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English and Galician in the Middle Ages: A Sociohistorical Survey

Begoña Crespo García

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English and Galician in the Middle Ages:
A Sociohistorical Survey

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Abstract

The sociohistorical approach provides a most accurate framework for the comparative study of both the English and the Galician speech communities in the Middle Ages. The analysis of the external circumstances in each case will constitute the starting point to examine their evolution across history. Since the status of a linguistic system can be altered by the influence of certain key events, I shall manage to determine how similar social factors and historical events in different communities can provoke, in the long run, divergent sociolinguistic effects.

English and Galician in the Middle Ages: A Sociohistorical Survey
Begoña Crespo García

1. Introduction

I t is the aim of this paper to offer a new perspective on the analysis of English and Galician by comparing the sociolinguistic situation of these languages in the Middle Ages. The paper will be organised into four sections: section 1 will depict the common history of both communities in the Middle Ages, referring particularly to their contacts with Norman/ French **(note 1)** and Castilian, respectively. Section *2 will be devoted to the divergent evolution of both languages detailing the behaviour of the main social strata. In order to complete the sociolinguistic analysis, section *3 will explore the effects of bilingualism and diglossia on English and Castilian as a means to illustrate the great influence external factors can exert on the corresponding linguistic community. Finally, section *4 will summarise the conclusions reached in the light of the proposals previously mentioned.

2. Two events in history

In the early Middle Ages the status of Latin as a language of culture and prestige was unquestionable (Tout, 1922; Clanchy, 1993). Hence, its usage in official records and for scholarly purposes. In this sense, England and Galicia were not exceptions. Nevertheless, the existence of vernacular literature, a native ruling class and a certain level of political independ-

ence turned them into territories with their own identity. As we shall see, between the 11th and the 13th centuries two historical events with similar effects generated a relationship of political dependence in the two speech communities which brought about the social intervention of the new ruling class and the subsequent subordination of the native language. This means that the native aristocracy would be replaced by a foreign nobility and that the foreigners' **(note 2)** tongue would acquire more power and prestige than the vernacular.

With the purpose of determining the common characteristics of both speech com-munities we will briefly describe the socio-historical situation of each of them.

1.1. The English speech community

In the history of the English language the Norman Conquest caused a radical shift in the evolution of the vernacular. It was a 'high-class' conquest since the ruling posts were occupied by Norman noblemen or clergy who reinforced their language and culture. Peasants did not see great linguistic changes in their ordinary intercourse, but in their relationships with the intermediary of their feudal lords or in legal affairs. Yet, Norman never ousted English completely in this defined cultural community, despite the vast amount of lexical importation the Conquest implied (Fisiak, 1995). Two factors testify the

survival of English in the post-conquest period: absence of linguistic resentment between the two groups and evidence of an extant body of vernacular literature under Norman dominance.

After the Norman invasion, the English and French peoples did not intermingle immediately. It was a gradual process, from initial aversion and hatred to peaceful cooperation and tolerance without any real fusion (Iglesias Rábade, 1992). On the one hand, although intermarriages and mercantile dealings were common activities for both communities, the Normans were always aware of their different social roles in society until long after the invasion. The absence of linguistic consciousness on the rulers' part and the lack of full integration favoured the non-imposition of the dominant language and hence, the coexistence of English and French (Berndt, 1969). On the other hand, resentment was always present but it was a social rather than a linguistic matter.

Englishmen were never despised for their language but for being English. This may explain why the Normans did not show a feeling of contempt towards the English people on account of their speaking a language different from their own (Norman-French), but because they constituted a socially inferior group. The relationships between the native popula-

tion and the Normans were usually kept on linguistically good terms until the rise of nationalism. With this phenomenon, the English language came to be a unifying device, a tool to fight and expel all foreigners, a symbol of ethno-cultural identity (Crespo, 1996).

As for language, not only did English-speaking people try to learn French but also some French speakers made an effort to learn English. Within the first group we have essentially those in contact with the French nobility, either those working in the houses of noblemen or those occupying administrative positions. The same happened with the lesser nobility, or a diffused middle group, who learnt French in order to adapt themselves to the nobility's linguistic habits. Within the second group the most obvious example is the fact that William the Conqueror himself tried to learn English with no success. Likewise, Henry I was supposed to know both English and French and his successor Henry II to understand English although not to speak it (Wilson, 1943). In 1295 Edward I summoned his people in English against the king of France. All in all, it is highly probable that contacts between feudal lords and household tenants or between merchants in towns provoked the gradual learning of English by native French speakers other than the king, as a consequence of everyday con-

tact. In fact, these social 'contact groups' may have spread bilingualism among their members. As Claiborne (1990: 99) points out:

> From the point of view of language, the most notable effect of the Norman Conquest was to convert England, almost overnight, into a bilingual country. The upper classes spoke French; before long they were joined by those of the English middle and lower classes who had regular dealings with them: tradesmen, manor 'foremen' and the like. French was always essential to anyone with ambitions of rising in the social scale. The rest of the population continued speaking English at home and among themselves, though many of them doubtless learned to understand French if not speak it.

