

Language Contact Effects on Verb Semantic Classes: Lability in Early English and Old French

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Abstract

Old and Modern English differ sharply in the prevalence of lability, the extent to which verbs alternate between transitive and intransitive frames (McMillion 2006, van Gelderen 2011). Such alternations are attributed by Pinker (1989) and Levin (1993) to membership of semantic classes: change-of-state/position verbs are mostly labile in modern English, whereas *destroy*-verbs and psychological verbs are not (Levin 1993). This study investigates how far verb semantic class membership was criterial for lability in older stages of English. It appears to have been a gradable phenomenon in Old English: among change-of-state/position verbs, lability was far from negligible (García García 2020), a very limited number of psychological verbs are found to have been labile, and *destroy*-verbs were non-labile. Middle English members of the latter two verb classes were also analysed and it was found that in both classes some expansion took place in the extent of lability within their members. We propose that this occurred under the influence of the corresponding Old French verbs, also analysed in this article. Lability in Old French has been argued by Ingham (2020) to have had a decisive influence on rendering the change-of-state/position verb classes labile in Middle English. It is shown here to have been present in earlier Old French with some psychological verbs and to a certain extent with *destroy*-class verbs, but to have been declining in the period of maximum French influence on Middle English. It is concluded that contact influence has had a large-scale effect on the lability of English verb classes (especially change-of-state/position verbs) where Old English already had substantial numbers of exemplars to act as ‘bridgeheads’ for the developing syntactic trend, but not where Old English lacked them, as

with psychological verbs and *destroy*-class verbs. Lasting contact influence appears to have combined with, and been favoured by, existing predispositions within the language.

1 Introduction

A very large body of research bears out how significant contact with other languages has been as a driver of changes in English over the centuries. Yet linguistic change does not always succeed. For one reason or another, an innovation that is initially taken up by a speech community, or some members of it, may fail to generalise and oust its competitor forms. Research into so-called ‘failed changes’ has been gaining some traction in recent years. Postma (2010) discussed two cases: the temporary replacement of *hem* ‘him’ in a Middle Dutch border dialect by the innovative lexical reflexive *sick*, borrowed from Low German,¹ and the temporary extension of *do*-support to non-emphatic declarative clauses in Early Modern English. He noted that the maximum point of the failed innovations was connected in time with a strong rise of the successful innovations that accompanied them: these were another reflexive form in the Dutch dialect case, and the rise of *do*-support in other clause types. Bacovcin (2017) studied the short-lived V - *to* NP - NP construction with dative verbs in Middle English, which he accounted for as a temporary by-product of successive changes in the Middle English Case system. At the level of lexis, Sylvester et al. (forthc.) have researched lexical variation in Late Middle English, showing that numerous innovations, especially loan items, did not succeed in displacing established lexemes. In this study we consider changes to the argument structure of English verbs in two semantic domains where contact influence may well have made some impact, but not sufficiently to alter their character long-term. Importantly, the innovative syntax which did not survive with these verbs emerged at a time when, as found by Postma (2010), the change in question was becoming successful in comparable linguistic domains. The phenomenon in question was the ability of a verb to appear in morphologically unmarked form in both causal-transitive and noncausal-intransitive frames, as discussed more fully in the next section.

2 Lability

¹ *Sick* was ousted by another reflexive form, *sich*, which successfully replaced *hem*.

According to Haspelmath's (1993) typology, languages possess a variety of causativisation and anticausativisation strategies involving verbs of change of state or location,² including P(ATIENT)-lability, where the PATIENT or UNDERGOER argument can appear either as subject or direct object and the verb can adopt a noncausal or causal sense without alteration of the verb form, e.g.:

(1) a. *The branch broke.* (noncausal-intransitive)

(1) b. *The man broke the branch.* (causal-transitive)

(2) a. *The ship sank.* (noncausal-intransitive)

(2) b. *The pirates sank the ship.* (causal-transitive)

It is found most notably in the semantic sub-classes of change-of-state verbs and change-of-location verbs, as illustrated above in (1)-(2), respectively, where the positionally alternating argument denotes the entity undergoing the relevant change. Lability in Modern English has been well-studied descriptively and theoretically (e.g. Visser 1963; Pinker 1989; Levin 1993; Rappaport and Levin 1995; McMillion 2006). The semantic criteria model of Pinker (1989) — (see also Rappaport & Levin 1995) — catalogued verbs on the basis of semantic constraints on their ability to alternate. Thus, verbs such as *break* involve a change of state which could occur independently of the action of an agent. Verbs such as *cut*, however, do not alternate because their semantics necessarily involve the action of an agent.

In Modern English lability is virtually absent from the semantic class of verbs with psychological meaning (henceforth psych verb) (Levin 1993, van Gelderen 2011, Alexiadou 2016). The semantic role of EXPERIENCER (roughly, the entity undergoing the psychological process) can appear either as subject or direct object of a psych-verb clause, e.g.:

(5) *John feared a lightning strike.*

(6) *A lightning strike frightened John.*

However, the verbs in question do not allow both constructions:

(7) **John frightened a lightning strike.*

² 'Causativisation' is the process by which a noncausal verb is rendered causal, as in 'laugh' > 'make laugh'. 'Anticausativisation' turns a causal verb into non-causal, as in 'scare (so.)' > 'get scared'.

(8) **A lightning strike feared John.*

Lability is also absent from the class of *destroy*-verbs (Levin 1993), even though their meaning involves a change of state in the PATIENT argument which otherwise permits lability (cf. (1)):

(9) *The storm wrecked the ship outside the harbour.*

(10) **The ship wrecked outside the harbour.*

Following the criteria-based approach, Levin (1993) observed that *destroy*-class verbs differ semantically from change-of-state verbs in that the latter encode some specific information about the resulting state of the entity that is e.g. broken or sunk (cf. (1)-(2) above), whereas *destroy*-class verbs encode simply the fact of the entity's destruction.

In the Middle English period, the position seems to have been interestingly different from Present-Day English. It was noted observationally by one of the present authors that some verbs with psychological meaning, as well as certain verbs with meanings similar to 'destroy', also showed lability. These observations prompted the questions pursued in this research, namely, (i) how widespread lability was among Middle English verbs belonging to these semantic classes, (ii) whether their Old English forerunners were also labile, and (iii) whether contact with French might account for any changes that occurred, as with change-of-state/position verbs.

3 Lability in earlier English: Previous research

The literature on lability in Old English is somewhat limited but adequate for a basic understanding of the situation. The first consistent contribution to the study of the argument structure of Old English verbs (known to us) is Hermodsson (1952), which contrasted the valency of a large number of verbs in Old High German, Old Frisian, Old English and Old Saxon. Hermodsson (1952: 210) pointed out the radical spread of labile verbs in English, when compared to other Germanic languages. He concluded from that comparison that lability is an inherited trait that originates in the Ingvaenic language group, comprising Old Frisian, Old English, Old Saxon (and Middle Dutch), and that is clearly visible in the Old English period. He acknowledged, though, like Visser (1963:

99), the abundance of intransitive verbs in Old English, compared to Present-Day English.

