency hierarchies*, which relates to “the frequency with which a category may be affected

by contact-induced change” (2007, p. 32). This hierarchy shows borrowability through counting the occurrence of either tokens or types and is used in the majority of observations on grammatical borrowing (for a list of authors, see Matras, 2007, p. 32). Matras criticises this method, arguing that counting tokens shows how often a borrowed form is *used*, not how likely it is to be borrowed. He asks whether we “can consider nouns to be more borrowable than, for instance, conditional particles, simply because nominal tokens occur in a corpus more frequently than conditional particles?” (2007, p. 32) Counting types, on the other hand, is criticised because the count for an open class, e.g. adjectives, will naturally show to be larger than that of a class of more restricted inventory, e.g. conditional particles.

The second type of hierarchy is *implicational hierarchies*, which, according to Matras (2007, p. 32), “suggest[...] an implicational relationship between the borrowing of individual categories: the borrowing of one category is understood to be a pre-condition for the borrowing of another” (Matras, 2007, p. 32). These hierarchies are established through “comparing the grammatical (and lexical) systems of different languages in samples” (Matras, 2007, p. 33). The borrowability of grammatical categories is measured by how many of the languages show borrowing that affects a particular category. More than that, implicational borrowing hierarchies seek to find connections between the borrowings of different categories. One such implicational constraint is formulated: “Y is not borrowed unless X is borrowed as well” (cf. Elšik & Matras, 2006; Fields, 2002; Matras, 1998, 2002; Moravcsik, 1978; Stolz, 1996). In this way it is not only assumed that different categories are more or less susceptible to contact-induced change, changes are also more or less predictable (Matras, 2007, p. 33). One stage leads as the pre-requisite of another.

There have been made several attempts to create scales showing the borrowability of different linguistic features, however, this is a subject of much discussion and controversy. As has been shown, there is more than one way to measure what elements of a language are more likely to be borrowed than others. Some assumptions can be made, however, and the most common one, according to van Gelderen (2006, p. 107), is that “words are borrowed first, then sounds, and then grammar”. This view is agreed on by McMahon (1994, p. 209), who argues that “the lexicon is most easily and radically affected, followed by the phonology, morphology and finally the syntax”. Nevertheless, McMahon (1994, p. 209) stresses that it is difficult to formulate acceptable constraints as to the borrowability of elements within a particular component. One of the reasons for this is that not all languages are built the same way, so a pronoun in one language may be more easily borrowed than that of another simply because

one is an individual word while the other is a clitic or an affix. If the pronouns of the target language have a different form than the source language, this would impact the pronominal borrowability in this particular scenario.

Many attempts have been made to categorise the results of language contact according to the level of influence or the amount and significance of the items borrowed from one language into another. One such proposed scale has been made by Thomason (2001, pp. 70-71), an abbreviated version of which is presented in the table below. This scale starts with the “casual contact” where the influence is just enough to transfer some of the more easily borrowed elements, and ends with the “intense contact” where the result after time seems to be a shift from speaking the target language to speaking some form of the source language. Thomason (2001, p. 71) emphasises that “any borrowing scale is a matter of probabilities, not possibilities”. This scale is merely a representation showing general assumptions about the borrowability of different linguistic elements.

Table 2.2 Borrowing scale by Thomason (2001, pp. 70-71), abbreviated version.

-
1. **Casual contact** (borrowers need not be fluent in the source language, and/or few bilinguals among borrowing-language speakers): only non-basic vocabulary borrowed.
Lexicon: Mostly nouns, but also verbs, adjectives, and adverbs.
Structure: None.
 2. **Slightly more intense contact** (borrowers must be reasonably fluent bilinguals, but they are probably a minority among borrowing-language speakers): function words and slight structural borrowing.
Lexicon: Function words (e.g. conjunctions and adverbial particles like ‘then’); non-basic vocabulary.
Structure: Only new structures, none that will alter existing structures; new phonemes in loanwords.
 3. **More intense contact** (more bilinguals, attitudes and other social factors favouring borrowing): basic as well as non-basic vocabulary borrowed, moderate structural borrowing.
Lexicon: More function words borrowed; basic vocabulary – including closed-class items such as pronouns and low numerals; non-basic vocabulary; derivational affixes.
Structure: More significant structural features are borrowed, usually without major typological change; loss and addition of phonemes even in native vocabulary; changes in word order (e.g. SVO replacing SOV); inflectional affixes.
 4. **Intense contact** (very extensive bilingualism among borrowing-language speakers, social factors strongly favouring borrowing): continuing heavy lexical borrowing in all sections of the lexicon, heavy structural borrowing.
Lexicon: Heavy borrowing.
Structure: Anything goes; major typological changes; loss or addition of entire phonetic and/or phonological categories; changes in word order, relative clauses, negation, coordination, etc.; loss or addition of agreement patterns.
-

Very few language contact situations would instantiate this scale step by step, increasing the influence gradually. Many stay on the “casual contact” without there being any increase in influence; the target language adds words from the source language now and then. Other contact situations directly fall under the category of “very intense contact” and stay there until the borrowing language is unrecognisable or dead. Thomason (2001, p. 11) argues that “all aspects of language structure are subject to transfer from one language to another, given the

right mix of social and linguistic circumstances”. What should be emphasised here is that the borrowability of an element is not only determined by the language it comes from or is borrowed into (linguistic circumstances), it also affected by the individual language contact situation (social circumstances). Thomason uses stronger and stronger versions of the concept *contact* to name the four stages (e.g. “casual contact”, “more intense contact”, cf. table 2), but another word that would perhaps better define the relationship between the languages is *influence*. Languages can be in constant and intense contact, but unless the speakers of one of the languages allow or succumb to letting the other to influence the way they speak, there will be no change. Thomason (2001, p. 12) write that

“in some [...] contact situations the groups in contact do not lean each other’s languages, either because they do not want to or because they lack sufficient opportunity to do so, or both. In such a situation a contact language may emerge, a pidgin (if it arises as a strictly secondary language, used for limited purposes) or a creole (if it arises in the first instance as the main language of a community)”.

The phrase “because they do not want to” speaks volumes about the attitude that the speakers in these types of contact situations have towards each other’s languages. The emergence of a contact language, however, shows that they are in constant contact. Milroy (1992, p. 221) emphasises that “linguistic change is a social phenomenon. It is negotiated by speakers in face-to-face encounters”. This goes back to what has been stressed earlier about language contact really meaning ‘users of language in contact’. The attitudes of both the source language speakers and the target language speakers will affect the level of influence.

An example can be taken from Viking Age England. Crystal (2005, p. 83) writes about how, as the Scandinavians were in the process of conquering England, “the primary direction of influence for some time would have been from Scandinavian into English”. He argues that “after all, the Danes were the conquerors, and conquerors do not usually have the sort of benevolent mindset which makes them look kindly on the vocabulary of the conquered”. Crystal places ON in the role as the superstrate language of the socio-politically superior group in the Scandinavian-conquered areas of England. Speakers of ON were thus in a position to spread their language onto the English who settled their conquered areas. This was without question part of what made the development of ME possible.

2.2.4. Genetic relationship

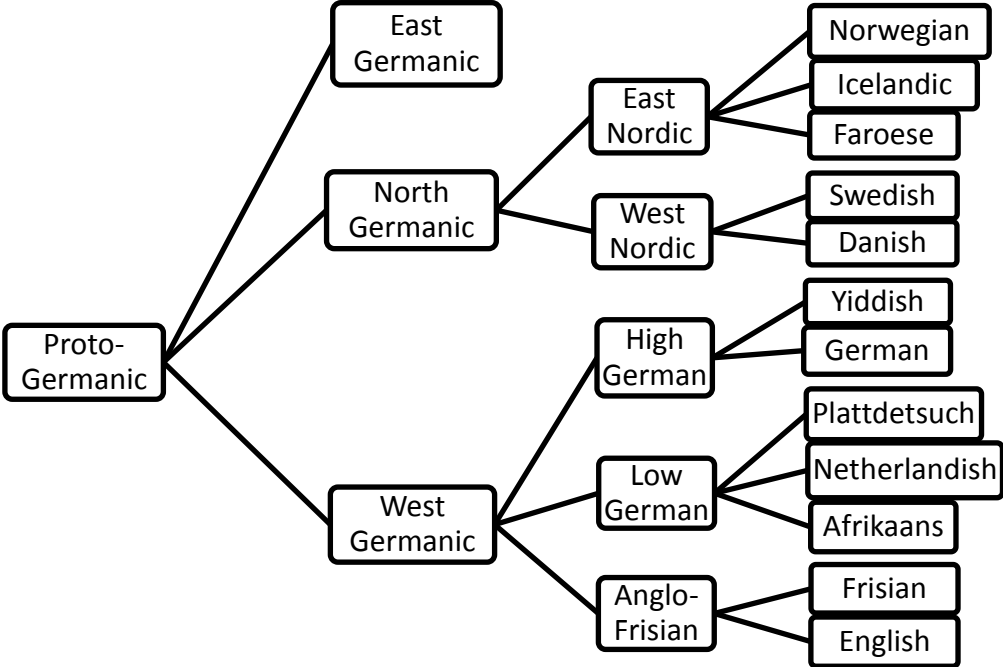
The concept of genetic relationships in linguistics is an important aspect to discuss in connection with my topic because the question of ON influence on the development of ME can be rephrased as “to what extent, if any, can ME be viewed as being genetically related to ON?” The idea of genetic relationships between languages is old, but the real work of historic and comparative linguistics that resulted in mapping out the relationships between the different language families of the world started in the late eighteenth century. Sir William Jones wrote in 1786 about his discovery of similarities between the Sanskrit language of India and the Latin and Greek languages of Europe. He wrote that Sanskrit bore “to both of them a stronger affinity, both in the roots of verbs and in the forms of grammar, than could possibly have been produced by accident” (Jones, 1786). This stirred an interest among scholars to discover and categorise languages that are related and descend from a common ancestor. In the early nineteenth century, the family of languages that include Sanskrit, Latin, Greek, and many others was named Indo-European.

The Germanic languages are part of the Indo-European language family in that they have the same ancestor, Proto-Indo-European, and the Germanic languages, in turn, are all descendants of Proto-Germanic. A very important part of this development was discovered by the Danish scholar Rask (1818). He uncovered that the consonant system of the Germanic languages differed systematically from most of the other Indo-European languages. This discovery was popularized by the German linguist Grimm (1819) and is known as Grimm’s Law. Hock and Joseph (2009, pp. 38-39) Hock and Joseph (2009, pp. 38-39) Hock and Joseph (2009, pp. 38-39) argue that this work “encouraged scholars to look for similar regularities in other correspondences” and made it possible for historical linguists to attempt “the comparative reconstruction of the Proto-Indo-European parent language” with greater confidence.

The categorisation of language families has traditionally been done through the analogy of a family tree. Branching shows where one language split and become two separate languages. As a branch on the main tree, Germanic it has the same common ancestor as all the other languages of the entire family, and the languages that branch further out on the Germanic part of the tree all share Proto-Germanic as their common ancestor. A very simple representation of the Germanic language family tree is shown in table 2.3 below. The dividing of East and West Nordic, as argued for by Faarlund (2004), has been included, and the branch named “East Nordic” is the location of ON. There is some disagreement as to the placement of English (which in a more detailed table would have included the stages from OE through ME

to ModE). The branch “Anglo-Frisian” is sometimes placed under “Low German”; however, some also place “High German” and “Low German” together under a branch called “Continental West Germanic”.

Table 2.3 The Germanic language family tree



The concept of language families is criticised by Crystal (2005, p. 20), who writes that “philologists have always tried to impose some order on the field by using the notion of a ‘family’ of languages”. He argues that “the metaphor of a ‘family’ is helpful, but it is also misleading in its suggestion that languages evolve through nice clear lines of descent, as in a human family”. Comparative method, where traditional language family trees are used, mainly bases language changes on system-internal change, arguing that most language change arises internally in the systems of the language and not as a result of language contact. Müller (1871-1872, p. 86) served the most extreme claim on this side, arguing that mixed languages do not exist. The most extreme counterclaim to this was provided by the creolist Schuchardt (1884, p. 5) who claimed that unmixed languages do not exist. Bailey and Maroldt (1977, p. 22), building on Schuchardt’s notion, use the family tree analogy to argue that just as all humans have at least two parents (biological and other guardians) who influence them either genetically or socially, every new node on a language family tree must be the result of a mixing between at least two languages. These are basically two contrasting ways of viewing the development of languages and genetic relationship: the pure line development, where one

language develops from its predecessor in a straight line and is thus purely genetically related to this language; and the mixed lines development, where one language develops from contact between its multiple predecessors and is thus genetically related to more than one “parent” language.

The views presented here are the extreme ends and there have later been many scholars arguing for more moderate views on genetic relationships between languages. One of the most important works in this area is the book *Language Contact, Creolization and Genetic Linguistics* published by Thomason and Kaufman in 1988. They sum up their conclusions on the topics of mixed languages and genetic relationships by arguing that “there are indeed mixed languages, and they include pidgins and creoles but are not confined to them; mixed languages do not fit within the genetic model and therefore cannot be classified at all; but most languages are not mixed” (1988, p. 3). The consequence of Thomason and Kaufman’s conclusions is that languages that do not arise within normal transition are not genetically related to *any* antecedent systems (1988, p. 10). Only when “systematic correspondences can be found in all linguistic subsystems – vocabulary, phonology, morphology, and syntax” – is there a traditional genetic relationship with one parent per language (1988, p. 8). That is, it must be possible to show that all the various subsystems of the grammar and the lexicon of a language derive from the same source in order for there to be a genetic relationship. The subsystems of mixed languages will naturally derive from more than one source and thus violates the restrictions Thomason and Kaufman place on the term genetic relationship.

The topic of my thesis is, as mentioned, very closely connected to the question of genetic relationship between ME and ON. However, this relationship is not the only one worth making a note of. In the representation of the Germanic language family tree in table 3 above there is also a link to be made between the two languages competing for custody of ME. We remember that the square labelled “English” includes the transition from OE via ME to Modern English (ModE) and that the square labelled “West Nordic” is the location of ON. The two languages both stem from what is called Proto Germanic, but from this point they belong to two different branches. The split that created North and West Germanic happened some centuries prior to the Vikings’ settling in England in the ninth century, but scholars disagree as to the exact time of this division. Kastovsky (1992, p. 329) argues for around nine centuries, no less than four to five, while Trudgill (2010, p. 183) argues for no less than six. The period of time the two languages developed apart will have played an important role in

the ease of communication between the two groups as they came together in Viking Age England.