The second factor which guaranteed the survival of English after the conquest is related to the existence of literature written in English. The use of the vernacular for writings of a historical, homiletic or didactic character continued after the coming of the Normans. Middle English works such as *Layamon's Brut*, *The Owl and the Nightingale*, *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* and *Ancrene Riwle* prove the existence of an audience who could be addressed in English at the end of the 12th century. Moreover, some Anglo-Latin historians such as William of Malmesbury and Henry of Huntingdon narrate stories in English about Saxon kings that they claim to have heard from the peasantry. These works prove that English was also used

by some educated men, despite the general assumption that the Conquest limited English to the unlearned. They also confirm that neither vernacular literature nor vernacular speech disappeared completely.

If the coming of the Normans constitutes the turning point in the evolution of English, the coming of Castilian speakers to Galicia sets the basis for the description of a similar situation in the Galician speech community.

1.2. The Galician speech community

The historical event that changed the course of Galician was an armed conflict and its social consequences.

At the beginning of the 13th century, a civil war in Castile between Pedro I and his half-brother Enrique II de Trastámara broke out. Most of the Galician aristocracy backed the legitimate king, Pedro, but he was defeated by the usurper.[3] **(note 3)** The most relevant conse-quence was the expulsion from Galicia of the noblemen on the losing side. Castilian nobles would substitute them introducing their language and the administrative organisation imported from the crown of Castile which could be accepted by the few remaining feudal lords (Villares, 1986).

The linguistic model imposed in Galicia by foreign noblemen around the 13th century might have died out but for the repetition of history. Another dispute put Juana la Beltraneja, illegitimate daughter of king Enrique IV, and her sister Isabel face to face between 1475 and 1479. Once again, Galician noblemen supported the wrong candidate in this war of succession to the throne of Castile. The immediate corollary was a conscious and planned invasion among the Galician medieval ruling class because once in power, Isabel 'a Católica' ['The Catholic'] embarked on a terrible repression to eradicate those in favour of Juana (López Valcárcel, 1991).

This was just the second stage in a process that had been initiated by Enrique II de Trastámara two centuries before. After the succession war in the last quarter of the 15th century, the 'Reyes Católicos' would strengthen their absolutism through the centralisation of political life. They would authorise measures mainly concerned with the defense and expansion of Castilian to the detriment of other languages spoken in the Peninsula.

This time the fall of Galician noblemen was intentional and calculated. Thus, the native nobility is, once more, replaced by foreigners bringing their own cultural standards with them. The coercive attitude and the repression exerted by the cen-

tral government were to make Galician disappear among the learned and dominant groups. The vernacular would be limited to the lower and unlearned social strata that were linguistically and politically subjugated to Castile. Eventually, the native language was not able to ride the wave of domination by foreigners. After a period of transition and adaptation to the new social situation, language contact was exclusively monodirectional: Castilian landlords, as a closed group, imposed their language on the native population and they did not make any effort whatsoever to learn its mother tongue. Nevertheless, peasants attempted to learn their lords' language either to gain favours or to acquire a better-regarded position in society. Intergroup relations generated a feeling of linguistic hostility as a consequence of the existing social resentment which crystallised in the form of low collective self-esteem. This sort of linguistic self-hatred meant that even monolingual speakers of Galician would not defend their mother tongue. On the contrary, they accepted the use of the foreign language in non-ordinary situations facilitating the alternation of both codes or what can be termed as "diglossic contact".

These circumstances fostered a linguistic resentment grounded on social differences that was to stigmatise the history of Galician as the language of the peasantry. As could be expect-

ed, the eradication of the native tongue from the social panorama of the Galician elite ran parallel to the decay of vernacular literary production. Castilian pervaded all spheres of Galician literature, including the relevant field of lyric poetry. The enchantment and splendour of those Cantigas **(note 4)** written by Villasandino, Arcediago de Toro and Macías o Namorado would become just a token of the past. The dark age of Galician literature was to begin with the native authors' refusal to use the vernacular in their writings (Fernández del Riego, 1984). Speakers' prejudice towards their mother tongue is attested by the lack of written literature which, in turn, accounts for the social status and level of usage of a language.

From a historical point of view, two events, a conquest and a war, weakened the use of the vernaculars in the dominated communities. However, despite this initial similarity which will be crucial in the development of English and Galician, the conditions under which these tongues evolve pave the way for a divergent future development as table 1.2 below summarises:

	English	Galician
Social resentment	Yes	Yes
Linguistic resentment	No	Yes
Written literature	Yes	No
FUTURE	EMERGENCE	DECAY

Table 1. Attitudes of both speech communities

The social resentment in the English case did not prevent the use of this tongue in a small number of literary works and this fact helped to keep English alive. The common Germanic origin that both English and Norman shared may have triggered off this situation of non-linguistic resentment. In Galicia, however, social and linguistic resentment resulted in a generalised prejudice against Galician language and culture.