McMillion (2006) claimed that Old English is not especially labile.³

In recent research into valency in the history of English, Ottosson (2013) and van Gelderen (2011), following Hermodsson, also trace back Present-Day English use of labile coding to Old English, while noting at the same time the much higher number of labile verbs in Present-Day English. More specifically, van Gelderen (2011: 122) links the rise of lability in Old English to the loss of the causative formation. This link has been studied by García García (2020), who points out that, since the causative formation is by far the main valency-changing mechanism in Proto-Germanic, the decline of its transitivity function in favour of labile coding in Old English demonstrates the impetus of labilisation already in this early period (2020: 170). This has been confirmed by a recent corpus study that shows that the number of labile verbs increases significantly both in token and type in late Old English with respect to early Old English (García García and Ruiz Narbona 2021). Note that most of the Old English causatives that become labile denote a change of state or change of position: e.g. *byrnan* ‘to burn (intr.); to burn (sth.)’, *gecelan* ‘to be cool; to make cool’.

The number of labile verbs massively increases over time. Ingham (2020) has shown that a great expansion of lability took place in Middle English: less than 20% of native verbs surviving into Middle English in the semantic areas of change-of-state and change-of-position were found to have been labile in Old English, while in Middle English two-thirds of them were attested as labile, with an even greater proportion of verbs in these semantic areas borrowed from French. He argued that intense French influence in the later medieval period was responsible for the large-scale adoption of lability by Middle English. Medieval French, unlike the modern language, made extensive use of lability in those same areas, so the case for seeing French contact influence at work in the large-scale extension of lability at the very time when the influence of French on Middle English generally was at its height (thirteenth and fourteenth centuries) appears solid.

Arising from that research, we wish to consider how far contact with French might have affected the argument structure of verbs in other semantic areas where lability could have, but did not, become dominant. The two lexical domains to which the present study is devoted are psych verbs and *destroy*-verbs (Levin 1993). Psych verbs in earlier English have received considerable attention in recent years from a number of authors, notably Allen (1995), Moehlig-Falke (2012),

³ He came to this conclusion by applying Haspelmath’s (1993) questionnaire of thirty-one inchoative / causative verb pairs to Old English. However, the reliability of such questionnaires for extinct languages has been rightly disputed, because of the absence of native speakers who can confirm the most usual gloss (see van Gelderen 2011: 115).

In this section we describe and compare the argument structure of Old English, Middle English and Anglo-French *destroy*-verbs. First, we present a detailed account of the data collection process of the Old English and Middle English material, and then discuss the results.

The data collection procedure used for Old English material was first to filter all the verbs in Bosworth and Toller's (1898) *Anglo-Saxon Dictionary (ASD)* which contained in their definition 'destroy' or any of the other members of the 'destroy' class identified by Levin (1993: 239). We used the advanced search tool in the electronic version of the dictionary, which turned up 122 verbs with the word 'destroy' in their definition, thirty-nine verbs with 'waste', eleven with 'ruin', nine with 'demolish', eight with 'ravage', and zero with 'wreck'. We then determined the argument frames in which the verbs were attested, consulting the citations in the *ASD* and, when available, in the *Dictionary of Old English (DOE)*, completed up to letter *I* so far. Only four of the verbs thus selected were attested as labile, that is, were used as both causal-transitive, with the PATIENT in object function, and noncausal-intransitive, with the PATIENT as subject. These are *breccan* 'to break, demolish (sth.)' / 'to force a way out of confinement', *slītan* 'to slit, tear, rend, destroy, waste (sth.)' / 'to tear, get torn', *losian* 'to lose, destroy' / 'to be lost, perish' and *forfaran* 'to perish, be destroyed' / 'to kill, destroy'. For the first three verbs, the meaning category 'destroy' is clearly secondary and results from the translation of specific contextual usages of the respective primary meanings, namely 'break', 'tear' and 'lose'. OE *forfaran* 'to perish, be destroyed' / 'to kill, destroy' is the only labile verb in the *destroy*-class in Old English retrieved by our searches. Examples of its noncausal-intransitive and causal-transitive usages follow:

Noncausal-intransitive:

(13) a. & mycel sciphere hider com suðan of Lidwicum, & hergodon swyðe be Sæfern, ac hi þær
mæst ealle syþþan **forforan** (ChronD 910.10)⁴

'And a big fleet of war came hither from the south of Brittany, and they pillaged much along the Severn, but afterwards almost all **were destroyed** there'

Causal-transitive:

(13) b. ...þæt man þa sawla ne **forfare**, þe Crist mid his agenum life gebohte (LawVAtr 2)

'...so that man does not **destroy** the soul, which Christ bought with his own life'

⁴ Old English works are cited after the *Dictionary of Old English Corpus*.

Unsurprisingly, our results closely coincide with previous findings, such as Hermodsson's (1952: 196ff.) and Visser's (1963: 97); neither study includes any *destroy*-verbs in its list of labile verbs in Old English.

Additional proof for the (near-)absence of lability in *destroy*-verbs in Old English is supplied by the fact that causative verb pairs with this and similar meanings ('injure', 'harm', 'kill') are kept intact, unlike causative pairs denoting change-of-state or change-of-position, which frequently become labile, as noted above. Some examples of causative pairs around the meaning 'destroy' are *ā-hrȳran* 'cause to fall, destroy' vs *hrēosan* 'fall, be destroyed', *wyrðan* 'injure' vs *for-weorðan* 'perish, vanish, go off' (intrans.) or *cwellan* 'kill' vs *cwelan* 'die' (see complete list in García García 2020: 175-6). This suggests that the incompatibility of lability with *destroy*-verbs is probably (nearly) categorial in Old English, and not merely the result of attestation gaps.

The method used to find *destroy*-verbs in Middle English was first to probe the *Middle English Dictionary (MED)* using the 'definition and notes' search tool so as to identify all the verbs in whose definition the words 'destroy', 'waste', 'ruin', 'wreck', 'ravage' or 'demolish' occurred.⁵ Some 263 hits were obtained in this way, the majority for 'destroy'. For each verb, the primary sense was then examined to identify whether labile syntax was attested in the citations, that is, whether the argument bearing the PATIENT role was attested in subject and also in object function of the same lexeme without morphological alteration.

This procedure required some refinement in order to arrive at appropriate target verbs: the *MED* adopts a very wide range of definiens terms, seemingly in order to give an idiomatic translation of particular uses of lexemes in the citations provided, e.g. 'destroy' is proposed as a translation of *voiden* and *miseden* respectively, in the following citations:⁶

(14) ... *in caas hir baner... were voided or rased.* (Vegetius 89/4)

'In case their banner were to be destroyed or cut down'

(15) *Icham adred, Þurth his folye he is misled.* (Arthur & Merlin (Auch.) 4988)

'I am afraid that through his folly he is destroyed'

⁵ Rarer words listed by Levin (1993: 239) such as *decimate* and *obliterate* were left aside as it was expected that one of the five terms selected would suffice to generate the corresponding Middle English lexis.