2.2.5. Mutual intelligibility

The length of the period from the split into North and West Germanic and the Vikings' settlement in England is an important factor in the discussion about the extent of mutual intelligibility enjoyed by speakers of OE and speakers of ON. Had the two branches managed to grow far enough apart in that span of time to make communication between the two groups impossible, or would there still be some extent of mutual intelligibility left? Fell (1982-83, p. 88) argues that we “[still] do not have an adequate understanding of the degree to which these two peoples were mutually intelligible, or what language and languages were involved every time Alfred and the Danes [...] sat down together to sort out yet another treaty”. Not to mention how a husband was able to communicate to his wife when he expected to be home for dinner. Did they learn each other's language, and if so did the Scandinavians learn OE or the English learn ON? Was there bilingualism, and if so, how widespread was it? Did the parties in a negotiation use specialist interpreters, or is it possible that there was adequate mutual intelligibility for them to understand and communicate whilst speaking their respective languages or dialect variants?

First, the term *mutual intelligibility* must be defined in the sense that it will be used in this thesis. Townend (2002, p. 183) argues that mutual intelligibility can be used to cover all scenarios between being able to understand the lexical variety and syntactic fullness of complex sentences on the one hand, and the widespread ability to understand individual words permitting face-to-face and day-to-day transactions on the other. In the type of contact situation enjoyed by the speakers of OE and ON in Viking Age England I believe that the latter form is sufficient, because, as Townend (2002, p. 183) points out, “one can hardly imagine many day-to-day transactions between Anglo-Saxons and Scandinavians (such as bartering) to have required any great degree of syntactic complexity”. He goes on to call this type of intelligibility *adequate* or *pragmatic*, emphasising that this is defined on the grounds of simple face-to-face communication. As long as frequent and repeated contact takes place between two speech communities without the development of bilingualism or use of interpreters, it can be said that there is adequate intelligibility.

As mentioned in section 2.2.4., OE and ON are related because they both stem from Proto-Germanic. Trudgill (2010, p. 183) argues that there were no less than six centuries

between the split into West and North Germanic and the Viking invasions in England, while Kastovsky (1992, p. 329) argues for somewhere between no nine and no less than four centuries. While that is a very large estimate span, Trudgill further argues that “six centuries may have been quite enough for all intelligibility to be lost” (2010, p. 183), giving an example from Jackson (1953, p. 690) who claims that the changes converting Brythonic into Welsh, Cornish and Breton, rendering speakers unable to understand each other, happened over the course of only 150 years (from Trudgill, 2010, p. 183). Kastovsky (1992, p. 329) partially agrees, arguing that given the time that had passed “since the two languages had been direct neighbours and probably mutually intelligible [...] it is indeed likely that the degree of mutual intelligibility now had become rather limited, though certainly not zero”. The view that the languages would have separated enough to hinder communication is also supported by Poussa (1982, p. 72) who claims that there would have been “ample time for the languages to diverge far enough to cause considerable difficulties of communication between ordinary speakers, if we consider that there was no widespread literary and educational tradition to slow down language change in either country”.

On the other hand, there are scholars who argue strongly for the existence of mutual intelligibility on a smaller or larger scale. Strang (1970, p. 282) claims that “at the time of the early Scandinavian settlements in England the period of separation had only been slightly longer than between British and American English today, and the two communities had been in touch with one another for much of the time”. Jespersen (1956, pp. 60, 75) has a stronger argument, claiming that

“an enormous number of words were then identical in the two languages. [...] The consequence is that an Englishman would have no great difficulty in understanding a Viking – nay, we have positive evidence that Norse people looked upon the English language as one with their own. [...] The Scandinavians and the English could understand one another without much difficulty”

The evidence which Jespersen is referring to is the line from Chapter 7 in *Gunnlaugs saga orms tungu*, where the saga-author remarks:

“Ein var þá tunga á Englandi sem í Nóregi ok í Danmörku. En þá skiptusk tungur í Englandi, er Vilhjálmr bastarðr vann England; gekk þaðan af í Englandi valska, er hann var þaðan ættaðr” (Nordal & Jónsson, 1938, p. 70).

(The language in England then was the same as in Norway and Denmark. But the languages changed in England when William the bastard conquered it; from then on French became current in England, because he was from France.) (translation by Townend, 2002, p. 16)

This saga claims that the languages of Scandinavia and England were the same around the year 1000, and, according to Townend (2002, p. 16), this by no means the only saga-witness to a supposed Anglo-Norse intelligibility. But even though these texts speak of the same language being spoken, there is no way of knowing how the saga scribes categorised languages and what changes had happened to the speech of the English the saga speaks of. There might have been just enough intelligibility between the English and the Scandinavians to create some understanding, prompting the writers to say that the languages were the same. In addition, in the year 1000 the Scandinavians had been settling in England for about 150 years and would already have had time both influence and be influenced by the speech of the English that settled in the occupied areas.

Townend (2002, p. 14) claims that “it is the phonological systems of languages which seem to be most important in determining the degree of intelligibility enjoyed by speakers of closely related languages”. His argument is that if the phonologies of closely related languages have diverged greatly, the similarities that naturally exist in lexicon and grammar will have no effect on intelligibility. Foreign sounds effectively cover up similarities. Even though there had been several hundred years of little or no contact, Townend (2002, p. 41) argues that “the phonological systems of the two languages [OE and ON] had remained remarkably similar”. At the end of chapter 2 (pp. 31-41) in his book *Language and History in Viking Age England* Townend describes the changes in phonology that happened in OE and ON in the time their speakers were apart. The table below is from Townend (2002, p. 33) with data from Wright and Wright (1925, pp. 26-31), showing the development from the Germanic vowels in both OE and ON (when in accented position and not affected by conditioned sound-changes).

Table 2.4 Vowel developments in OE and ON

	Gmc	OE	ON
<i>Short vowels</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>æ</i> (Kentish <i>e</i>)	<i>a</i>
	<i>e</i>	<i>e</i>	<i>e</i>
	<i>i</i>	<i>i</i>	<i>i</i>
	<i>u</i>	<i>u</i>	<i>u</i>
<i>Long vowels</i>	<i>ǣ</i>	<i>ǣ</i> ¹ (non WS <i>ē</i>)	<i>á</i>
	<i>ē</i>	<i>ē</i>	<i>é</i>
	<i>ī</i>	<i>ī</i>	<i>í</i>
	<i>ō</i>	<i>ō</i>	<i>ó</i>
	<i>ū</i>	<i>ū</i>	<i>ú</i>
<i>Diphthongs</i>	<i>ai</i>	<i>ā</i>	<i>ei</i>
	<i>au</i>	<i>ēa</i>	<i>au</i>
	<i>eu</i>	<i>ēo</i>	<i>jó</i>

This table is included as an example of the small extent of divergence there was in some areas of the phonetic systems of the two languages. We see that OE remained very close to Germanic (abbreviated Gmc), while ON shows a tendency to raise the long vowels. This table of vowels does not, however, represent the overall extent of sound-changes resulting from the time the two languages were apart. Some changes – i.e. i-umlaut – are found in both languages, but most changes are individual to OE or ON (for a review, see Townend, 2002, pp. 31-41). Townend (2002, p. 41) argues that many of these sound-changes “were of a regular, and therefore potentially predictable, nature” and that “this degree of regularity in the differences between the phonological systems of Norse and English [can be] termed dialect congruity”. The term *dialect congruity* is taken from Milliken and Milliken (1993), who argue that what intelligibility depends on is not *phonetic* similarity in itself, but rather on hearers’ ability to make *phonemic* correspondences. Dialectal congruity is thus concerned with

“whether or not an actual correspondence can be expressed as an exceptionless generalization from the point of view of the listener, i.e., ‘Their [b] always corresponds to our /p/.’ Those correspondences that permit exceptionless generalizations we call ‘congruent’ correspondences; those that do not we refer to as ‘incongruent’ correspondences. A dialect may be more or less congruent with another depending on the nature and number of incongruent correspondences existing between it and the other dialect.” (Milliken & Milliken, 1993, p. 3)

Whether speakers of OE and ON shared mutual intelligibility is a topic of great controversy and is still discussed among scholars. Even though it still is, and possibly will remain, impossible to determine the degree of mutual intelligibility shared between the two speech communities, there is good reason to believe that they shared at least something near adequate intelligibility. The question remains whether there was comprehension enough to stall the development of bilingualism.

2.2.6. Bilingualism

This last section under linguistic factors focuses on the implications of a suggested state of bilingualism in Viking Age England. As mentioned in the previous section, bilingualism is a common development in language contact situations where the intelligibility is not adequate. Bilingualism has a great impact on the languages involved in the contact as the speakers use them interchangeably on a daily basis. Because the languages in contact are spoken by bilingual individuals and not by separate linguistic communities, this type of contact is naturally much closer.

Just as with mutual intelligibility, there is more than one way to define the term *bilingualism*. Lehiste (1988, p. 1) argues that “the theoretical limits to bilingualism might be drawn to encompass the range between the person who uses one non-integrated loanword” on the one hand and “the so-called perfect bilingual who can pass for a monolingual in more than one language” on the other. Thomason (2001, p. 3) agrees with this definition, naming the first a “functional” definition of bilingualism, while the other and more conservative perhaps can be called the “traditional” definition. The functional definition of bilingualism does not only cover speakers using a single non-integrated loanword, but also people with knowledge of how to write a language, without being able to speak it. The traditional definition will, on the other hand, insist on full fluency in the traditional four skills: speaking, listening, reading, and writing. In this paper bilingualism will in general refer to speakers who can make themselves understood in more than one language. That is, they change languages when speaking to people from different speech communities. When speaking of people who fall under the traditional definition of bilinguals (excluding the skills reading and writing due to widespread illiteracy), the term *proficient bilingual* will be used.

A further distinction to be made about the term *bilingualism* is the separation between *societal bilingualism* and *individual bilingualism* argued for by Appel and Muysken (2005, pp. 1-2). They define the term *societal bilingualism* as where “two or more languages are spoken”;

while when they are spoken by the same person there is an added *individual bilingualism*. This is why Townend (2002, p. 185) argues that the existence of bilingualism in Viking Age England is not dependant on the extent of mutual intelligibility. Even though he argues for adequate intelligibility between the Scandinavians and the English, as defined by the lack of bilingualism, he claims that “Viking Age England was a bilingual society”. The distinction between these two forms of bilingualism is great for explaining the significance of having two languages being used by the same society even though there are no individual bilinguals. This is especially the case in a situation where the two are adequately intelligible. Even though speakers understand each other, there will still be many differences in all from words to grammar and even sounds, and influence can go one or both ways.

However, as has been emphasised several times, it is impossible to know the extent of intelligibility shared by speakers of OE and ON. Imagining a situation where the two languages are mutually unintelligible, there is good reason to believe that bilingualism developed. There are three different ways of developing bilingualism in this situation: either the ON speakers learn OE; or the OE speakers learn ON; or both learn each other’s languages. This is basically a question of which language became the superstrate. The last scenario is only possible in a situation like the one Townend (2002, p. 204) suggests when he argues that OE and ON “were roughly adstratal in Viking Age England – that is, they enjoyed more or less equal prestige”.

3. From Old English to Middle English

In order to discuss the role of ON in the development of ME, which is the aim of chapter 4, there are some general aspects of the development from OE to ME that need to be covered. No matter the extent it can be said that both OE and ON affected the turnout of ME. In this chapter I will continue the introduction to OE and ON that was started in the beginning of chapter 2. Here the focus will be on the structures of the two languages, mainly grammar and syntax. As discussed in section 2.2.3, these parts are less likely to be borrowed. For this reason, the grammatical and syntactical features of ME that are of OE or ON origin are of special interest. Section 3.1 briefly contrasts and compares the main characteristics of OE and ON.

As already emphasised, this particular development in the English language was very special, which is why scholars still disagree as to which factors created the basis for such great

change. Trudgill (2010, p. 1) writes that “Old English, as it first developed on the island of Britain, was typologically very different from the Middle English that it later became”. That is, the changes that created ME greatly affected the structural and functional features of the language. The extent of this transformation has baffled scholars for generations. Section 3.2 briefly maps out the characteristics of ME, following the style of the first section. In section 3.3 I draw attention to the two important aspects of the change, namely the process of simplification and the fact that ON was not the only language OE was in contact with.

3.1. Contrast and compare: Old English and Old Norse

This section is divided between OE and ON. The two languages were, as discussed in section 2.2.5 on intelligibility, somewhat similar. How much they had in common in everyday speech is heavily debated, but Townend (2002) argues powerfully for a situation of at least adequate intelligibility. In the texts written in OE and ON that have been preserved there are cognates and correspondences in many areas, including sounds, lexicon, grammar and syntax. The following sub-sections will first take a closer look at the languages in general, OE first, then ON. Here the areas of spelling, pronunciation and lexicon will be briefly discussed.

Afterwards, the areas of grammar and syntax will be given extra attention.

3.1.1. Old English

Quirk and Wrenn (1987, p. 1) describe the OE period as extending “from the earliest permanent settlements of the Anglo-Saxons till the time when the effects of the Scandinavian invasions and the Norman Conquest began to be felt on the language”. As was discussed in section 2.1.1, the speakers of what we now call OE consisted of people who before migrating to Britain originated from different parts around the northwest coast of mainland Europe. Baugh and Cable (2002, p. 53) write of OE that it was “not an entirely uniform language”; there were differences both in time – from the first written records from about A.D. 700 to later texts – and in different parts of the country. The dialects of OE, as argued for by Baugh and Cable (2002, p. 53), can be divided into four: Northumbrian, Mercian, West Saxon, and Kentish. Most texts written in OE originate from the southwest of England, where West Saxon was spoken, and this dialect did in a sense gain the position of a literary standard before the turn of the millennia. During the Norman Conquest from 1066 the introduction of French put a stop to the West Saxon dialect’s rise in power. Later, as again an English literary standard – that of Middle English – began to be established a few centuries later, the literary power had shifted and the basis was no longer that of West Saxon but the dialect of the East

Midlands, where the OE dialect of Mercian used to be spoken. Tristram (2006, p. 203) writes powerfully about the inclinations of this:

“Unfortunately, we know nothing about spoken Old English to the extent that it differed from the language as it was committed to writing, which was an instrument of power enforcement in the hands of a very few monastics belonging to the elite. In Old English literature we seldom hear about non-aristocratic people; they were given no voice. The spoken language only became visible (literally) after the Norman Conquest, after William the Conqueror effectively replaced the Anglo-Saxon aristocracy by Norman-French-speaking barons, clerics and their followers. Spoken Old English therefore only started to be admitted to the realm of writing at the beginning of the twelfth century”.

