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# ОСВІТА, НАУКА ТА ВИРОБНИЦТВО: РОЗВИТОК І ПЕРСПЕКТИВИ

## МАТЕРІАЛИ

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## THE FORMS OF MIDDLE ENGLISH GENERATED BY THE INTERPLAY OF ENGLISH, FRENCH AND LATIN

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Middle English (ME) is the term used to describe the varieties of English spoken and written from about 1100 to about 1500. ME differed from OE in terms of its status and function. After the Norman Conquest of 1066, the OE written standard, Late West Saxon, gradually fell into disuse. Latin took over from English the documentary functions of the medieval state, and French, the language of the conquerors, at first competed with English as the language of literary culture. Of course, English continued to be employed both in speech and in writing. Indeed, there is much more surviving written ME than OE material, and English not only remained the primary spoken language of the vast majority of the population of England but also was rapidly adopted by the descendants of the Norman-French invaders. However, in writing at least, the function of English was for much of the period a local one, catering for local literary tastes and used for the contemporary equivalent of primary education. [3, p. 92]

For a long time after the Norman Conquest, England was trilingual. Latin was the language of the Church, Norman French of the government, and English of the majority of the country's population. [1, p.146]

French influence became increasingly evident in English manuscripts of the 13<sup>th</sup> century. It has been estimated that some 10,000 French words came into English at that time – many previously borrowed from more distant sources. These words were largely to do with the mechanisms of law and administration, but they also included words from such fields as medicine, art and fashion. Many of the new words were quite ordinary, everyday terms. Over 70 percent were nouns. A large number were abstract terms, constructed using such new French affixes as *con-*, *trans-*, *pre-*, *-ance*; *-tion*, *-ment*. [4, p. 123]

The Conquest provided the impetus for the grammatical changes, but in fact English and French did not mix very much until after 1204: The vast majority of French words that enter English are borrowed after this date. Why? Because when French was the main language, and even later when there was a significant bilingual population, there was no need to bring French words into English: A speaker could just switch to French. But once French and English separated, a massive influx of French words changed forever the English language, enriching its vocabulary with thousands of new words.

Through the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, hundreds of French words poured into English. Entire semantic fields became dependent upon French vocabulary. For example, nearly all English words dealing with government and law (with the exception of the word "law," which is Scandinavian) come from French: *government*, *justice*, *crime*, *jury*, *felon*, *punishment*, *prison*, *attorney*, *mortgage*, *heir*, *legacy*, *sovereign*, *prince*, *princess*, *duke*, *duchess*, *count*, *countess*, *baron*, *squire*, and *page* are all French. Many words for war also come from French, including *army* and *navy* and *soldier*. Luxury goods and words for fashion are predominantly French, including all of the major gemstones (*diamond*, *ruby*, *sapphire*, *emerald*, *pearl*, and *amethyst*). Food words also enter English from French, and it is here perhaps that the semantic spheres of French and English are most obvious. The words for domestic animals in English are all Old English words: *ox*, *pig*, *sheep*. But when these animals are cooked and their meat placed on the table, the words are French: *beef*, *pork*, *mutton*, as well as many, many other words for food and food preparation. Words for art, literature, philosophy, architecture, and medicine are also heavily French. There are those

who deplore the addition of French words to the English language. Writing manuals encourage students to use simple, “Anglo-Saxon words” rather than French or Latinate forms (though such “simple” words as *face, cruel, grain, carry, tempt, strife, spirit, pure, real,* and *stout* are French borrowings. But French did in fact enormously enrich the English language. France was the leading culture of Europe at this time, and the words that come in from French give English a greater semantic range and more poetic power. Yes, there is a spare beauty about Old English, and it deserves to be more widely read and enjoyed. [5, p. 98]

Some French loans in Middle English which are represented the following semantic areas:

1. Administration: *baron, chamberlain, chancellor, constable, coroner, council, court, crown, duke, liberty, manor, mayor, messenger, warden.*
2. Law: *government, justice, crime, jury, felon, punishment, prison, attorney, mortgage, heir, legacy, sovereign, prince, princess, duke, duchess, count.*
3. Religion: *abbey, anoint, baptism, cardinal, cathedral, chant, chaplain,*
4. Leisure and theatres: *beauty, carol, chess, color, conversation, courser, lance, dance, falcon, fool, image, jollity, joust, juggler, kennel, lay, leisure.*

French was the dominant influence on the growth of Middle English vocabulary but it was no means the only one. Latin was not the language of a conquered people. During the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries several thousand words came into the language directly from Latin. [2, p. 124]

Some Latin loans in Middle English are in the following areas:

1. Administration and law: *alias, arbitrator, memorandum, pauper, prosecute, proviso, summary.*
2. Religion: *collect, diocese, immortal, incarnate.*
3. Science and learning: *abacus, allegory, etcetera, comet, contradiction, desk, diaphragm, discuss, dislocate, equator, essence, formal, genius, history.*
4. Thousand of loanwords that poured into English after the Norman Conquest had an effect beyond that of merely adding new terms and synonyms to the language. They also provided the raw material for an intricate system of levels of vocabulary ranging from the colloquial through the formal, from the everyday to the highly technical, from the general to the highly specialized. Through the thousands of Latin-based roots, they also mark the beginning of the highly cosmopolitan nature of English today.

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