⁶ All Old English, Middle English, and Anglo-French citations are referenced in the short forms given in the respective dictionaries.

The search also provided numerous hits where the ‘destroy’ meaning arose only thanks to a phrasal use, e.g. s.v. *putten* in the combination *put down*, as in:

(16) *They wolde **putt downe** mannes reason in fulfilling of their worldly desires.*

(Chartier, *Treat. Hope* 59/20-

21) ‘They would overturn human reason while fulfilling their worldly desires’

The great majority of hits did not correspond to items with ‘destroy’, ‘ruin’, and so on as the primary meaning (taken as being mentioned in the first sense listed) and were therefore culled.

Thirty-six verbs remained, some of them labile, e.g.:

(17) a. *Right as wormes **shende** a tree, Right so a wyf **destroyeth** hir housbonde.* (Chaucer *CT.WB* 376)

‘Just as grubs destroy a tree, so does a wife destroy her husband’

(17) b. *Sonne myght there none discende Lest the tender grasses **shende**.* (*RRose* 1400)

‘No sun could reach down there lest the tender grass would be destroyed’

(18) a. *Ye han nat **anientised** or **destroyed** hem.* (Chaucer *CT.Mel* 2438)

‘You have not eliminated or destroyed them’

(18) b. *With þe lest winde..Pe note **anentis**..& all to nozt worthis.* (*Wars Alex.*3302)

‘With the least wind the fabric of a spider’s web is destroyed and is nothing’

Table 12.1 below lists all the verbs belonging to the *destroy*-class and their valency in Middle English. NB: No lexeme meaning ‘wreck’ was obtained that was not already identified by the use of the probe ‘destroy’, leaving five meaning categories: ‘destroy’, ‘waste’, ‘ruin’, ‘ravage’ and ‘demolish’.

Table 12.1: Labile and non-labile Middle English verbs in the *destroy*-class in *MED*

Labile	Non-labile
<i>anienten, forfaren, perishen, shenden, spillen, tinen</i> : ‘destroy’	<i>astruien, awerden, corrupten, dilizen, destroien, fordon, forspillen, forwirchen, outenden, squachen, stroien, teren, tocasten, todreosen, toshenden, tospillen, towasten</i> : ‘destroy’
<i>westen</i> : ‘waste’	<i>adwinen, aswinden awesten, forclingen, iwesten towesten, wansen</i> ‘waste’
	<i>amerren, defeten</i> : ‘ruin’

	<i>forherghien</i> : 'ravage'
	<i>abatan, toslen</i> : 'demolish'
labile: 7	non-labile: 29

As can be seen, only seven out of the altogether thirty-six ME *destroy*-class verbs (19%) were attested in *MED* as labile; two of them, namely *anienten* and *perishen*, are of Anglo-French origin. Two native *destroy*-verbs (*shenden*, *spillen*) became labile which had been non-labile in Old English, e.g. intransitive uses of *shenden* in (17b) above and in (19):

- (19) *Whi nult þu hider wenden? þu lezst us her scenden.* (*Lay.Brut* (Clg A.9) 9015)
 'Why will you not come here? You cause us to be destroyed here'

Turning to *destroy*-class verbs in Anglo-French, target items were obtained by reverse look-up in the *Anglo-Norman Dictionary* (*AND*) using the same procedure as with Middle and Old English stated above. Table 12.2 shows that the majority of Anglo-French *destroy*-verbs (five out of nine) were labile.

Table 12.2: Anglo-French *destroy*-class verbs

Labile	Non-labile
<i>agravanter, anienter, degaster</i> 'destroy' / 'waste away'	<i>anientisser, annuller, destrure</i> 'destroy'
<i>gaster</i> 'ravage, destroy' / 'fall into disrepair'	<i>corrumpre</i> 'waste away'
<i>perir</i> 'cause the loss or destruction of' / 'perish'	
labile: 5	non-labile: 4

Examples of lability in Anglo-French were:

(20) a. *Si tost come il vous veit hardy et bald en la grace Dieu, sa force **anentera** et il tost s'en fuiera.* (Ancren 1186.21)

‘As soon as he sees you brave and bold in God’s grace, his force will vanish and he will quickly run away’

(20) b. ... *pur ceo k'il avait **ennenty** par arsouns Viles et eglises.* (Langtoft, Wright II, 362)

‘....because he had destroyed by fire towns and churches’

(21) a. *Le cors **degaster** ne purra Pur ceo ke jamés ne murra.* (Lum Lais ANTS 11849)

‘The body will not be destroyed because it will never die’

(21) b. *Beneuré sunt cil ki cest fu eschaufe e enlumine, nent cil k'il embrase e **deguaste**.*

(Joshua ii 14)

‘Blessed are those who this fire warms and lights up, not those that it burns and destroys’

The absence or near-absence of labiality in Old English *destroy*-verbs and its greater type-frequency in Anglo-French strongly suggest the determining influence of the latter on the occurrence of labiality in Middle English *destroy*-verbs. Given the data from Old and Middle English, the most likely hypothesis seems to us to be that labiality in ME *destroy*-verbs was a short-term tendency brought to life by Anglo-French models, which did not last after the main period of influence, as there were no Old English exemplars on which to sustain it. In contrast, contact influence has had a large-scale lasting effect on English in verbs of change of state and change of position. Here, Old English already had some models to act as bridgeheads for the developing syntactic trend, but where it lacked them entirely, as with *destroy*-verbs, contact influence was not lasting. The temporary spread of labiality into the ME *destroy*-verb class was plausibly influenced by the presence of labile verbs belonging to this semantic class in Old French.

5 Psych-verbs in Old and Middle English

It will be recalled that labiality is virtually non-existent among Present-Day English psych verbs, but that observational evidence of the extent of its presence in earlier stages of the language suggested that it merited more thorough investigation. In this section, appropriate analytic categories for this enquiry are first described, then results of similarly designed analyses to those pursued in the previous section of the paper are presented.

There were in Old English three main kinds of linking between the STIMULUS and EXPERIENCER roles and grammatical function:

(i) STIMULUS as subject, EXPERIENCER as (in)direct object, e.g. *lician* ‘please’, as in (11), repeated here as (22):

(22) *Dam wife þa word wel licodon.* (Beo 639)

DET.-DAT. woman-DAT. DET.-NOM.PL. words well please-PRET.-3PL.

‘Those words pleased the woman well’

(ii) EXPERIENCER as subject, STIMULUS as direct object, e.g. *wundrian* (‘admire’), e.g.:

(23) *Ic wundrige þá stihunge þære godcundan mildheortnesse.*

(GDPref 3 (C) 28.233.28)

I admire-1SG. DET.-ACC. dispensation DET.-GEN. divine mercy

‘I admire this dispensation of divine mercy’

(iii) Impersonal null subject, EXPERIENCER as indirect object, STIMULUS as genitive-case object, e.g.