Even though there at least can be agreed on a partly OE origin of ME, it is almost impossible for someone without training to get anything out of an OE text. Even though many words in ModE come from OE, Baugh and Cable (2002, p. 53) argue that the OE version “commonly differs somewhat from that of their modern equivalent”. One such example is found in words with long vowels, where there have been considerable alterations. The result is that the OE word *stān* is the same as ModE *stone*, only the vowel has changed. In the case of spelling, there are at least eight extra letters found in OE that did not survive into ME. Four of the more commonly known are *þ* (*thorn*), *ð* (*eth*), *ƿ* (*wynn*) and *æ* (*ash*). The first two represent the sound of *th* as in *wiþ* (*with*) and *ðā* (*then*), although Quirk and Wrenn (1987, p. 8) emphasise that the letters were “used indifferently for the two sounds [ð] and [θ]”. The third represents the OE sound [w] as in *ƿynn* (*joy*), but in many OE texts this letter has been replaced by *w* to avoid confusion between *þ* and *p*. The fourth expresses the sound of *a* in *hat*, as in *æsc* (*ash tree*). While these features make OE texts seem very unfamiliar and strange to a modern reader, Baugh and Cable (2002, p. 55) argue that

“the differences of spelling and pronunciation that figure so prominently in one’s first impression of Old English are really not very fundamental. Those of spelling are often apparent rather than real, as they represent no difference in the spoken language, and those of pronunciation obey certain laws as a result of which we soon learn to recognize the Old and Modern English equivalents”.

What is characteristic about the OE lexicon is that it lacks most of the loanwords that ME and ModE have embraced as their own. The contact with not only ON, but also Celtic and French, as will be briefly discussed in chapter 4, made a great impact on the language’s lexicon. According to Baugh and Cable (2002, p. 55), OE had very few words derived from Latin and

an absence of French words, two categories which combined cover more than half of the words in common use in English today. But OE does not only lack words that we today consider as English. Baugh and Cable (2002) claim that about 85 percent of the words found in an OE dictionary are no longer in use and have either lost their relevance or been replaced by words from another language.

3.1.2. Old Norse

Gordon (1957, p. 265) defines ON as “the language spoken by the North Germanic peoples (Scandinavians) from the time when Norse first became differentiated from the speech of the other Germanic peoples, that is, roughly, from 100, until about 1500”. He further distinguishes three phases of development: Primitive Norse, 100-700; Viking Norse, 700-1100; and Literary Old Norse, 1100-1500”. The separation of West and East Norse argued for by Faarlund in the previous chapter is also found in Gordon (1957, p. 265). Gordon claims West Norse was “spoken in Norway and its colonies” and East Norse was “spoken in Sweden and Denmark and their colonies”. However, he emphasises that there were no great differences between the two up until about 1000 (1957, p. 320).

Faarlund (2004, p. 7) notes that ON is found written in both the runic script *futhork* and in the Latin alphabet. He further explains that there was no standardised spelling for ON and that even though most of the manuscripts were written by professional scribes often affiliated with monasteries, there were different standards or conventions from place to place. The <þ> for the dental fricative, the <ð> for the voiced fricative, and the <y> for the front, high labial vowel were borrowed from OE in order to represent the ON sounds that the imported Latin letters did not distinguish. Other letters found are <ø>, which is a mid, front, rounded vowel, like German <ö>; <æ>, the long variant of <ø>; and <q> for the low, back rounded vowel [ɔ] (2004, p. 8).

There are not many things that need to be pointed out about the lexicon of ON. As was mentioned in section 2.2.5 on intelligibility, there is reason to believe that there were some similarities in lexicon between OE and ON. According to Freeborn (2006, p. 52) it is likely that “the two languages were similar enough in vocabulary for OE speakers to understand common ON words, and vice versa, so that the English and Norsemen could communicate”.

3.1.3. Old English grammar and syntax

Old English is a highly synthetic inflecting language, which, according to Baugh and Cable (2002, p. 56), “is one that indicates the relation of words in a sentence largely by means of

inflections”. Inflection for OE nouns is done according to number, gender and case. OE has two numbers, three genders and four cases. The four cases are nominative, genitive, dative and accusative. Each noun is marked for number, gender and case by different suffixes. There are certain broad categories or declensions for the inflection of nouns. Baugh and Cable (2002, p. 57) argue that “there is a vowel declension and a consonant declension, also called the strong and weak declensions [...] and within each of these types there are certain subdivisions”. The details of OE nominal declensions are complex and difficult to present in a proper way (for more thorough reviews, see Mitchell & Robinson, 2007, pp. 19-35; Quirk & Wrenn, 1987, pp. 19-31). The following table shows three patterns taken from Baugh and Cable (2002, p. 57), who explain that these are “two examples of the strong declension and one of the weak: *stān* (stone), a masculine *a*- stem; *giefu* (gift), a feminine *ō*- and *hunt*a (hunter), a masculine consonant-stem”.

Table 3.1 Example: Nominal declension in OE (Baugh & Cable, 2002, p. 57)

Singular	N.	<i>stān</i>	<i>gief-u</i>	<i>hunt-a</i>
	G.	<i>stān-es</i>	<i>gief-e</i>	<i>hunt-an</i>
	D.	<i>stān-e</i>	<i>gief-e</i>	<i>hunt-an</i>
	A.	<i>stān</i>	<i>gief-e</i>	<i>hunt-an</i>
Plural	N.	<i>stān-as</i>	<i>gief-a</i>	<i>hunt-an</i>
	G.	<i>stān-a</i>	<i>gief-a</i>	<i>hunt-ena</i>
	D.	<i>stān-um</i>	<i>gief-um</i>	<i>hunt-um</i>
	A.	<i>stān-as</i>	<i>gief-a</i>	<i>hunt-an</i>

Inflection of OE adjectives is even more complex. OE has what is called a twofold declension of the adjective, which means that depending on the context the adjective is inflected one of two ways. Baugh and Cable (2002, p. 58) explains that “one, the strong declension, [is] used with nouns when not accompanied by a definite article or similar word (such as demonstrative or possessive pronoun), the other, the weak declension, [is] used when the noun is preceded by such a word”. In OE this is evident in *gōd mann* (good man) and *sē gōda mann* (the good man), where we see the two declensions of the adjective *gōd* in the masculine nominative form. A full illustration of the forms of this adjective shows both the strong and the weak declensions:

Table 3.2 Example: Adjectival declension in OE (Baugh & Cable, 2002, p. 58)

		STRONG DECLENSION			WEAK DECLENSION		
		Masc.	Fem.	Neut.	Masc.	Fem.	Neut.
Singular	N.	gōd	gōd	gōd	gōd-a	gōd-e	gōd-e
	G.	gōd-es	gōd-re	gōd-es	gōd-an	gōd-an	gōd-an
	D.	gōd-um	gōd-re	gōd-um	gōd-an	gōd-an	gōd-an
	A.	gōd-ne	gōd-e	gōd	gōd-an	gōd-an	gōd-e
	I.	gōd-e		gōd-e			
Plural	N.	gōd-e	gōd-a	gōd	gōd-an		
	G.	gōd-ra	gōd-ra	gōd-ra	gōd-ena <i>or</i> gōd-ra		
	D.	gōd-um	gōd-um	gōd-um	gōd-um		
	A.	gōd-e	gōd-a	gōd	gōd-an		

OE, just like ModE, has both strong and weak verbs, and Mitchell and Robinson (2007, p. 35) argue that nearly all ModE strong verbs are survivals from OE; new verbs that are made up or borrowed join the weak conjugation. There is also a similarity in that the weak verb forms their preterite and past participles by adding a dental suffix, while the strong verbs change their stem vowel. The two examples below show the conjugation of the strong verb *singan* ‘sing’ and the weak verb *fremman* ‘do’ in first through third singular and plural persons in the present and preterite indicative.

Table 3.3 Example: Conjugation of strong and weak verbs in OE (with data from Mitchell & Robinson, 2007, pp. 43-44 and 46)

		<i>Singan</i> ‘sing’		<i>Fremman</i> ‘do’	
		Present indicative	Preterite indicative	Present indicative	Preterite Indicative
Sg	1	singe	sang	fremme	fremede
	2	singest	sunge	fremest	fremedest
	3	singeþ	sang	freme	fremede
Pl		singap	sungon	fremmap	fremedon

These examples are only one type of conjugation from the strong and one type from the weak (for a full review of the conjugation classes, see Mitchell & Robinson, 2007, pp. 35-50).

Other features of OE verbs include, among others, the existence of two tenses, present and

preterite; two infinitives, without and with *to*; two numbers, singular and plural (dual number is only found in pronouns, see below); only one voice, the active, though one synthetic passive, *hätte* ‘is called, was called’ remains (Mitchell & Robinson, 2007, p. 36). Mitchell and Robinson (2007, p. 111) argue that “the idea was expressed by the impersonal *man* ‘one’ with the active voice, e.g. *Her mon mæg giet geison hiora swæð* ‘Here one can still see their track’. It was also possible to create a passive voice using the verbs ‘to be’ or ‘to become’ with the past participle.

OE has distinctive personal pronoun forms for not only practically all genders, persons, and cases but it has, in addition to the regular singular and plural, also preserved a set of forms for two people or things – the dual number. The dual pronouns are found in first and second person and are used with plural verb forms. According to Baugh and Cable (2002, p. 59) this distinction between the dual and the plural was starting to disappear already in OE, and as we will see it did not survive in ME.

Table 3.4 OE personal pronouns (Baugh & Cable, 2002, p. 59; Quirk & Wrenn, 1987, p. 38)

		First person	Second person	Third person		
				Masc.	Fem.	Neut.
Singular	N.	īc	ðū	hē	hēo	hit
	G.	mīn	ðīn	his	hiere	his
	D.	mē	ðē	him	hiere	him
	A.	mē (mēc)	ðē (ðec)	hine	hīe	hit
Dual	N.	wit	gīt			
	G.	uncer	incer			
	D./A.	unc	inc			
Plural	N.	wē	gē		hīe	
	G.	user (ūre)	ēower		hiera	
	D.	ūs	ēow		him	
	A.	ūs (ūsic)	ēow (ēowic)		hīe	

OE is, as mentioned earlier, what we call a *synthetic* language. What this means is that the different parts of a sentence is given an indicator to show which role they play instead of relying on word order to mark e.g. subject and object. An example of this in practice from OE is the use of the nominative article *se*, which marks the subject of a sentence even if it is not in

first position as is the norm in ModE. Barber, Beal, and Shaw (2009, p. 126), for example, set the two sentence versions *se cyning hæfde micel geþeahht* and *micel geþeahht hæfde se cyning* against each other. They both mean ‘the king held a great council’ in OE, but with ModE’s lack of nominative inflection the latter would read ‘a great council held the king’.

Even though the word-order of OE is less rigid than that of ME and ModE, it does not mean that the different parts can be put together in any way while still retaining the same meaning. Basis word-order in most principal clauses is the familiar S-V-O (subject – verb – object), but we find the order V-S in more cases than in ModE. Quirk and Wrenn (1987, p. 92) argue for a tendency “towards the order S V O/C in non-dependent clauses”. And Lass (1994, p. 224) claims that as OE developed, “a strong tendency arose to restrict OV to subordinate clauses”. Other examples where O-V order is common are negative statements, e.g. *Ne com se here* ‘Not come the army’; and positive non-dependent questions either with or without interrogative words, e.g. *Hwær eart þu nu, gefera?* ‘Where are you now, comrade?’ (Mitchell & Robinson, 2007, p. 64). However, Mitchell and Robinson (2007, p. 62) emphasise that because the nominative and accusative forms often have no distinction (as in the first example with *stān* in table 3.1, p. 27) word-order is often the only indicator as to what is the subject and object.

3.1.4. Old Norse grammar and syntax

ON is also an inflecting language, like its Anglo-Saxon relative. The following table shows three examples of the declension of strong ON nouns. Again, these are only some examples; Faarlund (2004, p. 24) lists up four classes of declensions just for the strong masculine nouns (for a more thorough review, see Faarlund, 2004, pp. 23-33). The strong noun declensions listed here are for: *hest* (horse), a masculine a-class; *bæn* (prayer), a feminine i-class; and *land* (land, country), a neuter noun.

Table 3.5 Example: Nominal declension in ON (Faarlund, 2004, pp. 24, 29, 30)

Singular	N.	hestr	bæn	land
	G.	hest	bæn	land
	D.	hesti	bæn	landi
	A.	hests	bænar	lands
Plural	N.	hestar	bænir	lond
	G.	hesta	bænir	lond
	D.	hestum	bænum	londum
	A.	hesta	bæna	landa

The inflection of adjectives in ON is, as in OE, mainly realized by suffixes (including a zero suffix). In some cases the suffix is accompanied by stem-modification (Faarlund, 2004, p. 36). Just as in OE, ON adjectives inflect strong and weak depending on the adjective's syntactic and semantic function. According to Faarlund (2004, p. 37), "the weak declension is used in definite NPs, while the strong declension is used in indefinite NPs and to form predicates".

Table 3.6 Example: strong declension of ON adjective

		STRONG DECLENSION		
		Masc.	Fem.	Neut.
Singular	N.	langr	long	langt
	G.	langs	langrar	langs
	D.	lɔngum	langri	lɔngu
	A.	langan	langa	langt
Plural	N.	langir	langar	lngɔ
	G.	langra	langra	langra
	D.	lɔungum	lɔngum	lɔngum
	A.	langa	langar	lɔng

ON, like OE, has strong and weak verbs, where strong verbs are characterised by vowel gradation and weak verbs by their suffixes. The two examples below show the conjugation of the strong verb *grafa* 'dig' and the weak verb *telja* 'count' in first through third singular and plural persons in the present and past indicative:

Table 3.7 Example: Conjugation of strong and weak verbs in ON
(with data from Gordon, 1957, pp. 298, 303)

		<i>grafa</i> ‘dig’		<i>telja</i> ‘count’	
		Present	Past	Present	Past
		indicative	indicative	indicative	indicative
Sg	1	gref	gróf	tel	talða
	2	grefr	gróft	telr	talðir
	3	grefr	gróf	telr	talði
Pl	1	grøfum	grófum	teljum	tøldum
	2	grafið	grófuð	telið	tølduð
	3	grafa	grófu	telja	tøldu

Features of ON verbs that are also present in OE include, among others, the two tenses, present and preterite; the two numbers, singular and plural (dual number is only found in pronouns, see below). However, ON has only one infinitive. Where OE only has the active voice and traces of the passive, Faarlund (2004, pp. 126, 211) argues for an active voice and two ways of creating the passive in ON. The first he calls *medio-passive*, which is where the active voice is used with the *-sk* suffix of the reflexive pronoun. Faarlund (2004, p. 126) argues that since the subject and the *-sk* suffix have the same referent, one of the two semantic roles could eventually be suppressed [...]. If the suppressed role is the agent, the subject expresses the same role as the object”. The cases of passive with reflexive verbs in ON are not always clear and less used than the regular passive which is formed through the use of the perfect participle of the main verb and the auxiliary *vera* ‘be’ or *verðd* ‘become’. Faarlund (2004, pp. 211-212) argues that “the auxiliary does not assign a role to an external argument. Neither does the perfect participle”. The subject is then raised from the position of complement of the main verb.