2. The emergence of English and the decay of Galician

The originally similar situation of English and Galician will result in a different linguistic panorama for each community. These two divergent situations will be analysed by comparing the evolution of the main social strata, namely, the nobility, the middle stratum **(note 5)** and the church in each case.

2.1. **The nobility**. Early in the 12th century William of Malmesbury stated that "today no Englishman is a duke, or a bishop, or an abbot: foreigners devour the wealth of England, and there is no hope of remedy" (Berndt, 1969:390). In England after the loss of Normandy in 1204 the nobility supported the defence of national interests. This fact together with the successive wave of foreigners (1233, 1236, 1246) that made their way into England under the reign of Henry III, gaining the Court's favour, resulted in *The Provisions of Oxford* (1258). The reforms signed in this trilingual document, written in English, French and Latin, were not enough to satisfy the English aristocracy. In *The Barons' War* (1267) members of different social groups joined forces to fight together in a common cause: the expulsion of foreigners. At this time England had a native nobility that spoke English as their L_1 although they probably knew French quite well. In 1324, when the English were fighting in Gascony, Hugh the Despenser wrote in French to encourage the leaders of the English army: "nous conquerons de Franceis... a grand honur... de tout nostre lange" (Rothwell, 1993: 309). Therefore, despite the expansion of English in oral speech, French was still used in written communication. However, it can be easily inferred from the content of the message that they identified language with na-

tionalism. English patriotism allowed noblemen and all those involved in the struggle to enforce the vernacular.

In Galicia, after the forced substitution of the noble stratum, there was no native elite in charge of transmitting nationalist ideologies to other groups. Castilian noblemen depended on the central power and were reluctant to promote any kind of seccesion. The two last lords to rebel against the 'Reyes Católicos' were Pero Pardo de Cela and the Earl of Camiña, who were executed in 1483 and 1486, respectively. From then on noblemen were controlled through the Santa Hermandad, a sort of political police.

2.2. **The middle stratum**. The transformations that society was undergoing in medieval England were, partly, reflected in the Rising of 1381. The causes of this political and social rising were "the extravagance of the court and the household, the burden of taxation, the weakness of the executive, and the inadequacy of the national defences" (Mckisack, 1959: 422). An economic change occurred around the 1370s. Basic food prices were reduced, but not wages. This intruded the benefits of the lords, whose margin shrank. The proposal to curtail these wages by law in Parliament was not accepted. Moreover, constant war with France diminished all economic resources. The imposition of taxes on peasants and not on

lords was the last step before the revolt. A combination of these factors made peasants, townsmen and, in some cases, even members of the landowning group join the rising. The claimings of this varied group were held by the Commons in petitions to Parliament (Thompson, 1983: 30). All this evidence points towards the existence of a group at an inter-mediate level or drawing towards it. **(note 6)** With parliamentary representation they had some force to claim the rights of the economically weak: those who spoke English, or, those who, at least, were of clear native extraction. The revolt was, finally, supressed, but the presence of the bourgeoisie went on being felt everywhere. The final triumph of this middle stratum can be seen, as far as language is concerned, through the literary revival prompted by men like Chaucer, Gower or Hoccleve.

In 15th century Galicia the second wave of foreign noblemen led to the increase of social tensions and conflicts between the different groups. The new aristocrats, supported by the king, tried to expand their wealth by corrupt means, even by looting and ravaging. Their main aim was the redistribution of territories in order to gain properties to the detriment of the ecclesiastical feuds. The tension culminated in an open conflict known as "Guerras Irmandiñas": in 1431 and between 1467 and 1469. Some Galician-born noblemen, prelates and peas-

ants formed part of them, but they were defeated. It constitutes the first attempt to fight for the rights of the unprivileged. Its failure implied the disappearance of the future bourgeoisie that strove to rise up in the wars. As López Valcárcel (1991: 140) points out:

> A hoste irmandiña protagonizou a primeira revolta burguesa de Europa, moito antes do 1789. Foron os habitantes dos burgos e da pequena fidalguía quen se ergueron en armas contra a aristocracia. Foi, polo tanto, o primeiro intento histórico de arrebatarlle á nobreza o papel preponderante, pero fracasou. **(note 7)**

The spread of this middle group rising to defend the interests of the vernacular was cut down by the central government and the Castilian nobility deterred the native culture from its normal development.

2.3. **The Church**. The most immediate consequence of the Norman Conquest on English religious life was the replacement of the native members of the clergy by foreigners: "In 1075 thirteen of the twenty-one abbots who signed the decrees of the Council of London were English; twelve years later their number had been reduced to three" (Baugh, 2002: 113). During the 14th century an anticlerical wave caused by a clash of interests between the king and the Pope overcame the territory of the English. In the 70s this socio-political imbal-

ance increased as a consequence of "the Black Death, trade depression, the renewal of the war, reverses abroad, heavy taxation, loss of confidence in Edward III and jealousy of the ecclesiastical ministers" (Mckisack, 1959: 289). Hence the spread of a movement against a powerful and wealthy Church embodied by Wycliffe and the Lollards. Moreover, hatred of foreigners -those "who came in to compete with your trade, office, ecclesiastical preferment or court favour" (Tout, 1922: 87)- devouring the national wealth is seen through the various petitions of the Commons to Parliament. **(note 8)** Their immediate effect was felt under Richard II who restricted the arrival of French monks. By this time the lower clergy spoke English whereas the upper ecclesiastical ranks were bilingual: English was their L_1, they had a good command of French as an L_2, not to mention that knowledge of Latin was compulsory. The disuse of French in clerical circles is evident from the necessity to issue special regulations **(note 9)** concerning the linguistic com-petence of clerics:

> as they are freely permitted to speak English at mealtime and on other occasions many of them have become too loquacious and, when dispatched on errands for their houses, are frequently put to shame because of their imperfect knowledge of Latin and French (Berndt, 1969: 357).

After the Black Death many illiterate people with scarce knowledge of Latin or French joined religious orders which caused the gradual disuse of French in ordinary conversation. In this sense, some letters and less formal documents showed a mixture of English and French, which also accounts for the lack of fluency in the foreign tongue. Simultaneously, some monastic chroniclers like Ranulph Hidgen, campaigned on behalf of their native tongue in spite of the fact that the Church in general was a conservative force for which language shift meant loss of power or social position.

The linguistic situation of England at the time oscillated between the two languages in conflict. Although English was more generally used in ordinary conversation, French was the language of most writings and the proliferation of documents in English would not begin until a century later.

In short, the evolution of language in other spheres of society can also be seen to hold for the Church. Their linguistic development was directed towards English monolingualism, especially in the lower ranks. The higher prelates' insistence on the adoption of French and Latin for written purposes would be hard to overcome, but the progressive ignorance of French and the pressure exerted by Wycliffe and his followers would be a turning point in the defence of the vernacular.

In Galicia the repression exerted on the nobility also reached the ecclesiastical strata. This political submission was accompanied by an ecclesiastical dependence. Galician prelates, as in the English case, were substituted by Castilian ones. This process was so thorough that between 1530 and 1830 there remained only 15 Galician bishops out of a total of 167. This number is significant if we take into account that the Church was generally considered a focus of culture. This was the last step in the disappearance of native Galician culture. Whereas in the case of English the lower clergy, mainly of native extraction, contributed to the spread of the vernacular, in Galicia the Castilian members of the Church invaded all centres of religious expression. **(note 10)** We must wait three centuries to hear the first rumblings of discontent against the stigmatisation of the Galician language in favour of Castilian.

As a result of the social events and historical evolution that characterised the Middle Ages in England and Galicia two different paths were taken by the two languages. Although in both cases we stem from a point of decadence as a consequence of a political and linguistic submission, the social behaviour was somewhat different. In England the gradual intermingling of the two peoples and the non-derogatory attitude of the powerful French speakers towards English generated

the necessary confidence in the vernacular for it to be spoken and cultivated with no sign of stigmatisation. Englishmen were always proud of their tongue **(note 11)** when fighting against the French adversary.

The combination of different social forces made English emerge. This may be inferred from its use for legal or administrative purposes (increasing use in private and official documents, petitions, deeds, wills...) **(note 12)** and in private correspondence. At the same time, the appearance of manuals to teach the French language is symptomatic of the non-native character of this tongue (Kibbee, 1991; Rothwell, 1993; Crespo, 1996, 2000). This emergence of the native tongue crystallised in the development of Chancery English, the language of the national bureaucratic system considered by some scholars as a decisive step in the normalisation process of English and its future expansion.

In Galicia the political pressure imposed by Castile on local government and administrative affairs turned Castilian into the area's language of prestige. When the efforts of an incipient bourgeoisie were finally overcome, all hope of recovering the vernacular died away. On the whole, the most outstanding characteristic of Galician from the Middle Ages until the 20th century is that of being regarded as an unlearned and

rustic language. Its domain has been restricted for more than five centuries to the rural speech community. Galician fell into disuse outside rural circles and was in literary silence until the 19th cen-tury with "O Rexurdimento". This was partly due to the lack of interest on the part of those Spanish speakers belonging to the cultural and economic sectors of society. It was not until the 18th century that scholars began to work on it (Mariño Paz, 1995).

3. Diglossia and bilingualism in both communities

It has already been mentioned that the analysis of diglossia and bilingualism complies with the sociolinguistic study of the English and Galician speech communities in medieval times. As has been pointed out, the alternate and conditioned use of two linguistic codes by a speech community is present both in the history of English and Galician. Contacts with foreign tongues brought to these territories by members of a prestigious ruling class favoured the existence of the sociolinguistic phenomenon known as diglossia.

The description of Medieval England or Galician sociolinguistic panorama would be incomplete without a reference to "the alternate use of two or more languages" or to

the coexistence of two languages within the same language (speech) community, using them in different communicative do-

mains depending on the social situation and other parameters of a communicative event. Serving the same community, both languages form a single communicative system and are in functional complementation to each other (Svejçer & Nikiol'skij, 1986: 83).