(24) *Him ofhreow ðæs mannes.* (ÆCHom I, 13 281.12)

He-DAT. feel pity-PRET.-3SG. DET.-GEN. man-GEN.

‘He was sorry for the man’

Type (iii) verbs did not permit either EXPERIENCER or STIMULUS argument to be linked to subject. A verb appearing both in construction (ii) and in one of (i) or (iii) was labile, since alternative linkings of the EXPERIENCER role were available, either to subject or to (in)direct object.

The method used to obtain Old English psych-verbs was first to identify the forerunners of Middle English psych verbs of native origin (see below and Appendix 3), which make up a large part of the Old English psych verbs in the list in Appendix 1. These were collated and if necessary augmented by the items in Guidi’s (2011) study on Old English psych-verbs, as well as by the psych-verbs listed by García García (2020). The meaning and valency of the verbs from *A* to *I* was ascertained in the *DOE*. For the remainder of the alphabet, the *ASD* was our main source of information.

A total of seventy-five psych-verbs were found in Old English (Appendix 1). Their classification according to types (i)-(iii) above, and their combination, is presented in Table 12.3. The first column (‘subject EXPERIENCER only’) corresponds to type (ii), the second includes types (i) and (iii), the third and fourth display the combination of types (i) and (ii), and (ii) and (iii) respectively. The table does not take into account Old English psych-verbs which are attested only once (*gæstan* ‘torment’ and *wrāþian* ‘be angry’) or whose claim to lability rests on a single gloss example (*gramian* ‘anger (so.)’/ ‘burn with anger’, *gryllan* ‘provoke’/ ‘gnash the teeth, rage’).

Table 12.3: Psych verb types as attested in *ASD* and *DOE*

	Subject EXP. Only	Object EXP. Only	Labile	Labile, but 'Object' EXP.only in impers. clause	Total
Total	24	33	11	3	71
%	34	46	16	4	100

Labile psych verbs in Old English made up 20% of the total. They included those with the meanings of 'anger', 'trouble', 'doubt', 'shame', 'gladness', 'pleasure' and 'rejoicing'. In the examples that follow, *gebelgan* (25a and 25b) and *gladian* (26a and 26b) illustrate plain lability, where the EXPERIENCER can be linked to subject or object (types (ii) and (i) above); *tweogan* (27a and 27b) combines types (ii) and (iii) above, that is, the EXPERIENCER can be linked to subject or object, but in the latter case only with an impersonal subject.

gebelgan 'to be, get angry' / 'to make (so.) angry'

(25) a. & *gebealh heo swiðe eorlice wið hire sunu* (Ch 1462 17)

'and she got very angry with her son'

(25) b. [...] *þæt he [...] ecean dryhtne bitre gebulge*

'[...] that he [...] the eternal lord bitterly made angry' (Beo 2329)

gladian 'to be, get glad' / 'to make glad'

(26) a. *ahebbað þonne eowre heafda. þæt is gladiað on eowrum mode*

'raise then your heads. That is, rejoice (be glad) in your heart' (ÆCHom I, 40 526.77)

(26) b. *mid þan we magon ure mod gastlice glædien*

'with which we can gladden our heart spiritually' (ÆCHom II, 4 (B) 35.176)

tweogan ‘to doubt’ / ‘to inspire doubt into a person (accusative)’ with impersonal construction

(27) a. *Hine wile tweógan, hwæðer heó him sóð secge.* (HomU 21 35)

‘him will inspire doubt, whether she told him the truth’

(27) b. *Ic nát [...] ymbe hwæt ðú giet tweóst* (Bo 5.12.26)

‘I don’t know [...] about what else you doubt’

All three construction types in (i), (ii) and (iii) continue into Middle English, though the genitive case is now rarely found expressing the EXPERIENCER role. Lability continues to be found, e.g.:

(28) *He wile wreðe wið þe.* (Lamb. Hom. i.33,8)

‘He will become angry with you’

(29) *We ... wrepe hyne wyþ sennes.* (Shoreham 124/270)

‘We anger him with sins’

A new development is the appearance of verbs taking an EXPERIENCER subject together with a co-referential reflexive pronoun, of the type ‘He wraths him’. Verbs of this kind were counted separately if the subject linking of the EXPERIENCER was restricted to the reflexive construction. Other verbs also appearing optionally with a reflexive pronoun were noted but will not be further considered for the purpose of this paper.

To establish the argument structure possibilities of Middle English psych-verbs, the procedure was as in previous sections to use the modern English psych-verb lists in Levin (1993: §31.1.-31.3) as search terms, in this case in the *MED*’s reverse look-up facility (search by definition). Whenever a verb in those lists occurred in the definition (of one of the senses) of a Middle English verb lexeme, the latter was included in the data analysis. Once again, verbs with single citations were not counted, as in such cases no alternation would be observable.

Altogether 123 Middle English psych-verb lexemes were identified in this way, of which forty-nine came from French (36%). Numerous French loans restocked the object EXPERIENCER category, as noted by van Gelderen (2011), e.g. *surprise, please, delight, annoy, disturb, trouble, astonish, grieve, dismay*, and *discomfort*. French also contributed loans to the subject EXPERIENCER category, such as *adore, rejoice, despise, regret, repent*, and *marvel*. Forty-four verbs (35%) were inherited from Old English, the remainder being innovations or borrowings from other languages, not only French.

The breakdown of these 123 verb lexemes into the analytic categories presented above was as in Table 12.4 below. Native verb types (Old English-origin, Scandinavian-origin and coinages in Middle English) are shown separately from French-origin loans.⁷

Table 12.4: Psych-verb types as attested in *MED* entries, 1150–1450

Verb valency type:	Subject EXP. Only	Object EXP. Only	Labile	Labile, but ‘Object’ EXP. only in impers. clause	Object EXP. /Subject refl. pron.	Subject EXP. + refl. pron.	Total
Native	19	21	28	4	0	2	74
French loan	15	17	12	2	2	1	49
Total	34	38	40	6	2	3	123
%	27.6	30.9	32.5	4.9	1.6	2.5	

It can be seen that labile verb types made up nearly a third of the psych-verbs established by our search procedure. The situation in Old English, in which lability was limited among psych verbs, thus gave way to one in which the psych verb lexicon accommodated lability a good deal more readily. However, it was still considerably less frequent than among verb types of change of state/position, where 72% are attested in the *MED* as labile (Ingham 2020). We next pursue the

⁷ Old Norse loans are classified here as ‘native’ on the basis that by the 13th c. they had been in the language for up to half a millenium since the first Viking incursions. In addition, they are not always easy to distinguish etymologically from Old English lexemes (Durkin 2014: 192).

hypothesis of French influence as a reason for this development, by examining lability in psych verbs used in the French of England.