ON personal pronouns, like those of OE, include the dual number in first and second person. These are used with plural verb forms. A point that will be revisited later in this chapter is the fact that ME third person plural pronouns were taken from ON. The forms shown in the table below are where today’s *they*, *them* and *their* come from.

Table 3.8 ON personal pronouns

		First person	Second person	Third person		
				Masc.	Fem.	Neut.
Singular	N.	ek	þú	hann	hon	þat
	G.	mín	þín	hans	hennar	þess
	D.	mér	þér	honum	henna	því, þí
	A.	mik	þik	hann	hana	þat
Dual	N.	vit	it, þit			
	G.	okkar	ykkar			
	D./A.	okkr	ykkkr			
Plural	N.	vér	ér, þér	þeir	þær	þau
	G.	vár	yðar	þeir(r)a	þeir(r)a	þeir(r)a
	D.	oss	yðr	þeim	þeim	þeim
	A.	oss	yðr	þá	þær	þau

In the structures of syntax, Gordon (1957, p. 310) argues that ON resembles OE. As we have seen, there are several similarities in the manner and use of inflections for nouns, adjectives, verbs and pronouns. Many of the similarities boil down to the fact that both are synthetic Germanic languages. Because they are closely related, it is not surprising that OE and ON are structured in similar ways. Gordon emphasises, however, that there are several aspects in which the two differ.

As for word order, Faarlund (2004, p. 161) argues that “the most common order, which should be taken as basic, is head-complement (VO)”. However, the alternative order with complement before head (OV) is also found. Faarlund (2004, p. 161) argues that “the OV order [...] must be derived by movement of the complement and left-adjunction to V”. He further lists possibilities for OV order, such as when one complement moves while another remains in post-verbal position:

muntu henna gefa motrinn at bekkjargjöf
‘may.2s-you.N her.D give headdress.A-the at bench-gift.D’
(You may give her the headdress as a wedding present)

The OV order found in OE subordinate clauses is also found in ON, however, Faarlund (2004, p. 250) emphasises that the word order patterns of subordinate clauses are much the same as in main sentences, which means that the order often is VO, as in the example (2004, p. 252):

<i>yð</i>	<i>er</i>	<i>kunnigt,</i>	<i>at</i>	<i>eke</i>	<i>em</i>	<i>hér</i>	<i>kominn</i>	<i>á</i>	<i>þinn</i>
‘you.P.D	is	known.NEU.N	that	I	am	here	come.M.N	on	your
<i>fund</i>	<i>ok</i>	<i>hefti</i>	<i>ek</i>	<i>farit</i>		<i>langa</i>	<i>leið</i>		
meeting.A	and	have.1S	I	travelled		long	way.A’		

(You know that I have come here to meet you and that I have travelled a long way)

(for a full discussion, see Faarlund, 2004, sections 9.7 and 10.1.2).

3.2. Middle English

The Middle English period is often dated between 1150 and 1500. The ME standard, however, was not established before the fourteenth century. As was briefly mentioned in section 3.1 on the characteristics of, there had been a shift in literary power prior to this. People no longer looked to West Saxon but to the East Midlands, the area where the Scandinavian Vikings had settled and which had been referred to as the Danelaw under their rule. Baugh and Cable (2002, p. 192) argue that the reason for this was firstly that it had a middle position between the radical north and the conservative south. Secondly, it was the largest and most populated area, not to mention that the people were prosperous. Thirdly, this was the area that included Oxford and Cambridge. It is difficult to measure just how much of an influence the presence of the universities had, but as Baugh and Cable (2002, p. 193) point out, due to its location, at least any influence Cambridge had would be for the support of the East Midland dialect. Oxford, being on the border between Midland and Southern is a bit more uncertain. The rise of a new standard saw the end of three centuries where French had been the language of the upper class and government. The spoken English language had been given more or less free reigns, the result of which was that the language now set to paper was very different from OE.

Crystal (2005, p. 105) sums up the ME period as what “made the English language ‘familiar’”. This is particularly evident in the spelling. As was noted in section 3.1.1 on OE, there were several letters in OE that will be foreign for a modern reader. Most of these letters disappeared during the ME period. The spelling of many words also moved closer to the spelling we have today, as we can see from the table below. Notice that the ME spelling sometimes shows a gradual change.

Table 3.9 Examples: Old and Middle English spelling conventions (Barber et al., 2009, p. 162)

Pronunciation	OE spelling	ME spelling	Examples in ME
[kw]	cw	qu	queen, quirk
[ʃ]	sc	ss, sch, sh	fiss, fisch, fish
[v]	f	u, v	
[g]	Ʒ	g	god, good ‘good’
[j]	Ʒ	Ʒ, y	Ʒer, yer, yeer ‘year’
[x, ç]	Ʒ	h, Ʒ, gh	liht, liƷt, light
[ð, θ]	þ, ð	þ, ð, th	
[i:]	ī	i, y	fir, fyr ‘fire’
[u:]	ū	ou, ow	hous, hows ‘house’

The changes shown above are purely in spelling and do not necessarily reflect particular changes in pronunciation. Barber et al. (2009, p. 162) emphasise that the changes shown “are *typical* ones: there is a great deal of variation from text to text”.

Baugh and Cable (2002, p. 55) claim that “an examination of the words in an Old English dictionary shows that about 85 percent of them are no longer in use”. According to Denham and Lobeck (2010, p. 372) only about 4500 OE words survived. According to Baugh and Cable (2002, p. 55), these are mainly “pronouns, prepositions, conjunctions, auxiliary verbs, and the like”. Other OE words that survived express what they call *fundamental concepts*, and they give examples such as *mann* (man), *wīf* (wife, woman), *cild* (child), *hūs* (house), *mete* (meat, food), *gōd* (good), *etan* (eat), *drincan* (drink), *slēpan* (sleep), *libban* (live) (2002, pp. 55-56). Emonds and Faarlund (forthcoming, p. 13) have made an estimate of ME words derived from OE and ON partially based on a list by (Freeborn, 1992).

Table 3.10 Middle English vocabulary (Emonds & Faarlund, forthcoming, p. 13 with numbers from Freeborn (1992))

OE and ON cognates	571	50%
OE source only	405	36%
ON source only	163	14%
Total vocabulary listed	1139	100%

This table will be returned to and discussed in greater depth in the section on Anglicized Norse in chapter 4, but here it shows us an estimate of not only how many words survived

from OE, but also how many words in ME originate from ON. When it comes to the lexicon there is, as has been mentioned before, no doubt that ON had great influence on the development of ME.

3.2.1. Middle English grammar and syntax

The main change from OE to ME is without doubt that the fact that ME developed into a highly analytic language. Where OE used inflectional endings to mark relations between the different parts of a sentence, inflections continued to heavily decay in ME and word order became more fixed. Crystal (2005, p. 101) argues that “it is during Middle English that we see the eventual disappearance of most of the earlier inflections and the increasing reliance on alternative means of expression, using word order and prepositional constructions rather than word endings to express meaning relationships”. This decay of inflections was partly due to sound changes in ME. Barber et al. (2009, p. 167) argue that one of the reasons why ME inflections were disappearing was the fact that unstressed syllables at the end of words were being lost and weakened. Many of the distinctive inflections became disrupted as sound changes made several of the endings identical. The result was overall simplification.

One such simplification of inflections can be found in the category of nouns. Baugh and Cable (2002, pp. 159-160) argue that the only distinctive termination to survive in the strong masculine declension in ME is “the *-s* of the possessive singular and of the nominative and accusative plural”. They argue that because the nominative and the accusative cases were the most used, “the *-s* came to be thought of as the sign of the plural and was extended to all plural forms”. (An example showing these endings in OE *stān* is found in table 3.1 p. 28). The result of this was, according to Baugh and Cable (2002, p. 160), that “in early Middle English only two methods of indicating the plural remained fairly distinctive: the *-s* or *-es* from the strong masculine declension and the *-en* (as in *oxen*) from the weak”. They further argue that *-s* became “the standard plural ending in the north and north Midlands areas” by 1200 – other forms were exceptional (2002, p. 160). But it was not only the endings of nouns that were simplified in ME, it also saw the loss of grammatical gender. Baugh and Cable (2002, p. 166) write that the gender of OE nouns “was revealed chiefly by the concord of the strong adjective and the demonstratives”. As the inflections of adjectives were reduced and the demonstratives were fixed to the forms *the*, *this*, *that*, *these*, and *those* in ME, there was little support left for the grammatical gender and it disappeared.

As mentioned above, the story of the adjectival inflections is also one of reductions. This is connected to the decay in the nominal inflection system, as adjectival inflections tend to follow agreement patterns. Baugh and Cable (2002, p. 160) write that “the form of the nominative singular was early extended to all cases of the singular, and that of the nominative plural to all cases of the plural”. They further maintain that the result of this was a loss “distinction between the singular and the plural” in the weak declension: both ended in *-e* (*blinda* > *blinde* and *blindan* > *blinde*) (2002, p. 160). The result of this was in practice that the endings that remained to the adjectives often were without any distinctive grammatical meaning. There was no longer any strong sense of adjectival declension to govern them. Baugh and Cable (2002, p. 161) argue that even though the *-e* endings of the weak and plural forms are found in poetry in both the East and West Midlands up to the end of the fourteenth century, “it is impossible to know the most usual status of the form in the spoken language”. As has been argued before, changes in the spoken language often take some time to be transferred into the written form.

Losses were not that great in ME personal pronouns. ME retains from OE the forms for all three persons in both singular and plural. However, the dual number in the first and second person is lost. Another notable change in ME personal pronouns is the fact that the OE third person plural pronouns *hīe*, *hiera*, *him*, and *hīe* were replaced with borrowings from ON. As we saw in the language influence scale by Thomason (2001) in section 2.2.3, pronominal borrowing is placed under the category of ‘intense contact’. This is supported by Law (2009), who claims that “pronouns are unlikely to be borrowed”. The fact that the language contact between the two languages led to changes this deep in the structures of ME is a very strong indicator as to the degree and duration of the contact. It is a point that will be revisited in the next section of this paper when discussing the phenomenon of simplification in ME, and it will also be brought up in the main discussion in chapter 4.

As with nouns and adjectives, ME verbs also experienced levelling of inflections and weakening of endings. Baugh and Cable (2002, p. 162) argue that “the principal changes in the verb during the Middle English period were the serious losses suffered by the strong conjugation”. They maintain that new verbs would occasionally develop a strong past tense or past participle by analogy, but that new verbs from nouns and adjectives in general were conjugated as weak. OE verbs only had two tenses. Barber et al. (2009, p. 171) argue that “in Middle English and Modern English the system of tenses is built up by means of the primary auxiliaries (*be*, *have* and later *do*) and the modal auxiliaries (*shall*, *should*, *will*, etc.). The

future tense with *shall* and *will* is established in Middle English, although there are signs of its development in Late Old English”. In this way there developed an expanded set of tenses to compensate for the losses in inflectional endings. They further note that this development is very similar to the general tendency of inflections being exchanged for more analytic devices (2009, p. 171).

Baugh and Cable (2002, p. 166) argue that the overall levelling of inflections created ambiguity where syntactic and semantic relationships no longer were signalled by word endings. One example is that the grammatical functions of nouns that in OE had been signalled by the individual endings in, say, nominative and dative cases. The distinction between the two nouns became more uncertain in ME, and the role of inflections thus had to be covered in other ways. One such way was the limitation of the possible patterns of word order. Barber et al. (2009, p. 171) argue that even though there are many different word orders to be found in ME texts, the ME period is when “S-V-O was established as the normal type”. Another device used to clear what the decay in inflections had made unclear was the use of separate words to perform these functions. Barber et al. (2009, p. 171) write that “prepositions like *in*, *with* and *by* came to be used more frequently than in Old English. A few OE phrases with their modern equivalents will illustrate this: *hungre ācwelan* ‘to die of hunger’; *meathum spēdig* ‘abundant in might’; *dæges and nithes* ‘by day and by night’”. Both these strategies of coping with the loss of inflection show a move from English being a synthetic to an analytic language, and the significance of this is part of what makes this particular period of change in the English language so great and so interesting.

3.3. Some aspects of the development

This section takes a closer look at some other aspects that make the development of ME such a head-scratcher. It was mentioned that the decay of inflections can be looked on as *simplification*. This is an important term in language contact and in the discussion in chapter 4, and there are many aspects of the ME development that fall under this category. The first sub-section will tackle this term and its role in this particular scenario. In the last sub-section some of the other languages that have been credited with the role of influencing ME’s development will briefly be discussed. The overall goal of this section is to make the final touches on the basis for the main discussion on the role of ON in the development of ME in chapter 4.

3.3.1. Simplification

The main changes that were described above as defining the development of ME can all be counted as falling under the category of simplification. Trudgill (1996, in 2010, p. 4-5), following the works of Mühlhäuser (1977) and Ferguson (1959, 1971), suggests that “there are three crucial, linked, components to the simplification process”. The first is “the *regularisation* of irregularities”. Trudgill here lists the regularisation of irregular verbs (*helped* replacing *holp*) and plurals (*cows* replacing *kine*) as examples. In section 3.2.1 on ME grammar and syntax, it was mentioned that the strong verb conjugation was the one that suffered most losses in the transition to ME. New verbs would be conjugated as weak, and Baugh and Cable (2002, p. 163) argue that some strong verbs suffered in competition with weak verbs of similar derivation and meaning and were superseded. They claim that as many as “more than a hundred of the Old English strong verbs were lost at the beginning of the Middle English period”, and more were to follow. The ending *-s* for plural nouns was also established in the course of ME, replacing the different endings of the plural declension in OE. These are both clear signs of regularisation of irregularities in ME.

The second component of the simplification process is “an increase in lexical and morphological *transparency*”. Here Trudgill (2010, p. 4) uses the example that *thrice* and *seldom* are less transparent than *three times* and *not often*. An example from ME that can be viewed as a move towards transparency is the change from being a synthetic language to an analytic. Trudgill (2010, p. 5) argues that “analytical structures are [...] obviously more transparent than synthetic ones”. A more or less fixed word order of S-V-O is more transparent than a freer word order with inflectional endings to signal what the different parts’ relationship to one another is. In this sense, also, is the development of ME a clear case of simplification.

The third and last component is “the loss of *redundancy*”. Trudgill (2010, p. 4) argues that redundancy and the loss of it takes two major forms. The first he calls *repetition of information* (Trudgill, 1978), which is when there in for example grammatical agreement is both an inflection on the noun and on the adjective signalling that a noun phrase is feminine. A reduction in redundancy will here be the loss of agreement, such as what happened in ME. The second type of redundancy reduction is *loss of morphological categories*. An example of this is the way prepositions in ME took over the role that the inflections of for example the dative case had in OE. The example Trudgill (2010, p. 5) gives is how OE *godan huntan* became ModE ‘to the good hunter’. These are examples of a move towards more analytical

structures, which, of course, also is an example of an increase in transparency. All three of these components are, as mentioned in the introduction, linked. The result of regularisation, transparency and loss of redundancy is what we call *simplification*.