In this definition not only one but the two phenomena are mentioned: "the coexistence of two languages within the same (speech) community" refers to bilingualism but what comes next "using them in different communicative domains depending on the social situation and other parameters of a communicative event" reveals the importance of diglossia. As for England, Iglesias Rábade comments on the linguistic habits of medieval society. Concerning the upper group he (1992: 89) states that:

Las actitudes lingüísticas de la clase dominante se van transformando desde su monolingüismo inicial anglo-normando hacia un bilingüismo individual, primero, y un bilingüismo colectivo de carácter conflictual-diglósico, después en la segunda mitad del s. XII, y gran parte del XIII, para concluir con un monolingüismo inglés en la segunda mitad del s. XIV.

According to him (Iglesias Rábade, 1992: 90) the linguistic evolution of the middle strata encompasses:

desde un monolingüismo inglés de base se avanza hacia un bilingüismo individual, que con el paso del tiempo se convierte en colectivo, eso sí de carácter subordinado y conflictual-diglósico,

para retornar hacia el monolingüismo inglés hacia mediados del s. XIV.

Finally, he states that English monolingualism was common among the lower strata but there was a tendency towards individual bilingualism in some instances.

Therefore, language contact in England went through a variety of stages: from initial monolingualism of any sort (either English or French) through diglossia and bilingualism to finally English monolingualism. Two languages coexisted, but their use was determined by function and prestige factors. When there is no consensus between these two factors a conflict situation springs up (Fishman, 1979). Moreover, the learning of a foreign language is subordinated to the form and structures of the mother tongue. Hence, the necessity of considering the concepts of language conflict and subordination. In Galicia

> persiste desde a Edade meia unha situación de diglósia (sempre conflictiva), cun alto índice actual de bilingüismo individual -maioritariamente galego-dominante-, e unha baixa porcen-taxe de mono-linguismo individual -maioritariamente galego-falante- **(note 13)** (Álvarez Cáccamo, 1983: 38).

This brief sociolinguistic sketch depicted the situation of the Galician language towards the end of the 20th century. A 1994 survey revealed that the analysis of linguistic competence

among the Galician population established a clear-cut division between speaking and writing. Bilingual competence covered almost 100 % in speaking. Bilingual advances in written communication were limited to those with a high cultural level. Oral bilingual competence is also high in older generations, especially in rural areas. In an urban environment written competence grew but oral competence diminished due to Castilian influence and prestige (Rojo, 1994).

There was an initial situation of monolingualism common to the upper and lower extremes of the social scale in Mediaeval Galicia, but the upper group (formed by foreigners) spoke Castilian whereas the native population (lower stratum) spoke Galician. The intermediate group can be classified as bilingual because, although before the arrival of Castilian nobles they spoke Galician, they quickly learnt the prestigious code which facilitated their social advancement. External circumstances did not favour a change in the linguistic attributions of each social group until we finally get to the 19th and 20th centuries. The revival of Galician by means of a literary and administrative group -as in the case of English some centuries earlier- contributed to the expansion of bilingualism in the written medium. The defence of the vernacular was not practised among the rural population, a group that far from

supporting its mother tongue is constantly making an effort to speak Castilian outside ordinary conversation in order to imitate prestigious sectors.

As has been mentioned, the co-existence of two linguistic systems in the same area opens the possibility for the use of one or the other to be conditioned by external circumstances. The phenomenon of diglossia emerges in this environment as an "enduring societal arrangement" (Romaine, 1989: 35) and in this sense diglossia differs from bilingualism but is inevitably connected with it.

In order to see how the notion of diglossia works in the two speech communities in question, we will use the theoretical premises put forward by authors such as Ferguson (1959), Fishman (1979) or Fasold (1987). The primary conception of Ferguson's diglossia (1959) is particularly concerned with dialectal varieties but was superseded by wider conceptions such as Fishman's whole language diglossia (1979) and, more recently, by Fasold's broad diglossia (1987). Ferguson's definition fails to be totally appropriate for our examples since we are not dealing with varieties but with languages and their contexts of usage are not strictly restricted to the double relation power-formal style and absence of power-informal style.

Yet, most statements about the general characterisation of this phenomenon are adequate for our purposes.

Ferguson points to the existence of three conditions for diglossia to emerge stemming from two languages A, the dominating and B, the dominated,

1. A vast bulk of literature is written in A
2. Literacy is just for an elite formed by speakers of A
3. A suitable period of time is necessary from the establishment of conditions 1 and 2.

In England there is a considerable body of writing **(note 14)** in Anglo-Norman which was produced by both Frenchmen and Englishmen.

> For many years French was the first language of a large number of Englishmen, and Anglo-Norman, its English form, was a living language. Many works were written in French, usually in the Anglo-Norman variety, and some famous French texts would have been lost if they had not survived in copies made in England (Blake, 1977: 14).

Nevertheless, this literature written in A did not oust vernacular literature completely. After a 'dark age' that spreads from 1066 to the last quarter of the 12th century, some works in English can be traced: Robert Mannyng's *Handlyng Synne, Ancrene Riwle,* Layamont's *Brut, The Owl and the Nightin-*

gale, Pearl, Sir Gawain and the Green Knight, The Pricke of Conscience, a 14th century book of travel, Langland's *Piers the Plowman,* Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales*, and others.