6 Anglo-French psych-verbs

In Old French lability was found by Heidinger (2011) to have been common in verbs of change-of-state/position (see also Hatcher 1942), but his study did not cover psych verbs. Research into the syntactic behaviour of these verbs in insular French (Anglo-French) was accordingly undertaken for the purpose of the present enquiry. The reverse look-up facility of the *AND* was used to mine data on the basis of Levin (1993) in the same way as described above for Middle English. In this way a total of seventy-six psych verb lexemes was obtained. Depending on their argument structure patterning, citations were categorised into those taking only an object EXPERIENCER,⁸ those taking only an object EXPERIENCER with an impersonal subject, those taking only an EXPERIENCER subject, and those that were labile, e.g. respectively (30), (31), (32) and (33a)–(33b) below:

(30) *E, s'um le **desturbast**, ne seiüst parfiner.* (Becket 2365)

‘And had someone disturbed him, he would not have managed to finish’

(31) *De vostre maladie me **peise**.* (*Fabliaux* 21.276)

‘I am troubled by your illness’

(32) *"Sire Reis, fait li il, bien devum **doluser**."* (*Becket* 155)

‘(My) Lord King, he said to him, “We must feel great sorrow”’

(33) a. *De la voiz del tuen tuneire **espowenterunt**.* (*Oxf Ps.* 1.103.8)

‘By the voice of your thunder (they) will (be) frighten(ed)’

(33) b. *É Deu chalt pas sur les Phistiens tuná é forment les **espoentá**.* (*Quatre Livres*, p. 15)

‘And God quickly thundered over the Philistines and greatly frightened them’

The results of the analysis illustrated in (30)–(34) above are shown in Table 12.5:

⁸ Passive forms, e.g. *il fu esbai* (‘he was surprised’) were ignored, as they were analysable in a stative sense as consisting of *estre* ‘be’ + adjectival past participle, and so did not necessarily attest to a transitive use.

Table 12.5: Psych verb categories as attested in *AND* entries (twelfth to fourteenth century)

Subject EXP. only	Object EXP. only	Labile	total
38 (50.7%)	20 (26.7%)	17 (22.6%)	75

As can be seen, verbs in the labile group were in a minority, though at 22% not a negligible one.

Effectively, Anglo-French psych-verbs were divided roughly between those taking a subject EXPERIENCER only, and those taking an object EXPERIENCER, some of which allowed lability, while some did not. The last attestation dates of each construction involved in lability were also recorded, and these showed an interesting temporal progression. Verbs with meanings involving ‘sadness’, ‘fear’, ‘enjoyment’, ‘delight’, ‘trouble’, ‘astonishment’, ‘dismay’ and ‘shame’ were attested in the twelfth century as labile, appearing not only in EXPERIENCER object examples but also attesting to the EXPERIENCER subject non-reflexive construction:

(34) *Esjoirat Jacob e eslecerat Israel.* (Camb Ps 18.XIII.10)
 ‘Jacob will rejoice and Israel will rejoice’

(35) *Ne nul homme ne coroucera ové celuy qui la portera.* (Lapid 281)
 ‘And no man will get angry with the one who shall carry it’

Examples of this construction were found in Old English, as noted above, with verbs of often directly comparable meanings. However, with nine of the seventeen Anglo-French verb types collected, the non-reflexive subject EXPERIENCER construction no longer occurred in insular French after the twelfth century. By the thirteenth century, the majority of verb types previously labile now used the reflexive subject EXPERIENCER construction, e.g.:

(36) *Quant homme se esjoit de suen mal.* (Mirour Egl 24.17)
 ‘When a man rejoices in his evil’

(37) *Car li jugges se couroussent volunters quant om apele de eus.* (Lett de Rois 51)

‘For the judges easily grow angry when one appeals against them’

In the fourteenth century, hardly any were still attested as labile with the non-reflexive subject EXPERIENCER construction as in (33a)–(33b) above. Thus, Anglo-French was tending to lose lability in this verb domain by the time that the period of intense French contact influence on English is encountered, roughly 1220–1400. French influence on English favouring lability would hence not be expected on the scale that took place with change of state / location verbs, where a great number of Anglo-French verbs continued to be labile throughout this period (Ingham 2020).

In short, insular French would not have provided a strong model for psych-verb lability in Middle English. There was already some use of lability in Old English, which was not massively increased by contact with insular French, unlike with verbs of change-of-state and change-of-position. The much weaker incidence of lability in the psych-verb domain is in line with the hypothesis that argument structure in Middle English was most open to contact influence from French during the period of greatest lexical borrowing from that language. Lability among Anglo-French verbs of change-of-state and change-of-position remained very common throughout that time, whereas as we have seen among psych-verbs it declined quite sharply. Indeed, French influence may even, by the thirteenth century, have operated as a brake on the use of lability with Middle English psych-verbs, favouring instead the subject EXPERIENCER + reflexive construction.

7 Conclusions

Our analysis of the two verb semantic domains investigated here has enabled some nuanced conclusions regarding the role of external and internal factors on language change, at least as regards verb argument structure. It was found that in the *destroy*-verb class a certain number of items became temporarily labile in Middle English, whereas Old English had almost no exemplars among *destroy*-verbs. The finding that a good proportion of Anglo-French *destroy*-verbs were found to be labile appears not to have been decisive: any contact influence, attested by the Middle English citations showing lability, was clearly not lasting. Thus, although there may have been some external pressure from French towards lability, the language lacked an internal basis for lability in that semantic area.

In the psych verb semantic domain, Middle English made considerably more use of lability. Here the same two factors were found to be important. Old English already had some exemplars, which we would see as having constituted a kind of ‘bridgehead’, from which lability could expand its scope, in a similar way to what transpired with change-of-state / position verbs, and here a substantial number of verbs became labile in Middle English. However, the model that French

could have constituted in this domain occurred too early for contact influence to have played a decisive role; by the time bilingualism (and thus contact influence) became established among the educated members of the English speech community, labiality among French psych verbs was already very recessive. Whereas in Anglo-French nearly a quarter of psych-verbs were found to be labial, the non-reflexive subject EXPERIENCER construction gave way to the subject reflexive EXPERIENCER construction after the twelfth century. Nevertheless, we would judge from our findings that the combined effect of contact influence from Anglo-French and the existence of labiality in a fair number of Old English psych-verbs provided the language with the momentum to develop labiality somewhat further in this semantic domain than with *destroy*-class verbs.

In both semantic domains, the temporary rise of labiality appears to have been a failed change, never going to completion as it has largely done in the change-of-state / position semantic domains. As noted, the combined influence of Old English and Anglo-French was too weak to allow labiality to put down strong roots among *destroy*-verbs, where even in Middle English the innovation was clearly failing. With psych verbs, we have, however, noted informally from *OED* entries that labiality continues to be attested quite often in the Early Modern period until apparently growing obsolescent in the seventeenth century. It has not been possible in this study to take detailed account of developments in the post-medieval period, which would undoubtedly merit further attention. One suggestive point that has emerged from this inquiry is that psych verb labiality in the source language (French) was being challenged strongly, and crucially at the period of maximal contact influence on English, by a competitor, the reflexive construction, as discussed in Section 6. This factor of competition may have had the effect of putting a brake on the spread of labiality right across the English psych verb domain, similar to Postma's (2010) finding that a competitor form led to a failed change in the context of language-internal development in Dutch.