It has already been established that ME underwent a process of simplification. All three of Trudgill's components can easily be found when studying the transition from OE to ME (even from ON to ME, if one is thus inclined). But what was the cause of the simplification? Now, it is quite obvious that simplification must be the result of language contact. However, there is in fact disagreement as to whether language contact fosters simplification or the opposite, complexification. Trudgill (2010, p. 16) argues that there in sociolinguistics is "widespread acceptance [...] that language contact produces simplification". While the view of linguists according to Nichols (1992, p. 192) is that "contact among languages fosters complexity, or, put differently, diversity among neighbouring languages fosters complexity in each of the languages". Trudgill (2010, p. 17) wraps it up, claiming that language contact can indeed lead to both simplification and complexification, and that "the two different types of outcome result from *two different types of contact* (see Trudgill, 2009)". He summarises them like this (2010, p. 23):

- high-contact, long-term contact situations involving childhood language contact are likely to lead to complexification through the addition of features from other languages
- high-contact, short-term post-critical threshold contact situations are more likely to lead to simplification

What it all boils down to is, in the words of Trudgill (2010, p. 17), "*who does the learning, and under what circumstances*"? Simplification is the result of a sociolinguistic contact situation where non-native language learning by adults is dominating (Trudgill, 2010, p. 20). Adults in this context are those who have passed the age that is the critical threshold of language learning. Tristram (2004, p. 200) argue that "adult L2 learners are far less successful in their replication of target languages than children are: the younger the children, the better their proficiency". Trudgill (2010, p. 19), basing his claim on the general view of sociolinguistics (e.g. Labov, 1972), places the critical threshold of language learning between the age of eight and fourteen. A language that changes through simplification, Trudgill (2010, p. 21) argues, will with its "move from synthetic to analytic structure, reduction in morphological categories, and grammatical agreement and other repetitions, increase in

regularity and increase in transparency make for greater ease of adult learnability”. The reason why simplification is the result of this type of language contact can be traced back to the concepts of *imperfect learning* and *shift-induced interference* discussed in section 2.2.2 on contact-induced language change. If a large group shifts language, there will be interference caused by imperfect learning, and in the case of this large group consisting mainly of adult learners the imperfections will be in the category of simplification.

Moving back to the language contact situation at hand, Baugh and Cable (2002, p. 104) argue that where the languages of the English and the Scandinavians differed the most was in the inflectional elements. It has already been argued that many of the words of OE and ON were similar, and Baugh and Cable claim that it was only the differences in inflectional endings that created obstacles for mutual intelligibility. This element of confusion, they further argue, will gradually have become obscured and lost for the sake of communication (2002, p. 104). This is an explanation for simplification in the contact between OE and ON, but as Trudgill (2010, p. 24) argues: “[c]ontact between Old Norse and Old English was of the sociolinguistic type that makes not for simplification but for complexification”. What he means by this is that this contact included the elements of high-contact, long-term, and childhood language contact, as listed in the points on complexification contra simplification above. He then moves to claim that “we see no evidence of complexification as such” resulting from this particular contact (2010, p. 25). Complexification can be defined as the borrowing of additional morphological categories from another language. Trudgill (2010, p. 25) argues that the reason why nothing like this happened between OE and ON is that the two languages “were sufficiently closely related that there were no significant differences in the inventory of morphological categories between the two languages, so none could be borrowed”. As we see, the contact with ON does not explain the simplification process that OE went through in the transition to ME. The following section will look into some of the other contact situations at the time to see if there is an answer there.

3.3.2. Other contacts

The period in which ME developed did not only include language contact with ON. As mentioned, scholars disagree when it comes to which language or languages have had the most influence in this process. They also disagree as to what level of influence the different languages have had. It is naïve and ignorant to suggest that every change that happened in ME was the result of ON influence, and therefore the other candidates must also be presented in order to make a grounded argument for the role of ON. The candidates listed here have been

borrowed from Trudgill (2010) in his chapter on ‘What really happened to Old English?’ He argues that the influences on the English language that can be viewed as contributors to the simplification in ME were, in somewhat chronological order; contact between the Germanic dialects of the Angles, Saxons and Jutes; contact with the Celtic language of the Britons; contact with the French of the Norman conquerors. In this line contact with ON belongs before contact with French. Here follows a very brief outline of the three contact situations.

Starting with the case of Germanic dialects in contact, Trudgill (2010, p. 5) argues that “the earliest example of colonial dialect mixture involving English surely concerned the actual development of English itself”. It has already been established that OE developed through interaction between the dialects of the Angles, Saxons and Jutes. This is, of course, a case of dialect contact and not language contact as with the other candidates, but the premises are somewhat the same and the situation must be included. The question Trudgill asks is whether it is possible “that contact between these different Germanic dialects led to dialect mixture, and therefore perhaps eventually to simplification?” (2010, p. 6). He further argues (2010, p. 7) that the decay in morphology such as occurred from OE to ME breaks with the cases of dialect-contact-induced simplification described, for example, in Trudgill (1986). These are generally of the type where “regularisation occurs, and unmarked forms are selected or developed”, but they do not extend as far as the changes in ME. What Trudgill (2010, p. 7) concludes is that “a case could be made for suggesting that the reduction of, say, Old English declension types in Middle English was due to dialect contact”, but there are other parts of the simplification process that are harder to ascribe to such a contact situation.

The next contact situation was between speakers of OE and the Britons speaking Celtic. The two claims against the influence of Celtic that Trudgill (2010, p. 11) argues for are, firstly, that there was too little contact due to the Britons being wiped out or driven out, and, secondly, that the contact does not fit in the chronology; the Celtic language died out in England many centuries before the changes happened in OE. On the first point, Laker (2008, p. 21) argues for there being “much agreement [...] that there was significant survival of the Romano-British population in the fifth and sixth centuries, especially in the northern and western Britain”. Gelling (1993, p. 55) even argues for more than four hundred years between first contact and when the shift from Celtic to Old English was completed. As for the second counterclaim, Tristram (2004) argues for a written-language/spoken-language diglossia in Anglo-Saxon England, which would mean that changes in written OE had already existed in spoken form for some time. A more thorough investigation on the role of Celtic can be found

in Trudgill (2010). All that can be included here is that the case for Celtic being the source of simplifications in OE is stronger than most. Trudgill (2010, p. 34) concludes that “it was contact between a minority of Old English speakers and a majority of socially inferior Late British [Celtic] speakers, in northern England, that set the process of simplification going as the Britons shifted to (their form of) English”. It is pointed out that further contact with ON may have played a role in continuing the process.

The last contact situation that must be mentioned is with the French of the Normans. As has already been mentioned in section 2.1.2 on the historical setting of the contact between OE and ON, the Norman Conquest of 1066 brought French to England. The impact that this language contact situation had on ME is clear, as is evident from it being mentioned in every history of the English language. Trudgill (2010, p. 9) writes that the most considerable impact was on the “English lexis, with 40 per cent often being cited as the proportion of French-based lexis in the modern language”. There is less agreement as to how great an impact French had on the other changes in ME. Baugh and Cable (2002, p. 167) argue that the only influence the Norman Conquest had on the “decay of inflections and the confusion of forms that constitute the truly significant development in Middle English” was by creating favourable conditions for the changes; “by removing the authority that a standard variety of English would have, the Norman Conquest made it easier for grammatical changes to go forward unchecked”. Others claim that it is contact with French that made English the language it is today. In the second section in the following chapter, I briefly discuss the role of French in an ME creole, but my focus will from here on be on the role of ON.

4. Old Norse influence on the development of Middle English

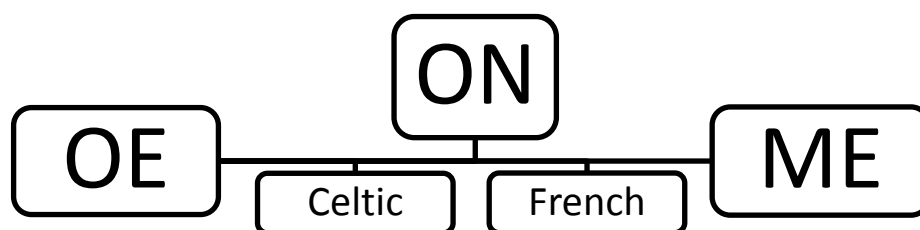
Scholars agree that the development of Middle English was triggered or at least aided by language contact. Many of the changes came as a direct consequence of contact with one or several languages, others were already latent in OE; contact helped them along and perhaps made them happen earlier than they would have if the language had been isolated. As we have seen, there were several language contact situations around the time when ME started developing. What scholars disagree on is to what extent these different situations influenced the final outcome. The aim of my thesis is to look into the influence of ON and discuss to what extent it was part of the linguistic development of ME. The views among scholars with regard to this topic can be arranged into three different hypotheses. The analogy of family has been applied before, and in this case the first hypothesis, normally called the *traditional view*,

gives ON the influencing role of a cousin living under the same roof; the second, the theory of ME being a *creole*, gives ON the role of one of two parents; the third, the hypothesis that ME would be more correctly named *Anglicized Norse*, gives ON sole custody of ME. The following sections discuss these three theories in more detail. There will be a section at the end of each theory with critics on particular statements from representatives of the theories, but, as will become clear, they are all critical to each other and many of the points made in the different sections will be criticism of points made by the others.

4.1. The traditional view

What is often called the traditional view on the role of ON in the development of ME is that it played its part in influencing and perhaps even initiating the change, but when it comes to the big picture there is an unbroken line from OE to ME. Baugh and Cable (2002, p. 52) argue strongly for this, claiming that “the evolution of English in the 1,500 years of its existence in England has been an unbroken one”. They draw the line not only from ModE back to OE, but all the way back to the Germanic dialects of the Angles, Saxons and Jutes (2002, p. 51). This evolution includes instances of language contact that has led to change, but at the core, the language has been the same all along, namely English. The schema below attempts to illustrate the unbroken line between OE and ME, where ON, Celtic, and French are just attachments on the line. This illustration only shows instances of language contact and therefore it does not include the Germanic dialects discussed in the previous chapter. These would be placed as the origin of OE.

Table 4.1 The traditional view: Unbroken line from OE to ME, with Celtic, ON and French language contact



Traditionalists tend to argue for more of the changes in the English language being of natural causes. The opposite of *contact-induced language change* is *language internal change*, which are changes that happen naturally in a language, without being the result of contact.

Thomason and Kaufman (1988, p. 9) call these internal stimuli *drift* and describe them as “tendencies within the language to change in certain ways as a result of structural imbalances”. There are changes in a language that can be explained in this way and changes

that are obviously the result of foreign interference. Believing that there is a straight line of development from OE to ME, traditionalists seek to explain especially changes in grammar and syntax in terms of internal change. Lass (1992, p. 244), for example, will claim that “even during the Old English period itself, many of the main structures appear to be breaking down”. Written language is, as we know, usually more conservative in terms of change and variation. If there was structural imbalance already in written OE, this must have been the case even earlier in the spoken language. Baugh and Cable (2002, p. 167) also emphasises that language contact is not necessarily the direct reason for change but that it indirectly can bring about conditions that *favour changes*. As we have seen, OE has had long periods of language contact, starting with Celtic and moving on to ON and French. This opens not only for many contact-induced changes. More interestingly, with regards to the traditional view, it can also open up for changes that still would have happened in the language if there was no foreign interference, but would have taken much longer time.

4.1.1. The role of Old Norse

In the traditional view the existence of words, phrases and other elements of foreign origin in English are attributed to borrowing. Among traditionalists there are different opinions on what language has had the biggest influence on the English language. ON is often given less attention than Norman French. This is mostly because the Conquest by many is viewed as a catalyst to ME’s development, but also because of the fact that French contributed almost half the Middle English vocabulary. Nevertheless, the French infiltration of the lexicon, however great in numbers, was limited mostly to open word classes and in lexical fields such as government, law and medicine. In the case of ON, on the other hand, the number of words are in truth fewer, but they have found their way deeper into the structure of English. Examples of ON borrowings are found in everyday words like the nouns *birth, egg, guess, sister, skin,* and *want*, and the verbs *bait, call, die, give, lift,* and *take*. We also find traces of ON in grammatical structures such as the third person plural pronouns *they, them* and *their*, and in the present plural *are* of the verb ‘to be’. As we have seen from the borrowability scale of Thomason (2001) in section 2.2.3, the borrowing of pronouns is more likely to happen in cases of ‘more intense contact’, and the borrowing of part of the conjugation of a verb as basic as ‘to be’ is also a very clear sign that ON had great influence on the making of ME.

However, Burchfield (1985, pp. 13-14) very clearly states that ON must not be allowed too much of a role in the development of ME. As we will see in the next section of this chapter, there have been put forward arguments that that the loss of inflections came from the creation

of a mixed language (creole) between ON and OE. Burchfield writes that this “view, which supposes a period, however temporary, of creolized and virtually illiterate speech, cannot be sustained”. In his view, it is more likely that the changes that happened in the transition from OE to ME in the period 900 to 1200 “result from an increasing social acceptance of informal and unrecorded types of English”. He calls these types Vulgar Old English, and argues that they emerged due to the instability of the Old English declensional system. The case endings were not distinguishable enough to fully bring out the relationships between words, claims Burchfield (1985, pp. 13-14), and he further argues that “lying ready at hand was a set of powerful but insufficiently exploited prepositions”. What Burchfield is arguing for is the idea that it is unnecessary and misleading to always look for outside influence in order to explain the changes in OE.

Following the traditional view, ON eventually died out in England. Baugh and Cable (2002, p. 96) argue that ON was spoken as long as there was contact with Scandinavia through settling newcomers and trade. This contact continued up until the Norman Conquest. The death of ON was not a quick and general one. Scandinavian settlers in different places gave up their language at different times. In some places this happened early, but Baugh and Cable (2002, p. 96) claim that there as late as 1100 still were many ON speakers among newcomers and “a considerable number who were to a greater or lesser degree bilingual”. The latest records of ON speakers are, according to Baugh and Cable (2002, p. 96), from some parts of Scotland in the seventeenth century. The story goes, however, that ON never became powerful enough to fully take over for English. In some places smaller numbers of OE speakers might have shifted to ON for a period of time, but the power situation was never stable enough in favour of ON to see a spreading of this phenomenon. The English language always prevailed in the end, resulting in Scandinavians shifting to speak some version of English. But the fact that the death of ON happened over time and that ON remained a much used language in England for at least two centuries accounts for the large number of Scandinavian elements found in English.