However, the existence of a similar literary output is not valid for Galician. It is true that some Galicians tried to write in the prestigious language and imitate the canons of Galician-Portuguese poetry and it is also true that, in the end, they left aside their roots forgetting their mother tongue for a long time:

> O ano 1350 sinala o último límite da xeira cumiante na poesía galego-portuguesa. Desde entón ate o 1450 ábrese unha etapa de transición, durante a que conflúen as escolas poéticas de Galicia e de Castela, pero conservando ainda aquela a primacía deica o 1400. A partir de aquí a escola castellana comeza xa a adquirir predominio sobre a galega **(note 15)** (Fernández del Riego, 1984: 39).

As for the learned and privileged it was only an elite in both communities that was literate. The arrival of foreign rulers brought, in each case, the establishment of a cultural and governing elite. The efforts of some groups of the population (English-French) or the vast majority (Galician-Castilian) were directed towards the imitation of foreigners speech habits and cultural standards, especially when in contact with them. This general attitude is echoed in literature.

The period of linguistic domination in England lasted about two centuries (1066-1204 and further into the 13th century) before the first outbreaks of rebellious linguistic behaviour. In Galicia, from the beginning of Castilian repression in the 15th century until the first signs of struggle against Castilian dominance in the 18th and 19th centuries, three or four centuries had elapsed.

The three conditions mentioned by Ferguson concurred favourably in the two-paired situations. We face, then, two diglossic communities characterised by the features mentioned in table 2 below:

FEATURES	ENGLISH	FRENCH	GALICIAN	CASTILIAN
Function	oral	written	Oral	Written
	informal	formal	Informal	formal
Prestige	Inferior language	Superior language	Inferior language	Superior language
Literary heritage	Existing literature	Literature in higher esteem	Existing literature	Literature in higher esteem
Acquisition	At home	By rules	At home	By rules
Standardisation	Lack of normative studies	Tradition in normaive studies	Lack of normative studies	Tradition in normaive studies
Stability	Around 2/3 centuries		Around 4/5 centuries and still today	
Grammar	Structural differences		Less structural differences	
Lexicon	Paired items		Non-paired items	
Phonology	Different phonological systems		Similar phonological systems	

Table 2. Diglossia: comparative features.

The FUNCTION feature is of overriding importance as it determines the contextual balance of both languages in society. English and Galician are functionally ascribed to informal speech through oral communication. French and Castilian are put down to formal conversation and to writing. But FUNCTION is mainly connected with the PRESTIGE factor. A situ-

ation of social unbalance generates two groups, the dominating and the dominated. The former imposes its speech habits as superior to any other (French, Castilian) whereas the latter is felt to be ignorant and vulgar. LITERARY HERITAGE refers to the past literary production of the languages in conflict. There was an extensive body of written literature in the A and B languages, but whereas French and Castilian literature were highly regarded, English and Galician literary activities remained in darkness.

In reference to the ACQUISITION factor, English and Galician are acquired unconsciously thanks to an internalisation process rule that results from natural language use. They are acquired in a familiar and spontaneous environment. On the contrary, French and Castilian are consciously learnt through the formal knowledge of grammars and rules.

Although diglossia does not form part of the evolution towards standardisation (Ferguson, 1959) it may be useful to analyse the degree of STANDARDISATION of languages in diglossic communities. During French domination in England there were not normative studies of the native tongue. Writers soon began to produce French grammatical works in order to prevent its loss. It is in this sense that we can say that the tradition in grammar studies was greater in the foreign tongue. English

would not be carefully studied until the 16th century. Despite the fact that the Renaissance expansion of knowledge acted on Castilian, it did not touch Galician at all. The standardisation of the latter began in the 20th century and is still a matter of debate. STABILITY is another criterion that can be used to depict diglossia. In England it took around three centuries to overcome this language conflict. In Galicia diglossia is still present.

GRAMMAR stands for the differences or similitudes between the grammatical structures of As and Bs. The grammatical differences between English and French are opposed to the lesser number of differences in the Galician-Castilian pair. LEXICON implies the existence of synonyms of common concepts with two realisations: oral or B version and its equivalent in writing or A version. The existence of paired items with different sociolinguistic connotations illustrates this aspect: English (animal)-French (meat): *swine -pork, ox- beef, calf - veal, sheep- mutton.* Social distance is linguistically reflected in the coexistence of two nouns of different origin and semantic referent: the noun of Saxon origin names the animal and the French origin term refers to the corresponding meat (Hughes, 2000).

As for PHONOLOGY, the phonological system of both codes may be defined as either close or distant, that is to say, with moderate or strong signs of divergence. English and French exhibit moderate signs of divergence and so do Castilian and Galician (the vowel system contains five vowels whereas in Galician there are seven vowels).