Some limitations must be acknowledged. Dictionaries as a data source do not normally provide evidence of the relative textual frequencies of the lexemes they feature, nor of the constructions in which they appear. Useful information on the development of verb alternations could be gained by searching a Middle English text corpus, which in particular cases might show that one or other alternant never achieved more than very minimal representation, and quickly died out. It could be that in some cases the labiality noted in the dictionaries consulted for this research could be hapax attestations. There again, since available Middle English texts, especially prior to the fourteenth century, are not greatly numerous and are strongly skewed towards particular text types, it could not be claimed that the frequencies to be derived from them are representative of language use at the time the English language was undergoing contact influence from French.

A further limitation is that account has not been taken of possible dialectal or idiolectal variation. Conceivably, the appearance of labiality taken from our sources could be a compilation of

a speaker variety in which a verb was used only in one construction by one type of speaker, and only in the other construction by another type of speaker. The resources at our disposal hardly allow us to resolve this issue.

Nevertheless, some broader conclusions can be drawn. The semantic criteria model of Pinker (1989) and Levin (1993) may be valid in synchronic terms, but evidently can hardly have applied in the same terms to earlier stages of the language. Some verbs which now conform to the semantic constraints on a given alternation evidently did not in the past, while other verbs have done so for a very long time, including the Old English verbs of change-of-state researched by García García (2020). The constraint now ruling out lability with *destroy*-class verbs may have existed in Old English, but then appears to have been relaxed temporarily in Middle English, under contact influence as we argue, only to be reinstated later. In both cases, the semantic criteria valid for Present-Day English may be seen over time as emergent, appearing via a process whereby over time more and more verbs were used according to those criteria, while those that did not fit the criteria ceased being used in ways that would have violated them. This is naturally speculative and attendant on further research into questions of argument structure diachrony.

Appendix 1: Old English psych-verbs⁹

OE psych verbs	Valency	OE psych verbs	Valency
<i>byldan</i> ‘embold’	O	<i>geirsian</i> ‘be angry’, ‘make angry’	L
<i>belgan</i> ‘swell with anger’	S	<i>lāþian</i> ‘be hateful or loathed’	S
<i>abelgan</i> ‘cause so. to swell up in anger’	O	<i>mislædan</i> ‘mislead’	O
<i>gebelgan</i> ‘become angry’; ‘anger, enrage’	L	<i>lician</i> ‘please’; ‘take pleasure in’ (=be pleased by)	O

⁹ Key: L = labile; O = EXPERIENCER object only; S = EXPERIENCER subject only.

<i>bliþian</i> ‘rejoice’; ‘gladden’	L	<i>gelician</i> ‘please’	O
<i>ābylgan</i> ‘anger, offend’	O	<i>mislician</i> ‘displease’	O
<i>carian</i> ‘sorrow’ (int.); ‘take care’ (tr.)	S	<i>oflician</i> ‘displease, be displeasing (to so.)’	O
<i>cwacian</i> ‘shake’	S	<i>lustfullian</i> ‘rejoice, be glad’	S
<i>cweman</i> : imp. ‘please, satisfy’	O	<i>gelustfullian</i> ‘be delighted’ ‘to delight’	L
<i>gecweman</i> ‘please, satisfy’	O	<i>lufian</i> ‘love’	S
<i>miscweman</i> ‘displease’	O	<i>lystan</i> ‘cause pleasure or desire’ (pers., impers.); ‘desire’	L
<i>dreccan</i> ‘afflict. oppress’	O	<i>gelystan</i> ‘please, cause a desire’ (impersonal)	O
<i>drefan</i> ‘disturb, agitate, oppress’	O	<i>gemædan</i> ‘make insane’	O
<i>(a)drædan</i> ‘dread, fear’ (<i>adrædan</i> w. dat. reflex)	S	<i>(be)mænan</i> ‘lament, mourn, complain’	S
<i>dwellan</i> ‘lead into error; err (intr.)’	L	<i>nīperian</i> ‘bring low, humiliate’	O
<i>dyrfan</i> ‘be diligent’; ‘torment’	O	<i>sceamian</i> ‘feel or cause shame’ (impersonal)	L
<i>eargian</i> ‘be or become timid’; ‘fear’ (tr.)	S	<i>forsceamian</i> ‘be or make greatly ashamed’ (impersonal)	L
<i>faegnian</i> ‘rejoice’; ‘welcome’	S	<i>swencan</i> ‘cause a person to labour, harass, afflict’	O
<i>(a)faeran</i> ‘terrify’	O	<i>geswencan</i> ‘disturb, vex, afflict’	O
<i>forhtian</i> ‘fear’	S	<i>swincan</i> ‘toil, labour, work with effort’	S
<i>aforhtian</i> ‘be, become afraid, fear, dread’	S	<i>scendan</i> ‘put to shame’	O
<i>frefran</i> ‘console, comfort’	O	<i>sorgian</i> ‘care, grieve’	S
<i>gæstan</i> ‘torment’ (only 1x)	O	<i>teonian</i> ‘vex, irritate’	O
<i>gladian</i> ‘be glad, make glad’	L	<i>tirgan</i> ‘vex, provoke’	O

<i>gramian</i> ‘anger (so.)’; ‘burn with anger’ (gloss)	L?	<i>tregian</i> ‘vex, annoy’	O
<i>gremman</i> ‘enrage, provoke’	O	<i>tweogan</i> ‘feel, cause doubt’ (impersonal)	L
<i>grimman</i> ‘rage, vent fury (intr.)’	S	<i>getweogan</i> ‘to doubt, hesitate’	S
<i>agrīsan</i> ‘be afraid, dread’	S	<i>for-þencan</i> ‘despair’ (always refl.)	S
<i>gryllan</i> ‘provoke’; ‘gnash the teeth, rage’ (gloss)	L?	<i>of-þyncan</i> ‘cause regret or displeasure’ imp.	O
<i>hatian</i> ‘hate’	S	<i>ā-prēotan</i> ‘be wearisome, tedious, distasteful’	S
<i>hefigian</i> ‘become heavy’; ‘make heavy, burden’	L	<i>ā-prȳtan</i> ‘weary, tire out (so.)’	O
<i>gehefigian</i> ‘become heavy’; ‘make heavy, burden’	L	<i>wlatian</i> ‘cause a person (ac.) loathing’ (imp.)	O
<i>heortan</i> ‘hearten, encourage’	O	<i>wōrian</i> lit. ‘wander’; fig. ‘hesitate, err’	S
<i>hreowan</i> ‘distress’, ‘affect (so.) with compassion for so. else’,	O	<i>wrāþian</i> ‘be angry’ (only 1x)	S
<i>gehreowan</i> ‘distress’, ‘cause to regret’	O	<i>gewræþan</i> ‘be wroth, savage’; ‘attack, molest’ (BT & BT Addenda)	L
<i>hreowsian</i> ‘grieve, lament, regret’	S	<i>wundrian</i> ‘wonder at’; ‘make wonderful’	S
<i>behreowsian</i> ‘regret, lament, repent, feel pity’,	S	<i>weallan</i> ‘bubble forth’ (cp. meaning <i>wyllan</i> ‘boil (sth.); torment, agitate (so.)’)	O
<i>irsian</i> ‘be angry’, ‘make angry’	L		