4.1.2. Critics of the traditional view

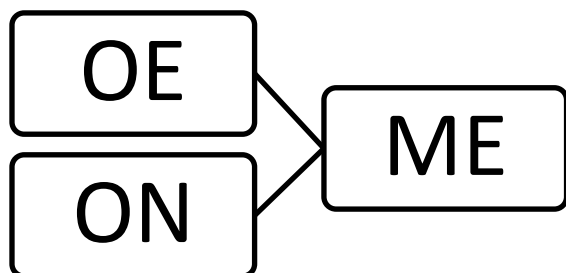
The traditional view is undoubtedly the least controversial and the most accepted, and it is the one found in most literature on the history of the English language. However, in addition to the two following theories, there are some points made above that have stirred criticism. Mitchell (1994, p. 165) criticises that Burchfield “oversimplifies”, arguing that “the fact that those changes in the English language which did occur need not [...] have involved

creolization, does not dispose of the theory of Scandinavian influence”. Shippey (1985, p. 306) also disagrees with Burchfield’s complete dismissal of the theory of Scandinavian influence, and argues that “he simply disregards the phenomena that fit it – like the relative linguistic conservatism of the south and west, or the prominent irruption of Norse even into the English personal pronouns, like ‘she’ or ‘they’”. The last point about words of ON origin in ME’s personal pronouns has already been mentioned. The first is also argued for by Quirk and Wrenn (1987, p. 2) who write that “modern literary English descends more directly from an East Midland (Anglian) dialect than from the southern and south-western language of Anglo-Saxon Wessex in which nearly all the OE texts have survived”. The traditionalist view of the development from OE to ME as a direct and unbroken line, they argue, “is to some extent misleading”. The following section argues for another story of the development of ME where the line is indeed not unbroken and ON is given more than merely the role of influence.

4.2. The creole theory

The theory of ME being a *creole* or a *mixed language* became a discussion in the 1970s. Research on pidgin and creole languages in other places of the world led linguists to view the development of ME in a different light. The extent and nature of the changes resembled cases of mixed languages, leaving scholars reflecting on whether there instead of the traditionally unbroken line from OE to ME should be an additional line from a second language. Bailey and Maroldt (1977) argue boldly that “[i]t cannot be doubted that it [ME] is a mixed language, or a creole” (1977, p. 22). The idea that ME developed through “mixing languages” is not an unlikely scenario when remembering the many influences in the language’s history. Bailey and Maroldt’s original claim that ME is a creole is based on the idea of a creolisation between OE and French. However, Poussa (1982) argues that they are correct in assuming ME is a creole, but that OE rather mixed with ON. The table below is a very simple illustration of how the creolists view the development differently than the traditionalists above.

Table 4.2 The creole theory: The mixing of OE and ON creates ME



In order to properly discuss whether ME can be viewed as a mixed language, the terms of mixed languages must be explored. In language contact theory terms such as *pidgin language*, *creole language*, *creolisation*, among others, are used. Starting with *pidgin language*, Thomason (2001, p. 273) defines this as “a mixed language that arises in a contact situation involving (typically) more than two linguistic groups”. Pidgins arise from necessity, where communication between speakers from different speech communities regularly occur but for limited purposes, such as trade. The lexicon is narrow and often mostly from one of the languages, the *lexifier*, while the grammar is simplified mixture with limited morphology. A *creole language* is also a mixed language, but the difference is, Thomason explains, that it “is the *native language* of a speech community” (2001, p. 262, my italics). There are many similarities to pidgins in the way creoles are created, and creoles often arise through the nativization of a pidgin. However, some creoles arise either abruptly or gradually without there being a pidgin state. The most interesting difference between the two is that the first includes bilingualism among the creating speakers, while the other does not. Bailey and Maroldt (1977, p. 21) define *creolisation* as the “gradient mixture of two or more languages”. Thomason and Kaufman (1988, p. 27) argue that this term by some is used for all contact-induced language change, while they limit it to “interference so extreme as to disrupt genetic continuity” (1988, p. 123), that is, the creation of a mixed language. Here it will only be used more in the latter sense, in connection with language mixing on the level of creating pidgins or creoles. I also agree with Poussa (1982, p. 70) who makes a point out of limiting the term to language influence in the *spoken* form, excluding the written.

A creole language is not really a patchwork of features from the languages it arises from, as it may seem from the description above. A more elaborate definition by Bailey and Maroldt (1977, p. 21) states that the mixing of languages into a creole is “substantial enough to result in a new system, a system that is separate from its antecedent parent systems”. The separateness of the creole is clarified by the idea that it creates a new node on the family tree; it is not a continuation of either of the languages that mixed to create it. Bailey and Maroldt (1977, p. 22) argue that this is the only way to create an entirely new language, and thus “each node on a family tree [...] has to have, like humans, at least two parents”. Viewing genetic relationships in languages this way has been argued against by Thomason and Kaufman (1988), as shown in section 2.2.4, but it is a powerful way of illustrating how the creole language is a new linguistic system independent of its predecessors but still connected through certain similarities. The identifying traits of a creole, Bailey and Maroldt (1977, p.

21) argue, include “morphological (derivational and inflectional) simplifications – or rather “analyticity” in the morphological sense”. The term *simplification* has already been discussed in connection with ME, and both derivational and inflectional simplifications were part of ME’s development, resulting in an analytical structure. Trudgill (2010), as shown in section 3.3.2, argues that this was the result of contact with Celtic. The similarities with creole languages are however striking, and must be discussed. The focus will be on OE mixing with ON, but the theory of a mixing with French will also be mentioned.

4.2.1. The role of Old Norse

It is natural in a paper on the influence of ON in the development of ME to focus on the article by Poussa (1982) arguing that ME is an OE/ON creole. It is here that we find the greatest role ON plays as part of a creolisation process. However, this is not the only creolisation theory that hands out a role to the language of the Vikings. Poussa writes her article as a counterclaim to the article by Bailey and Maroldt (1977), who argue that ME is a OE/French creole. Even though French is viewed as the main influence by the authors, ON is given a large role as creating the conditions for this development. The situation between OE and ON is even described as creolisation, but here the term is used very liberally. Bailey and Maroldt (1977, p. 36) claim that the “Nordic creolization of Anglo-Saxon [...] created an essentially unstable situation”, and further that “the infusion of Old Norse elements led to that kind of linguistic instability which linguistic mixture generally creates, and thus prepared the ground for even more substantial foreign creolization afterwards” (1977, p. 26). The initial reduction of inflections and the following tendency in the same direction is attributed to this first mix (1977, p. 41). Bailey and Maroldt thus claims that ON did the first tries on opening the jar, making it easier for French to come in and take the lid off.

According to Poussa (1982), however, it is ON and not French that more likely mixed with OE to create the ME creole. She argues (1982, p. 71) that Bailey and Maroldt’s use of the term *creolisation* is “highly misleading [...] as pidginization and creolization proper are processes which take place in the spoken language, whereas most of the French influence which goes beyond the lexical level may well have come into English via the written medium”. Because French only was spoken by limited groups such as the nobility, parts of the middle class, and members of professions such as the clergy and clerks, Fisiak (1977, p. 252) claims that “no more than 10% of the population used both English and French”. A society structured like that of Norman-governed England is not, as argued by Poussa (1982, p. 71), one that “provide[s] the type of language contact situation which normally produces a creole”.

In her opinion, as the main part of the population had no use for French (1982, p. 72), the extensive amount of French words in English must have been brought in by the writings of educated men using loanwords (1982, p. 72).

The argument for ON being the language that mixed with OE is much stronger, Poussa (1982) argues. Her angle in arguing for an OE/ON creole is that it provides a historical explanation for three characteristics that ModE shares with pidginized and creolized languages. These are found by comparing Chancery Standard (mid-fifteenth century) and late West Saxon literary standard, and are: “a) loss of grammatical gender; b) extreme simplification of inflections; c) borrowing of common lexical words, and word-forms” (1982, p. 70). Poussa (1982, p. 71) further claims that when examining these three linguistic changes in the ME period it is revealed that “the direction of change is consistently from the central and east Midlands towards the capital”. The East Midland area, as we know, was where the Danish Vikings settled and ruled as the Danelaw. This is where, according to this theory, the creolisation process started, in the interaction between the Vikings and the English locals.

Poussa (1982, p. 73) argues that for an extended period of time in the late ninth century there was a group of English speakers trapped between the Danish armies of Halfdan and Guthrun in Mercia. This group consisted largely of women and children as the men had been called to serve in the levy. According to Poussa (1982, p. 74) this kind of mingling would have resulted in large-scale intermarriage between the English women and Danish men, which in time would have led to children growing up in households where both OE and ON were spoken. Whether we view OE and ON as mutually intelligible or not is crucial at this point. Poussa does not, or at least she does not argue for adequate intelligibility like Townend (2002). She argues that a bilingual society such as that which would develop in this situation “provides a likely setting for the formation of a creole” (1982, p. 73). Factors that further favours the development of a creole are language mixing and the fact that the society was separated from both parent speech-communities (Poussa, 1982, p. 74).

Being the language of a small mixed society of English and Danes does not seem to be the ideal starting point for arguing that this creole is where ME stems from. Poussa (1982, p. 74) admits that “an Anglo-Danish creole would at first have had very low status in the eyes of monolingual speakers of English”, but claims that “given high prestige, however, there is no reason why the Danish English creole should die out”. She argues (1982, pp. 75-76) that under the invasion by Swein (1013) and the reign of King Knut (1017-35) the unstable

Midland dialect was crystallised and raised in status “to that of a supra-regional spoken koiné”. The Midland dialect was the most natural choice for a lingua franca between the north and the south because it was widely understood. Poussa (1982, p. 77) argues that during the Norman Conquest, when the official writing standard of West Saxon had to make place for French, there was little change in the need for a means of communication between civil servants and between the rulers and the ruled. Thus the Midland dialect not only survived but also remained high in status so as to become the basis of the new standardisation of the English language as it was established in the fourteenth century.

4.2.2. Critics of the creole theory

Both creolisation theories mentioned here controversial. Baugh and Cable (2002, p. 125) argue that one of the main reasons is the disagreement on what defines a creole. As we saw in section 4.2.1, Poussa (1982, p. 70) opts for a definition based on findings in the *spoken* language. She criticises Bailey and Maroldt (1977), claiming that their arguments for a OE/French creole theory are founded mainly changes brought into the language through the written media and that this hardly can be viewed as creolisation. However, Poussa’s attempts to base her own theory on spoken language also falls short. Thomason and Kaufman (1988, p. 264) argue that creolisation theories of Poussa’s kind are speculative because “they try to devise scenarios for linguistic developments in English for which there is essentially no documentation, namely those in the north of England from 950 to 1250 and those in the whole of England from 1050 to 1150”. As has already been stated, West Saxon was the written standard of OE from about the year 900, and Thomason and Kaufman (1988, p. 267) argue that even though other OE dialects were spoken “material written in them without a WS overlay are rare if not altogether lacking”. Traces of changes in the spoken language found in written texts are, as mentioned, difficult to pin-point in time. Even though Poussa claims to search for evidence of creolisation in the spoken language, truth is there are no records of language from this period that are not tinted by being put to pen by educated scribes.

Poussa uses the term *creolisation* for the process she describes, indicating that she intends to argument for how ME was created as a creole. However, the term creole is only mentioned when arguing for a mixed language being developed as an unknown number of English were surrounded Danish armies, also of unknown number. Poussa argues that this was the status from the Danish conquest of the Midlands between 866-875 and King Alfred of Wessex’s reconquering of Mercia between 916-918, which is 52 years at the most (Poussa, 1982, p. 73). Her claim is that there in time would be created a hybrid language among speakers from

bilingual homes. This hybrid or creole is the basis of the East Midland dialect. Here, however, Poussa leaves the term *creole* to start arguing for an East Midland *koiné*, which is a dialect mixture. She claims (1982, p. 83) that the OE/ON creole further mixed with the Mercian dialect and the West Saxon standard to become a lingua franca. These are descriptions of both language and dialect mixing, but can it really be called creolisation? As a creole mixes back with several variants of one of its predecessors, the result will no longer be a true creole. Romaine (1984) commends caution:

“When referring to pidginization/creolization (and pidgins/creoles), we must be careful not to confuse the process with the entities which result from them. Hence the term ‘creolization’ should be reserved for the situation in which a creole results. There are however cases where conditions are conducive to simplification, reduction etc. (e.g. second language acquisition), but which do not give rise to a pidgin or creole” (Romaine, 1984, p. 465).

The processes Poussa describes, I argue, are not creolisation, but several instances of contact-induced language change, the contact being with both languages and dialects.

Görlach (1986) agrees with Romaine that the term creolisation should not be used in vain in connection with ME. He argues that

“unless simplification and language mixture are thought to be sufficient criteria for the definition of creoloid (and I do not think they are, since this would make most languages of the world creoles, and the term would consequently lose its distinctiveness), then Middle English does not appear to be a creole” (Görlach, 1986, p. 330).

Even though ME is characterised by simplification and the fact that the language went through several instances of contact, this is not, in Görlach’s opinion, enough to make it a creole. This brings us back to Baugh and Cable’s argument on disagreement concerning definitions. However, Görlach (1986, pp. 340-341) also claims that there are several features in the development of ME that simply diverge from the normal course of a creole. He maintains that it “did not lose, as would be expected in a ‘proper’ creole, gender and case in pronouns, number in nouns, personal endings and tense markers in verbs; it retained the passive and did not replace tense by aspect”. Not only is simplification and language mixing enough to brand ME as a creole, but there are also other parts of the process lacking.

Lastly, Thomason and Kaufman (1988, p. 264) argue that “the extent of Norse influence on English between 900 and 1100, though remarkable, was not extreme given the pre-existing typological and genetic closeness of the two languages”. We have already seen that there were

many similarities between OE and ON. Townend (2002) even argued strongly that the two languages were at least adequately mutually intelligible. This creates doubt as to whether there even developed a temporary creole in Mercia, as Poussa argues. If speakers of OE and ON understood enough of each other to be able to communicate, there would be no need to create an entirely new language to assist communication.

4.3. The hypothesis of Anglicized Norse

The most radical and controversial view of ON's influence on ME is that the "unbroken line" mentioned in the traditional view attaches ME to ON rather than OE. This hypothesis is fairly new and had its genesis in 2011 in a paper published by Joseph Emonds. He argues that ME (and therefore ModE) should be grouped with the North Germanic languages, not the West Germanic. His reasoning is based on the nature of the words incorporated into ME from ON, and on several syntactic properties of ME that are shared with ON and not found in West Germanic languages (e.g. word order, P-stranding, infinitival and directional particles, passive participles and case inflections) (Emonds, 2011, p. 13). The argument proposed in Emonds' paper is that ME was "a new '*amalgamation*' of Old English and Old Norse". As *amalgam* means something like "mixture" or "fusion", the distinction from a creole is not evident, but where *creole* is defined as a new system, Emonds claims that the mixing of ME is different. He argues that "Middle English is a direct continuation of the grammar of Old Norse", but also that "the new language's lexicon was almost certainly more English than Norse" (Emonds, 2011, p. 13). It is this combination of the grammatical system of one language and the lexicon of another that makes Emonds call it an *amalgam*.