These Fergusonian assumptions can be used to describe the situation in post-conquest England and post-war Galicia. It is, thus, acceptable to call these communities 'diglossic communities' on broad terms. All in all, later authors went deeper into the study of this sociolinguistic notion.

Fasold's revision (1990: 53) of the basic concept of diglosssia expressed by Ferguson sheds new light on the comparison of the speech communities under survey. He states that diglossia

> is the reservation of highly valued segments of a community's linguistic repertoire (which are not the first to be learned, but are learned later and more consciously, usually through formal education), for situations perceived as more formal […]; and the reservation of less highly valued segments (which are learned first with little or no conscious effort), of any degree of linguistic relatedness to the higher valued segments, from stylistic differences to separate languages, for situations perceived as more informal and intimate.

He also establishes a subdivision pointing to three types of diglossia:

1. "Classic diglossia": the one referred to by Ferguson. It involves divergent dialects.
2. "Superposed bilingualism": the languages involved are not very closely related.
3. "Style-shifting": it deals with stylistic differences. There is a close connection between the codes in contact.

Fasold seems to include languages with a different degree of linguistic relatedness in his definition. That is the reason why when applying his subdivision to English and Galician we come across two different situations: when Norman French invaded the power circles of English life the relation between these two languages was comparatively distant. Old English descended from a West-Germanic branch of the Indo-European family whereas Old French was of Italic origin. Their only point of convergence was the footprints left by the bands of Northmen (9th/10th centuries) that had settled in both countries: in the North and East of England and in Normandy (Fennell, 2001). However, the fact that Latin was the common root of Galician and Castilian implies a close connection between the two. The different linguistic substrata in the peninsula before the coming of the Romans and the circumstances under

which the Roman Empire was fragmented triggered off the existence of several dialectal varieties that later turned into related languages. In this case more than in the preceding one geographic proximity had a predominant role.

In England as well as in Galicia the first diglossic communities developed between English and Latin. The second step encompassed a shared diglossia with English and Latin or French. This "double overlapping diglossia" (Fasold, 1990: 44) began to disappear when English began to be used in formal style replacing Latin and French. This explanation can also be applied to Galician. History shows a similar process of "double overlapping diglossia": Latin was first used for written records, later Castilian. It was not until the last quarter of the 20th century that Galician began to be introduced in official circles.

Authors generally admit the existence of diglossia in Galicia, but they debate on its characteristics and peculiarities. Rojo (1981: 148) calls it "conflictive diglossia" because the codified uses of both languages are not assumed by the community. Álvarez Cáccamo (1983) criticises this definition by explaining how redundant the term 'conflictive' is. Diglossia is conflictive by nature, unless the two languages involved are perfectly distinguished and functionally or socially divergent. Since this

is not the case and the social role played by each language is clearly ascribed to a particular stratum, Taboada (1992: 409) calls it "ascription diglossia": Castilian is used in formal contexts (upper, middle strata) whereas Galician in informal ones (low strata).

The speech communities under survey belong to two different types of diglossia. I would describe the diglossic situation in England as Fasold's type 2 'superposed bilingualism' because of the low degree of similarity between the languages before the contact. Nevertheless, a higher degree of relatedness in the case of Galician and Castilian turns this relationship into a case of 'classic diglossia' as put forward by Ferguson because they both were dialects of the Latin family. Furthermore, the term 'ascription diglossia' describes properly the situation since the use of either Castilian or Galician is socially marked. The common Latin ancestor and the social pressure exerted by a Castilian ruling class to the detriment of the prestige of Galician could have restrained its evolution as an eloquent and prestigious language under the humanist trend and even later, up until the eighteenth century.

4. Concluding remarks

In conclusion, the socio-historical study of both speech communities in the Middle Ages reveals that a similar historical

event changed the evolution of the vernaculars. Yet, they would not follow the same path. Certain extra-linguistic factors (social, linguistic resentment, low collective self-esteem, vernacular literature, middle groups) would determine the differences between them.

As for the behaviour of the different social strata, the nobility and the Church would behave exactly in the same way in both territories: French, Castilian and Latin were the codes employed by them. The same would happen with those at the lower extremes of the scale who were vernacular monolinguals. The difference between England and Galicia lies in the emergence of an English intermediate group that contributed to the expansion of the mother tongue. The lack of this group in Galicia implied social submission and language subordination to Castilian speakers.

Hence, the situation that can be termed as language conflict lasted for around three centuries in England but for almost seven centuries in Galicia. The sociolinguistic phenomena of diglossia and bilingualism are present in both cases but the different development in each community (as has already been mentioned in section *2) would promote the beginning of a normalisation process in English from the end of the 15th

cen-tury onwards but which did not have a parallel in Galicia until the last quarter of the 20th century.

There are two key factors that determined the different evolutions of English and Galician: a social factor, i.e. the necessary conditions for the expansion of a rising middle group were present in the English panorama although not in Galicia. As a consequence of the above-mentioned social factor the diglossic phenomenon left a deep imprint on the collective psychology of Galician speakers -to the detriment of the vernacular's prestige-, which has been transmitted from generation to generation up to the present day. The period of language contact in England under the dominance of French and Latin did not undermine the linguistic conscience of the English population who always defended, at least in the oral medium, the native code.