Totals

Labile:	14
EXPERIENCER object:	34
EXPERIENCER subject:	24
<u>Not conclusive:</u>	<u>2</u>
Total	74

Appendix 2: Encoding of EXPERIENCER role, Anglo-French verbs, as attested in *AND*

Subject EXPERIENCER	Object EXPERIENCER	Labile
<i>abhomer</i> ‘abhor’	<i>acurager</i> ‘encourage’	<i>contrister</i> ‘sadden, become sad’
<i>admirer</i> ‘admire’	<i>agreger</i> ‘aggravate’	<i>corucer</i> ‘anger, become angry’
<i>aduluser</i> ‘deplore’	<i>apeiser</i> ‘calm’	<i>deduire</i> ‘amuse, be amused’
<i>affiancer</i> ‘promise’	<i>asuager</i> ‘soothe’	<i>deliter</i> ‘delight, be delighted’
<i>affier</i> ‘promise’	<i>commouvoir</i> ‘upset’	<i>rejoir</i> ‘gladden, rejoice’
<i>agarder</i> ‘observe’	<i>conforter</i> ‘comfort’	<i>travailler</i> ‘torment suffer’
<i>amer</i> ‘love’	<i>cuivrer</i> ‘vex’	<i>vergonder</i> ‘shame, be ashamed’
<i>aurer</i> ‘honour’	<i>desturber</i> ‘disturb’	<i>enpourir</i> ‘frighten, take fright’
<i>aviler</i> ‘dishonour’	<i>embaudir</i> ‘embolden’	<i>esmaier</i> ‘dismay, be dismayed’
<i>chericer</i> ‘cherish’	<i>encumbrier</i> ‘harass’	<i>espourir</i> ‘frighten, take fright’
<i>cherir</i> ‘cherish’	<i>enoier</i> ‘trouble’	<i>esbahir</i> ‘amaze, be amazed’
<i>confier</i> ‘trust’	<i>enorter</i> ‘exhort’	<i>effreer</i> ‘frighten’
<i>creire</i> ‘believe’	<i>entariier</i> ‘irritate’	<i>esjoir</i> ‘rejoice’
<i>criembre</i> ‘fear’	<i>esmovoir</i> ‘stir up’	<i>esleecer</i> ‘rejoice’
<i>dedeignier</i> ‘disdain’	<i>estoner</i> ‘astonish’	<i>heitier</i> ‘gladden’
<i>se desafier</i> ‘distrust’	<i>grever</i> ‘afflict’	<i>irer</i> ‘anger’
<i>desesperer</i> ‘despair’	<i>hunir</i> ‘humiliate’	<i>espoenter</i> ‘frighten’
<i>despire</i> ‘despise’	<i>peser</i> ‘calm’	

Subject EXPERIENCER	Object EXPERIENCER	Labile
<i>doleir</i> ‘suffer’	<i>trubler</i> ‘trouble’	
<i>doluser</i> ‘deplore’	<i>turmenter</i> ‘torment’	
<i>duter</i> ‘fear’		
<i>endoler</i> ‘afflict’		
<i>envier</i> ‘envy’		
<i>esbanoier</i> ‘amuse oneself’		
<i>esmervoiller</i> ‘amaze’		
<i>esmirer</i> ‘admire’		
<i>hair</i> ‘hate’		
<i>honurer</i> ‘honour’		
<i>joir</i> ‘enjoy’		
<i>leescer</i> ‘delight’		
<i>pleindre</i> ‘complain’		
<i>preiser</i> ‘appreciate’		
<i>reduter</i> ‘fear’		
<i>regreter</i> ‘regret’		
<i>repentir</i> ‘repent’		
<i>reverencer</i> ‘worship’		
<i>reviler</i> ‘revile’		
<i>s’asseurer</i> ‘to feel confident’		

Totals

Subj. Experiencer 30

Obj Experiencer 28

Labile 17

Total 75

Appendix 3: Native (OE-origin and newly coined) psych verbs attested in *MED*, with Old English source verb where relevant¹⁰

	Labile in OE	Labile in ME		Labile in OE	Labile in ME
<u>Labile ME</u>			<u>Subject EXPERIENCER ME</u>		
<i>accenden</i> ‘stir, become stirred’	-	✓	<i>belwen</i> ‘become angry’	X	S
<i>agasten</i> ‘frighten, become frightened’	X	✓	<i>abhorren</i> ‘abhor’	-	S
<i>angren</i> ‘anger, become angry’	-	✓	<i>arwurðen</i> ‘respect’	X	S
<i>arghen</i> ‘intimidate, be timid’	-	✓	<i>bimenen</i> ‘deplore’	X	S
<i>agrisen</i> ‘terrify, be terrified’	X	✓	<i>caren</i> ‘grieve’	X	S
<i>blithen</i> ‘be/make happy’	X	✓	<i>haten</i> ‘hate’	X	S
<i>bolden</i> ‘be/make bold’	-	✓	<i>lipnen</i> ‘trust’	-	S
<i>dreden</i> ‘frighten, fear’	X	✓	<i>liten</i> ‘delight’	-	S
<i>fainen</i> ‘be/make happy’	X	✓	<i>mistresten</i> ‘mistrust’	-	S
<i>feren</i> ‘frighten, fear’	X	✓	<i>mistrouen</i> ‘disbelieve’	-	S
<i>forpinken</i> ‘be/make sorry’	X	✓	<i>mornen</i> ‘grieve’	-	S
<i>gamen</i> ‘be/make merry’	X	✓	<i>overhouen</i> ‘despise’	-	S
<i>gladen</i> ‘be/make glad’	✓	✓	<i>overtrouen</i> ‘mistrust’	-	S
<i>grillen</i> ‘offend, suffer’	X	✓	<i>quaken</i> ‘be upset’	X	S
<i>hevien</i> ‘trouble, be troubled’	✓	✓	<i>reuen</i> ‘rue’	X	S
<i>iwreþen</i> ‘anger, become angry’	X	✓	<i>sorwen</i> ‘feel sorrow’	X	S
<i>irken</i> ‘make/become weary’	-	✓	<i>traisten</i> ‘trust’	-	S

¹⁰ Key: ✓ = labile, X = non-labile, S = EXPERIENCER subject only, O = EXPERIENCER object only.