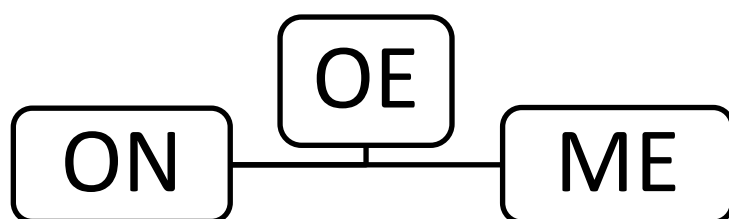
Amalgam is also used in a forthcoming article Emonds has written in collaboration with Jan Terje Faarlund, which builds further on Emonds' ideas. Here they argue that the amalgamation process was between the two lexicons of OE and ON (Emonds & Faarlund, forthcoming). They argue in their article that ME should rather be called Anglicized Norse since the grammatical and syntactic structures are Norse, while there has been great influence by the English language. According to the authors, the case presented in this forthcoming article has more supporting arguments and reaches a stronger conclusion. Emonds and Faarlund sum up their argument like this:

"It is well known that Middle English (and its descendant Modern English) has a large number of words of Scandinavian origin. This is conventionally attributed to language contact and heavy borrowing of Scandinavian words into Old or Middle English. However, this alleged borrowing

was not limited to lexical words, as is the normal case in contact situations; many grammatical words and morphemes were also borrowed. [...] Even more problematic is the fact that Middle English and Modern English syntax is Scandinavian rather than West Germanic. The explanation argued for here is that the linguistic ancestor of Middle English (and therefore Modern English) is North Germanic, with large borrowings from the Old English lexicon, rather than the other way around” (forthcoming, p. 1).

As with the two other theories, the hypothesis of Anglicized Norse can be simply illustrated. This shows the continuation of the system as a straight line, while OE influence is added in the same way ON contact was attached in the transition from OE to ME illustrated in the traditional view.

Table 4.3 The hypothesis of Anglicized Norse



Before explaining the line of linguistic argumentation Emonds and Faarlund put forth to support their hypothesis of Anglicized Norse, the historical and sociolinguistic situation placed behind their findings need a brief introduction. They argue that “the fusion of the two vocabularies dates back not to early Scandinavian settlement in England, but about 200 years later, especially the 12th c. during the full impact of the Norman Conquest” (forthcoming, p. 1). Emonds (2011, p. 17) claims that “the harsh realities of the Norman Conquest” where the two peoples were “practically enslaved under the Conquest”, prepared the ground for “a complete *fusion* of two previously separate populations” (2011, p. 15). The language of this fusion or amalgam, Emonds (2011, p. 21) argues, would most likely favour the syntactic patterns of ON because families of Scandinavian origin “probably retained more social prestige”. The English “were politically subservient and lacked a recent history of conquest and trade success”, which affected the way they viewed their language. This is why, Emonds and Faarlund argue, it was the language of the Scandinavian population that won ground. In a situation where two opposing groups were forced to rally together against a common oppressor, the language of the group that had enjoyed the highest prestige prior to the Conquest would certainly be the most influential. According to Emonds (2011, p. 21), the ME

speaking children would naturally emulate the syntactic properties of the most prestigious language.

4.3.1. The role of Old Norse

As we have seen from the two other theories, there is a considerable number of ON words in ME. Nevertheless, we also know that amount of OE originating words is higher, as was shown in a table in section 3.2. However, the implications of the distribution of percentages must also be discussed in connection with the hypothesis at hand. The fact that ME has a larger percentage of words of OE source has been used to argue that this is the language's origin, just as it has been argued that the large number of French words could mean that ME is a OE/French creole. Now we know that, in the words of Emonds (2011, p. 22), "a language is classified by its syntactic descent [*italics removed*]", but when the argument is that this descent is from a language that is not even among the top two contributors in lexicon, an explanation is needed. Why are there not more ON words?

Table 4.4 Origin of Middle English words (Emonds & Faarlund, forthcoming, p. 13 with numbers from Freeborn (1992))

OE and ON cognates	571	50%
OE source only	405	36%
ON source only	163	14%
Total vocabulary listed	1139	100%

The answer Emonds and Faarlund propose is quite simple. They argue that the ON language in England at the time of the Conquest undoubtedly had "borrowed many hundreds (quite possibly thousands) of open class words for [...] new cultural concepts" from OE (forthcoming, p. 7). On the other hand, Baugh and Cable (2002, p. 99) argue that only about forty ON words were borrowed into OE. The result is that the two peoples thrown together after the Conquest were speakers of what Emonds and Faarlund name *Anglicized Norse* on the one side, and an OE more or less unaffected by Scandinavian influence on the other. As the two vocabularies melted together, many OE words were strengthened by their existence in both languages. Emonds and Faarlund (forthcoming, p. 15) also make a point out of the fact that according to their hypothesis the second language learners were the OE speakers. Their shift to speaking *Anglicized Norse* further explains the presence of OE elements. In this way *Anglicized Norse* became laden with OE borrowings. The high number of ON everyday words in ME is accounted for by the prestige of ON, its *Anglicized* nature, and the fact that

many children grew up in bilingual homes. These are the lexical arguments used to explain how ON gained ground in the place of OE. Alone, however, it is not enough to make Emonds and Faarlund's case.

This leads us to the grammatical arguments. Emonds and Faarlund (forthcoming, p. 15) claim that when languages undergo heavy lexical borrowing of the kind argued for both by the traditional view and their own hypothesis, "almost universally [...] native speakers maintain their grammars". In other words: "living languages essentially borrow no grammatical items that are inflections or free standing words [italics removed]" (Emonds & Faarlund, forthcoming, pp. 35-36). One example from the development of ME is how thousands of French words were incorporated into English, but next to no grammatical free morphemes. Emonds and Faarlund (forthcoming, p. 39) claim, however, that in the category of grammatical lexicons ON and OE forms were "in roughly equal shares". Their argument is that the grammatical lexicon of ME is a hybrid between OE and ON. They define *grammatical lexicon* as lexical items that lack "purely semantic features" (see Chomsky, 1965, pp. 88, 143, 150-151) and shows "*Unique Syntactic Behaviour*" (forthcoming, p. 35). One of the examples Emonds and Faarlund argue for that speak strongest for the role of ON is the sources of ME grammatical verbs, where they claim the predominant source is ON, not OE (forthcoming, p. 36). The table includes the ON versions of the cognates, as seen in rows two and four.

Table 4.5 Modern English grammatical verbs (with data from Emonds, 2000, 2001)

ON and OE cognates	(10) <i>come, go, have, is, let, make, need, put, say, were</i>
- ON cognates	- <i>koma, ganga, hafa, er (<es), lata, maka, nauð (noun), pute, segja, váru</i>
ON source only	(5) <i>are, get, give, take, want</i>
- ON cognates	- <i>eru, geta, gefa, taka, vanta</i> ('lack', 'need')
OE source only	(3) <i>be, bring, do</i>

Examinations of other categories of the grammatical lexicon, such as the modal auxiliaries, personal pronouns, demonstratives, quantifiers and prepositions show the same tendency. Emonds and Faarlund (forthcoming, p. 37) find that items with ON cognates seem more likely to survive, and that among ME's non-cognate grammatical morphemes at least half are of ON origin (forthcoming, p. 39). They further emphasise that the borrowing of core grammatical items in the quantity they have found is not in accordance with the sociolinguistic properties of living languages. Their explanation is that this hybrid grammatical lexicon was created as

“the two linguistic communities [...] set about after the Conquest, partly consciously, to forge a common vocabulary” (forthcoming, p. 37). Because there is an even mixture of grammatical items from OE and ON, Emonds and Faarlund (forthcoming, p. 37) argue “there are no reasons based on lexical forms for claiming that ME continues one of OE or Norse significantly more than the other [italics removed]”. The other grammatical case discussed by Emonds and Faarlund, the lack of inflections in ME, also comes to an inconclusive answer as to the role of ON. They argue that the loss of inflections may not entirely be due to language contact, but “also to internal diachronic development in Western Europe more generally and in North Germanic in particular [italics removed]” (for more details, see Emonds & Faarlund, forthcoming, section 6.2). The grammatical arguments, just like the lexical ones, do not fully make the case, though the support found here is a bigger step in the direction Emonds and Faarlund is leading.

The last arguments are the syntactic. This is where the main support for Emonds and Faarlund’s hypothesis of Anglicized Norse are found. And, as has been made clear before, it is in the syntax that we discover the ancestry of a language. Emonds and Faarlund (forthcoming, section 5) discuss elements of ME syntax in relation to OE and ON from three different perspectives: the first is syntactic properties of ON and ME lacking in OE; the second is syntactic properties of OE never part of ON or ME; and the third is later syntactic innovations shared by English and Mainland Scandinavian. These properties are far too many and too detailed to be discussed in full in this thesis. However, the overall aim of the supporting arguments Emonds and Faarlund produce is to argue that ME syntax follows the pattern of ON, not OE. The table below lists the seven syntactic properties of ON and ME lacking in OE.

Table 4.4 Syntactic properties of ON and ME lacking in OE
(Emonds & Faarlund, forthcoming, section 5.1)

		Old English	Middle English	Old Norse
1	Word order in verb phrases	OV	VO	VO
2	Verbal prefix or post-verbal particle	verbal prefix e.g. perfective: <i>gewyrcean</i> (do) <i>berad</i> (overtake)	post-verbal particle	post-verbal particle
3	Subject to subject raising	not found (in unquestionable forms)	found	found
4	Subject to object raising	not found	found	found
5	Future tense	expressed by present tense	future auxiliaries: <i>shall, will</i>	future auxiliaries: <i>skulu, munu</i>
6	Preposition stranding	not found	found	found
7	Split infinitive	not allowed	allowed	allowed

The third point, subject to subject raising, we know is a much used construction in ModE, “whereby the subject of a subordinate clause may occur on the surface as the subject of the matrix clause”. In the examples below, version b shows how the subject of the subordinate clause (version a) has been raised to subject of the main clause.

a. *It is likely/seems that John is the most competent person.*

b. *John is likely/seems to be the most competent person.*

Constructions of this kind are found in ME well before Chaucer (late fourteenth century). The examples below are from Denison (1993); (cf. Emonds & Faarlund, forthcoming, p. 21); the raising predicate is underlined:

a. ...& war & wirrsenn toc anan ut off hiss lic to flowenn.

...and pus and corruption took at-one out of his body to flow.

“...and pus and corruption took at once to flowing out of his body”.

(Denison, 1993, p. 234, from Ormulum, c. 1180)

b. þe yeres of grace fyl þan to be 1303.

“The years of grace fell then to be 1303”.

(Denison, 1993, p. 233, from Handlyng Synne, c. 1303)

Emonds and Faarlund (forthcoming, p. 20) claim that this type of construction is “absent from Old English”. The evidence they use is from Traugott (1972, p. 102), who maintains that subject to subject raising in “[u]nquestionable instances” is “hard to find”. While the one example found by Denison (1993, pp. 211-212) was the result of “a translation from Latin”. Lastly, Hawkins (1986, p. 82) argues that OE had “effectively no S[ubj] to S[ubj] or S[ubj] to O[bj] Raising”. In ON, on the other hand, Emonds and Faarlund (forthcoming, p. 20) claim subject raising is “the *normal and unmarked construction*”, giving us examples such as the ones below:

a. ...ok þótti hann vera inn ágæzti maðr.

...and seemed he.NOM be the noblest man.NOM.

“...and he seemed to be the noblest man”.

b. þorleiki virðisk engi jafnvel til fallinn at vera

Thorleik.DAT seemed none.NOM equal-well to fallen.MSC.NOM to be

fyrirmaðr.

foreman.NOM.

“Nobody seemed to Thorleik to be well suited to be the leader”.

Emonds and Faarlund (forthcoming, p. 21) argue that the source of “the robust subject raising construction of Late ME and Modern English” is “most probably an uninterrupted continuation of Norse syntax”.

The argument of the sixth point, preposition stranding (P-stranding), is about constructions where prepositions “appear *inside clauses* when their complement NPs are either relativized or moved to the front of clauses” (Emonds & Faarlund, forthcoming, p. 24). According to Emonds and Faarlund, van Riemsdijk (1978) has claimed that the only languages in the world to have fully developed P-stranding are the North Germanic languages and English

(forthcoming, p. 24). The four ways prepositions can become stranded in these languages are (examples in Modern Norwegian and English, from Emonds & Faarlund, forthcoming, p. 24):

a. NP movement in the passive:

Den saka vart snakka om.

That issue was talked about.

b. Wh-movement in interrogatives:

Ho spurde kva du snakka om.

She asked what you talked about.

c. Relative clauses without overt relative pronouns:

Den saka som han snakka om.

The issue which/that he talked about.

d. By topicalisation:

Den saka snakka vi aldri om.

That issue we never talked about.

P-stranding is circumscribed in OE. Van Kemenade (1987, section 5.3) argues that OE P-stranding must involve P-internal traces of clitics, so that there is not really a separation between the preposition and its object. She further argues that “when the loss of morphological case was completed around 1200” clitics and thus OE’s version of P-stranding disappeared (1987, section 6.3.3). It is therefore very unlikely that the P-stranding found in ME originates from OE.

The basis of Emonds and Faarlund’s argument (forthcoming, p. 25) that P-stranding in ME originates from the language in fact being Anglicized Norse is that this particular characteristic developed at the roughly the same time in ME and the Scandinavian languages. Examples from thirteenth century Scandinavian texts show P-stranding in relative clauses and with topicalisation. According to van Kemenade (1987, pp. 208-209), this is the same time that “we begin to find evidence of P-stranding in wh-relatives and wh-questions” in ME, and also “examples are found of preposition stranding in topicalization and passive constructions”. Emonds and Faarlund (forthcoming, p. 25) argue that the allowing of P-stranding in the English and Scandinavian languages, which is a situations that “appears to have developed only once in known linguistic history [italics removed]”, shows connection between them that can only be explained by ME being based on ON syntax.

With regards to the seventh and last point of the list above, the split infinitive, Emonds and Faarlund (forthcoming, p. 25) claim that “the infinitival marker *to* was *invariably* adjacent to the following verb” in OE. There was never any intervening constituent. They further claim that “[t]his is still the case throughout West Germanic”, giving examples from Dutch and German. Due to the rather free word order, Emonds and Faarlund (forthcoming, p. 26) argue that “instances of an intervening adverb may be found in Old Norwegian”, even though this was not a particularly common construction as long as the language had verb to T raising and thus also null-subject in infinitival. They argue further that as “verb movement to T was lost, sentential adverbials began to appear more freely between the infinitive marker and the verb” (forthcoming, p. 26). This development was seen both in Mainland Scandinavian and in English. In this case also the English language follows the pattern of North Germanic and breaks significantly with that of West Germanic.