Both languages, English and Galician, experienced an initial situation of vernacular monolingualism changed by the force of social events. The imposition of the language belonging to the dominant group favoured the bilingual panorama in both communities and the subsequent functional distribution of the codes in contact in the form of diglossia. Nevertheless, the degree of linguistic relatedness in each case, -greater between Galician and Castilian than between English

and French-, and the feeling of nationalism and defence of vernacular cultural values, stressed by a triumphant middle group in England though non-existent in Galicia have made both tongues reach different ends stemming from similar situations in origin. In the end, English emerged and developed through history as other national languages did, while Galician fell into decay. Though nineteenth-century regionalist movements exerted a considerable influence on its re-emergence (O Rexurdimento), it was not until the late 1970s that Galician was recognised institutionally, appearing as one of the three co-official languages, together with Spanish, in the country's Constitution.

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1. The terms Norman and French will be applied here with different purposes since Norman has a Germanic basis whereas French descends from the Italic branch. Norman is understood to refer to the language spoken by the invaders for approximately a century after the Conquest. French is the language used in the written medium probably spoken by foreigners later than the 12th-century.

2. In the medieval context the term 'foreigner' is applied in its literal sense: a newcomer (in this particular case mainly from Castile or France), a person who comes from a foreign kingdom and introduces himself into a society to which he does not belong, bringing with him his cultural values and speech habits.

3. The misrule of Pedro I el Cruel in Castile provoked a grave political crisis among the nobility, extending eventually into a general rebellion led by Enrique de Trastámara. During this conflict the lesser nobility sided with Pedro I. The rebel nobility fled to Aragon taking refuge with Pedro IV el Ceremonioso. The rebellion in Castile turned into a more general conflict with Aragon, finally embroiling the peninsula in the *Hundred Years' War* as the two antagonists turned for help to England and France. In March 1366 Enrique was proclaimed king in Calahorra taking over the whole reign except for Galicia. Pedro was definitively defeated in Montiel in March 1369 and was later murdered.

4. A vernacular genre which was common in Galician-Portuguese literature during the Middle Ages.

5. The expression "social class" will be avoided in order to obviate the connotations that can be derived from it and to keep the social divisions corresponding to each period. When talking about class and so-

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cial order Nevalainen and Raumolin-Brunberg (1996: 305) put forward the use of the term class "to refer to the function of a social group in the process of production", although another way of establishing social categories would be to resort to the "orders model", which "relates social hierarchy in earlier societies to 'orders' or 'states', each of which performs a necessary function". The model of social classes is the one that best describes industrialised societies; however, to account for pre-industrialised societies such as the mediaeval or the renaissance, the hierarchies organised in groups or strata form the most adequate social model.

6. Clerical proctors, knights and burgesses were summoned to parliament. Among these two groups there were weighty men, merchants, members of rich families and, even, small traders and shopkeepers. English was their main vehicle of expression, although for those with a higher rank knowledge of French as a complement to their education was probable.

7. "The Irmandiños protagonised the first bourgeois revolt in Europe long before the one in 1789. The townspeople and the gentry raised up arms to fight against the aristocracy. Therefore, it was the first historical attempt to take from the nobility its predominant role, but they were defeated". (My translation)

8. In 1346 the petition was concerned with the expulsion of all foreign monks and the acquisition of their states for the crown; new petitions were frequently repeated.

9. An example of it is the provincial synod of Benedictines issued in 1343.

10. Masses were preached in Latin until the second half of the 20th century. Generally speak-ing, priests used Castilian outside the Church.

11. Geoffrey Chaucer in *The Canterbury Tales* (1386-87) and William Langland in *Piers The Ploughman* (1370-1379) depict contemporary English society with a tinge of irony. They describe different characters according to the different types of individuals of mediaeval life in England. They also deal, in some instances, with England itself, their language and their distinctiveness.

12. The first English private and official documents come to light: the first petition in English dates from 1344. From there onwards they appear sporadically until 1436. The two last French petitions date from 1441. Deeds in English are scarce from the last decade of Henry III's reign until 1440, when they begin to be more frequent. The last French deeds came out in 1456.

13. "[T]here exists a diglossic situation (always conflictive) from the Middle Ages, with a high percentage of individual bilingualism -of Galician dominance- , and a low percentage of individual monolingualism -mainly Galician-speaking-" (my translation).

14. This literature may be either religious or secular. The first type comprises treatises on religion, biblical works, sermons, saints' lives, lyric poetry and drama. The second group encompasses romances, lais, fabliaux, ballades, proverbs, allegories, moral works, satirical and humorous pieces, chroniclers, treatises on natural science, legal works and, already in the 15th century, economic literature, grammars and glossaries.

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15. "1350 marks the beginning of the decadence for the Galician-Portuguese poetry. From that date until 1450 there is a period of transition during which both the Galician and the Castilian poetic schools live together, although the first one prevails until 1400. From this very date the Castilian school begins to be more relevant" (my translation).