<i>liken</i> 'like, please'	X	✓	<i>wlaten</i> 'feel disgust'	X	S
<i>listen</i> 'cause/feel desire'	✓	✓	<i>worshipen</i> 'worship'	-	S
<i>lopen</i> 'loathe'	X	✓			
<i>madden</i> 'make/be mad'	-	✓	<u>Object EXPERIENCER ME</u>		
<i>offinken</i> 'grieve, regret'	X	✓	<i>auen</i> 'terrify'	-	O
<i>shamen</i> 'cause/feel shame'	✓	✓	<i>cheren</i> 'console'	-	O
<i>souen</i> 'cause/feel sorrow'	-	✓	<i>derfen</i> 'harass'	X	O
<i>swenchen</i> 'afflict, suffer'	X	✓	<i>drecchen</i> 'oppress'	X	O
<i>tenen</i> 'anger, become angry'	X	✓	<i>dreven</i> 'trouble'	X	O
<i>wropen</i> 'anger, become angry'	-	✓	<i>frevren</i> 'comfort'	X	O
<i>misliken</i> 'displease/dislike'	X	✓	<i>gasten</i> 'frighten'	X	O
<i>herten</i> 'encourage'	-	S + refl.	<i>gramen</i>	X	O
<i>trusten</i> 'trust'	-	S + refl.	<i>ihevien</i> 'afflict/suffer'	✓	O
<i>biloven</i> 'be inclined'	-	S, O + impers. S	<i>iswenchen</i> 'harass'	X	O
<i>lusten</i> 'please'	-	S, O + impers. S	<i>mirpen</i> 'amuse'	-	O
<i>uggen</i> 'be fearful'	-	S, O + impers. S	<i>misleden</i> 'mislead'	-	O
<i>wondren</i> 'amaze'	X	S, O + impers. S	<i>netheren</i> 'humiliate'	-	O
			<i>quemmen</i> 'please'	X	O
			<i>shenden</i> 'shame'	X	O
			<i>terren</i> 'vex'	-	O
			<i>treien</i> 'annoy'	X	O
			<i>vexen</i> 'vex'	X	O
			<i>woren</i> 'confuse'	-	O

			<i>wrixlen</i> ‘confuse’	-	O
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Totals

Old English

<u>Labile</u>	5
non-labile	38
<u>verb unattested</u>	<u>31</u>
Total	74

Middle English

Subj. EXPERIENCER only	19
Subj. EXPERIENCER + reflexive	2
Obj. EXPERIENCER only	21
Subj. EXPERIENCER/ O + impers S	4
<u>Labile</u>	<u>28</u>
Total	74

Appendix 4: Encoding of EXPERIENCER role, French-origin psych verbs attested in *MED* up to 1500

<u>Labile</u>			
<i>affraien</i> ‘harass/be afraid’	✓	<i>enjoien</i> ‘rejoice’	S + refl.
<i>agasten</i> ‘make/become afraid’	✓	<i>envien</i> ‘envy’	S
<i>deliten</i> ‘give/take pleasure’	✓	<i>humblisshen</i> ‘feel humble’	S
<i>dismaien</i> ‘dismay, be dismayed’	✓	<i>maien</i> ‘be frightened’	S
<i>greven</i> ‘harass/be angry’	✓	<i>prisen</i> ‘esteem’	S
<i>masen</i> ‘confuse/be confused’	✓	<i>recomforten</i> ‘comfort’	S
<i>merveillen</i> ‘surprise/be surprised’	✓	<i>sotten</i> ‘be stupid’	S
<i>rejoicen</i> ‘give/take pleasure’	✓		
<i>remorden</i> ‘cause/feel remorse’	✓	<u>Object EXPERIENCER</u>	
<i>savouren</i> ‘give pleasure/relish’	✓	<i>acoien</i> ‘soothe’	O
<i>stonen</i> ‘astonish/be astonished’	✓	<i>acombren</i> ‘burden’	O
<i>troublen</i> ‘make/become agitated’	✓	<i>agreven</i> ‘trouble’	O
		<i>amesen</i> ‘soothe’	O
		<i>comforten</i> ‘comfort’	O

<u>Subject EXPERIENCER</u>		<i>destourben</i> ‘disturb’	O
<i>douten</i> ‘fear’	S	<i>disesen</i> ‘inconvenience’	O
<i>endeinen</i> ‘take offence’	S	<i>egren</i> ‘excite’	O
<i>adouren</i> ‘worship’	S	<i>mispaien</i> ‘irritate’	O
<i>affien</i> ‘trust’	S	<i>mispleesen</i> ‘displease’	O
<i>aggrugen</i> ‘resent’	S	<i>noien</i> ‘afflict’	O + impers. S
<i>cherishen</i> ‘appreciate’	S	<i>paien</i> ‘satisfy’	O + impers. S
<i>despisen</i> ‘despise’	S	<i>perturben</i> ‘disturb’	O
<i>discomforten</i> ‘discomfort’	O, S + refl.	<i>plesen</i> ‘please’	O
<i>disdeinen</i> ‘disdain’	S	<i>recomforten</i> ‘comfort’	O, S + refl.
<i>dolen</i> ‘suffer’	S	<i>solasen</i> ‘comfort’	O
		<i>stourben</i> ‘disturb’	O
		<i>tarien</i> ‘vex’	O

Totals

Labile	12
Subj. EXPERIENCER only	15
Obj. EXPERIENCER only	17
Obj. EXPERIENCER + impers. Subj.	2
Obj. EXPERIENCER/Subj. reflexive	2
Subject EXPERIENCER + reflexive	<u>1</u>
Total	49

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General index

Ælfric

Catholic Homilies, 13, 14

Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, 7

Beowulf, 12, 14

Boethius, Anicius Manlius Severinus

Consolatio Philosophiae, 15

Chartier, Alain

Treatise of Hope, 9

Chaucer, Geoffrey

Canterbury Tales, 9

Dialectal variation, 21

Dutch

Middle Dutch, 2, 4

French

Old French, 4, 5, 6, 15, 16, 17

Anglo-French, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 17, 18,
19, 20, 21, 22, 24, 25, 26, 29, 30, 31

Frisian

Old Frisian, 4

German

Old High German, 4

Gregory the Great

Dialogues, 13

Lazamon

Brut, 10

Lambeth Homilies, 15

Linguistic transfer

Lexical, 2, 15, 16, 29, 30, 31

Morphosyntactic, 2

Argument structure

Labiality, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11,
12, 13, 14, 15, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21,
22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31

Low German, 2

Old Saxon, 4

Of Arthour and of Merlin, 9

Old English laws, 8

Old Norse, 16

Pronouns

Reflexive, 2, 15, 16, 19, 20, 29, 31

Romaunt of the Rose, 9

Vegetius, Flavius

De Re Militari, 9

Wars of Alexander, 10

William of Shoreham, 15