As already mentioned, these are only some of the arguments put forth by Emonds and Faarlund in their article. In all, from all three perspectives listed above, they include at least fourteen separate syntactic properties that place ME with the North Germanic and apart from the West Germanic languages. Their conclusion is that ME is connected to the North Germanic languages through being based on the syntax of ON, an amalgam of ON and OE grammatical lexicon and general lexicon from both languages. Languages are, as we know, categorised by their structure, and on this point Emonds and Faarlund claim the ancestry lies with ON and the North Germanic languages.

4.3.2. Critics of the hypothesis of Anglicized Norse

Since Emonds' first article was published in 2010 the idea of ME being North Germanic has had the opportunity to receive some response from the linguistic society. However, as noted, the argumentation of this first paper is not as strong as that made in the article by Emonds in collaboration with Faarlund. Even though it has not yet been published, an interview with Faarlund by Trine Nickelsen in the *Apollon* research magazine in 2012, has given scholars the opportunity to comment on some of the arguments the authors use to support their hypothesis.

Gjertrud F. Stenbrenden (2013) wrote an answer to Faarlund's interview in the same magazine. She argues that English “*viser jevn og tydelig kontinuitet i de endringene vi kan identifisere mht. setningsoppbygning, bøyningsmønster, ortografi og ordforråd*” (shows uniform and clear continuity in the changes we can identify as regards sentence structure, declension paradigms, orthography and vocabulary (translation mine, in this and all citations

from Stenbrenden)). On Emonds and Faarlund's claim that ME's VO structure is of ON origin, she argues that "*alle de germanske språkene i sin aller tidligste fase ser ut til å ha hatt verbet til slutt i alle setningstyper*" (all the Germanic languages in their earliest phase seem to have placed the verb last in all sentence types). Language changes of different kinds have led to some Germanic languages giving up on having verbs at the end of sentences, while some, e.g. German and Dutch, still retain this structure in subordinate clauses. The fact that English has made the full transition as the only West Germanic language does not necessarily mean that it has been misplaced. Stenbrenden (2013) emphasises that "*[s]iden engelsk og de skandinaviske språkene opprinnelig også hadde de samme typologiske egenskaper, bør det ikke overraske oss at de har gjennomgått svært like, noen ganger identiske, endringer*" (since English and the Scandinavian languages originally had the same typological characteristics, it should not surprise us that they have undergone very similar, sometimes identical, changes). Similar changes in related languages do not automatically imply that any contact between them must be the reason. It seems that a change away from placing verb last is inherent in North Germanic and might just as well be in West Germanic too. Differences in conditions may have spurred this change in English, and language contact with ON could indeed have been part of that. Claiming

Split infinitives, Stenbrenden (2013) argues, are "*et relativt nytt fenomen, både i engelsk og norsk, og kan derfor ikke skyldes påvirkning fra norrønt*" (a relatively new phenomenon, both in English and Norwegian, and can therefore not be due to the influence of Norse). As with word order, she argues that it is possible that the option of split infinitives is inherent in the English language due to its common ancestry with the North Germanic languages. Sarah G. Thomason (2013) agrees with this, attributing some of the similarities between ME and ON syntax to the fact that the two languages are related to a common ancestor. She argues that "[p]arallel but independent innovations in closely-related languages are well known and reliably attested". Internal language change of this kind happen due to what Thomason calls *drift* (see section 4.1), which she very simply describes as "structural imbalances that make particular bits of grammar hard to learn". Related languages are more likely to have the same inherent structural imbalances. This means that what spurred certain developments in ON due to grammar that was "hard to learn" could also be found in OE and create similar changes there.

Thomason (2013) criticizes the arguments made by Faarlund in the *Apollon* article, claiming that "[t]he evidence cited in the article is nowhere near extraordinary" and that "there are

some serious problems with Faarlund's claims". One of Emonds and Faarlund's main arguments behind their hypothesis is that languages retain their own grammar even if they borrow heavily in the lexical category. The Norse nature of ME syntax, as argued for by Emonds and Faarlund, could therefore only have become so if the language was a continuation of ON and not OE. Thomason disagrees with this statement and argues that "there are hundreds of convincing examples of structural diffusion — including phonological, morphological, syntactic, semantic, and discourse features — in contact situations all over the world". Languages borrow all types of features and do not always retain their grammar. One example is the Indic language Kupwar in the border area between the Indic and the Dravidian languages. Kupwar borrowed syntactic properties from both a Dravidian language and another Indic language (for details, see Gumperz & Wilson, 1971). Thomason further argues that "word order is the most frequently borrowed type of syntactic feature". Looking back at the borrowability table in 2.2.3, we see that word order is placed under "more intense contact", together with pronouns. If the third person plural pronouns of ME are borrowings from ON, then surely the word order can also have been affected. This is a very relevant point, because Emonds and Faarlund's arguments of VO order in subordinate clauses and of P-stranding are both concerning word order.

In the interview with *Apollon*, Faarlund (2012) claims that "*på så å seia alle punkta der engelsk skil seg syntaktisk frå dei andre vest-germanske språka tysk, nederlandsk, frisisk, så har det same struktur som dei skandinaviske språka*" (in as good as every point where English is syntactically different from the other West Germanic languages German, Dutch, Frisian, it has the same structure as the Scandinavian languages (my translation)). Thomason (2013) argues that "this implies that there are syntactic structures in which English matches the rest of West Germanic". If Emonds and Faarlund argue that grammar was hardly borrowed in the contact situation between OE and ON, then where did the West Germanic structures come from? There must consequently have been borrowings from OE into Anglicized Norse, which prompts the question why the borrowing could not have gone the other way. Thomason (2013) argues that a survey of ON influence on the English language of the Danelaw "counts 57 structural traits of Norse origin in Norsified English dialects, out of a total of at least 260 grammatical traits" (Thomason & Kaufman, 1988, p. 298). This survey focuses exclusively on phonological and morphological features, but ON influence comes here to no more than 20%. Thomason and Kaufman (1988, p. 298) further argue that thirty-eight of these traits "are mere phonological variants of what English had had in the first place". Thomason (2013)

argues that this “makes them look like fashionable "accent" shifts rather than wholesale borrowings”. Her point is, essentially, that even though Emonds and Faarlund’s percentage of ON syntax turns out to be higher than the 20% found in phonological and morphological features, the overall percentage of structures of ON origin is unlikely to reach an unusually high level, “compared to other instances of structural diffusion in intense contact situations”. When being compared to the results of other cases of high intensity language contact, there is no difficulty in explaining the syntactic structures Emonds and Faarlund use to support their argument as borrowings.

Having had access to the actual article where all the argumentation for Emonds and Faarlund’s hypothesis is presented has given me the opportunity to get the full picture and not just pieces of it. Much of their argumentation is well based and convincing (although being a Scandinavian I might be slightly biased in wanting to add English to our ranks). As opposed to the arguments found in Emonds’ (2010) paper and in the *Apollon* interview (2012), the forthcoming article supports them with text excerpts from OE, ON and ME showing the existence or lack of the different syntactic properties. However, many of the arguments are conditional in that they show evidence of Anglicized Norse because other elements seem to do so. The best examples are here found in the category of “later innovations shared between English and Mainland Scandinavia”, which are the type of changes that are dismissed as similar innovations due to English and Norse being related languages, as shown by Stenbrenden and particularly Thomason above. However, some of the other properties that have been placed among the “syntactic properties of Norse and ME lacking in OE” could arguably be relocated to fit the same profile. Faarlund (2013), in his answer to Stenbrenden’s criticism, admits that the split infinitive must be credited to common innovation (though he will argue that this happened due to the Norse source of ME structure). Timing the development of P-stranding in both the Scandinavian languages and ME to the thirteenth century also prompts the question whether this should be handled as a common innovation or not. The great problem when arguing about the time of development for the different changes is the lack of data on the spoken language. The conservatism of written language is well attested, but there is no way of determining how long it takes for a change in spoken language finds its way into written form.

As a last remark on critic against Emonds and Faarlund’s hypothesis of Anglicized Norse, I noticed that both Emonds (2011, p. 13) and Emonds and Faarlund (forthcoming, p. 10) argue that the term *amalgam*, used for the Anglicized Norse language they argue developed as the

English and Scandinavians interacted, is taken from Baugh and Cable. Given the authority of Baugh and Cable on the history of the English language, to claim that the term (and consequently their use of it) originates from such a source instantly adds underlining. However, Baugh and Cable (2002, pp. 95-96) use the term *exclusively* for the mixing of the two peoples, not their languages. They write that “[t]he amalgamation of the two peoples was greatly facilitated by the close kinship that existed between them”. And they are not speaking directly about their languages. The fact that Emonds and Faarlund attempt to attach their language amalgam terminology to Baugh and Cable begs the question whether the mistake is on their side or if they intentionally accredit the term to them to add extra credibility to their hypothesis.

Emonds and Faarlund’s hypothesis is already viewed as controversial and will be thoroughly scrutinised by scholars when the pending article is published in full form. From the comments found in reactions to the interview with Faarlund in *Apollon*, it is clear that the full strength of Emonds and Faarlund’s argumentation is needed to properly make their case. As an example, Stenbrenden’s (2012) inability to fully grasp that the basis of the hypothesis is that ME developed from a Scandinavian based language greatly influenced by OE (hence the term *Anglicized Norse*), shows that a simple interview is not solid enough a base to attempt a proper discussion of the hypothesis. I eagerly await the reactions of the linguistic society at the publication of Emonds and Faarlund’s forthcoming article to see what the authorities in the fields of English language history and ON structure will make of the hypothesis.

5. Conclusion

In my thesis I have attempted to find the role of ON in the great changes that happened as ME developed. The Scandinavian Vikings who settled in England from the ninth century have unquestionably had great effect on the English language, as is seen in the existence of everyday words and even personal pronouns of ON origin in ME that have survived in ModE. As the second chapter showed, contact-induced language changes such as these are common results of intense language contact. The undisputed borrowing of the third person plural pronouns *they*, *them*, and *there is* by Thomason (2001) in her borrowability scale placed in the third of four levels of intensity for contact, named “more intense contact”. This shows that there must have been much interaction between speakers of OE and ON in Viking Age England. The question still remains as to what language(s) they used, whether there was mutual intelligibility, or there developed a temporary pidgin, or if the society became more or

less bilingual. Townend (2002) argues strongly for an adequate intelligibility, and this is supported by the existence of lexical cognates in OE and ON, and perhaps also by the loss of inflections in ME. However, the topic is still controversial and there is disagreement among scholars as to the extent of understanding between the two speech communities.

The loss of inflections in ME is part of the overall simplification that is characteristic for its development. Both OE and ON are highly inflecting languages with synthetic structure, while ME turned out with a highly analytical structure. Trudgill (2010) argues that the basis of the simplification process was contact with Celtic, but Bailey and Maroldt (1977) and Townend (2002), among others, maintain that the loss of inflections in ME for the most part should be attributed to contact with ON. Given a situation of adequate intelligibility between OE and ON speakers, Baugh and Cable (2002, p. 104) claim it would be the differences in inflectional elements that created confusion. The argument for the role of ON in the simplification of inflections in English is strong, but, as we have seen, there are different views as to how much more of a role ON played.

In my approach to this subject I chose to discuss ON's influence from three different viewpoints. The traditional view is interesting because it is the most widely accepted and argued for. There is no doubt that the link between OE and ME is very strong, and this is attested in the fact that the traditional view is found in every introduction to English language history. It is also a great point of outset for discussing the influence of ON, because traditionalists believe, as is strongly argued by Burchfield (1985), that ON must not be allowed too much of a role. A greater role for ON has, however, been seen by several scholars. Poussa's (1982) claim is that there existed an OE/ON creole that was part of the basis for the development of ME. There is reason to believe that temporary pidgins and other creolisation processes occurred in the language contact situation between speakers of OE and ON, but the theory of ME being a creole has been strongly refuted. Poussa's theory created a nice stepping stone between the traditional view and the innovation of Emonds and Faarlund's (forthcoming) hypothesis of Anglicized Norse and was mostly included for this reason. However, I realised early on that the creole theory is a good basis on which to present this new hypothesis. They both argue that there must have been more to ON's influence on ME than the claims of the traditionalists. They see that the traces go too deep to have been the result of mere borrowing. Emonds and Faarlund's hypothesis was largely the reason for my interest in this topic. The presentation of it in this thesis has by no means done it credit, but I have attempted to give an idea of the argumentation used by the authors.

I set out to cover what theories have existed and still exist regarding the level of ON influence on the development of English. The fact that there is more than one theory begs the question why the traditional view is not good enough. There has to be a reason why some feel the need to challenge it and argue for a greater role for Old Norse. I cannot say that I agree with either Poussa or Emonds and Faarlund. The creole theory had its day and made an important point in arguing that the “unbroken line” between OE and ME might not be as straight as traditionalists claim, but I agree with the critics, and especially the lack of many creole elements argued for by Görlach (1986). ME is not a creole. Nor do I fully support Emonds and Faarlund in their endeavour to make ME North Germanic. Their argument that grammar is not borrowed, which is a great part of the base of their claim, was disputed by Thomason (2013), who argued that grammar indeed is borrowed, and that word order is one of the first structures to be borrowed. Still, I agree that many of the syntactic properties presented by Emonds and Faarlund may indeed be the result of contact with ON. More research is of course needed in order to create a greater support for the claim, but the result will in this case not be that ME should be named Anglicized Norse. If some of Emonds and Faarlund’s claims of ON origin for syntactic properties in ME can be supported, I would rather argue that the role of ON must be extended to include these. It will create a dent in the line between OE and ME, but it will by no means break it.

Writing a thesis on the influence of ON on the development of ME from three different perspectives turned out to be a bigger task than I first imagined. In retrospect I see that limiting myself to just one of them would have given me the opportunity to more fully commit to understanding all the aspects and not just the general idea of them. There are many features of the contact situation and of the language changes that I have not had the chance to include in this paper or indeed the opportunity to fully study and attempt to comprehend. I have come across discussions questioning the number of Vikings who really settled in England (Holman, 2007; Härke, 2002; Thomason & Kaufman, 1988, p. 299), and there is also debate around whether OE and ON should be viewed as separate languages or merely different Germanic dialects, changing the contact to that of dialects (Townend, 2002). Not to mention the fact that English, unlike the rest of the Germanic languages, from North to West, is not a verb second language. This is a factor that separates English from Germanic entirely, alienating it from both West and North Germanic. All these discussions and others like them have implications for what role we give ON in the development of ME. I have included what I found to be most important for the angle I chose.

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