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Universidad  
del País Vasco

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Unibertsitatea

European Master in Multilingualism and Education

Master's Thesis

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**Learning Latin in Late Anglo-Saxon England:  
Evidence from the Colloquies**

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June 2022

### **Abstract (EN)**

Ælfric of Eynsham was a Benedictine monk who lived and taught Latin in tenth- and eleventh-century England. He wrote his *Colloquy* in order for his pupils to practise their oral skills while acquiring specific vocabulary, and he is often regarded as one of the most innovative pedagogues of his time. Ælfric Bata, a pupil of his, also produced his own colloquies and enlarged much of his master's work. This dissertation draws a comparison between the colloquies written by these two authors, especially focusing on the fact that Bata's eccentric language radically deviates from the stylistic dogma that characterised Ælfric's text, which goes to show that these authors had different views of how Latin had to be taught and of the knowledge that had to be transmitted in the classroom. Based on the synchronic and diachronic implications of the colloquies, this paper emphasises that they posed a novelty not only considering that they opened a window into monastic life, but also owing to their usage as context-specific language learning tools, which makes it possible to suggest analogies between these texts and contemporary methods of foreign language teaching such as English for Specific Purposes.

**Keywords:** Ælfric of Eynsham; Ælfric Bata; Anglo-Saxon period; multilingual education; colloquy; learning Latin.

### **Abstract (ES)**

Ælfric de Eynsham fue un monje benedictino que vivió y enseñó latín en Inglaterra entre los siglos X y XI. Escribió su *Coloquio* con la intención de que sus alumnos practicasen la expresión oral a la vez que adquirirían vocabulario específico, y a menudo se le considera uno de los pedagogos más innovadores de su época. Ælfric Bata, discípulo suyo, escribió sus propios coloquios y amplió buena parte de la obra de su maestro. En este trabajo se comparan los coloquios de ambos autores, haciendo hincapié en que el lenguaje excéntrico de los textos de Bata se aleja radicalmente del dogma estilístico que caracterizaba la obra de Ælfric, lo que demuestra que estos autores tenían distintas visiones de cómo debía enseñarse el latín y de los conocimientos que debían transmitirse en el aula. Teniendo en cuenta las implicaciones sincrónicas y diacrónicas de los coloquios, podemos afirmar que fueron textos novedosos por la forma en que nos permiten adentrarnos en la vida monástica y por su utilización como herramientas de aprendizaje que fueron adaptadas a su contexto pedagógico, lo que nos permite trazar

similitudes entre los coloquios y otros métodos contemporáneos de enseñanza de lenguas extranjeras como el English for Specific Purposes.

***Palabras clave:*** Ælfric de Eynsham; Ælfric Bata; período anglosajón; educación multilingüe; coloquio; aprendizaje del latín.

## Acknowledgements

I would first like to extend my deepest gratitude to my supervisor Francesca Tinti for believing in my abilities and having encouraged me to work on this topic. The completion of this thesis would not have been possible without her support and guidance.

On a more personal level, I am eternally grateful to *amama* and *atxitxe* for being my guiding light and for celebrating my achievements as if they were theirs.

*Gogo bil-bil dut gorde magalean, laster sorgor, itsu;  
baina lo aurrean, gar berriko sua nigan oi dut piztu;  
zertako nai ditut izar eta tarte ameska berritu?  
Nere biotzean, ain toki gutxitan, guzia zaude Zu.  
Ernai, ametsetan, lotan, argiz, gauez, Zu zaituda zeru.*

“Pampetan izar” (Orixe, 1950)

To Sasha and Aritz, my life companions.

To all female scholars who have contributed to the study of language.

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## 1. Introduction

The word ‘colloquy’, from Latin *colloquium*, can be defined as a “formal conversation or conference” (Collins, 2014). It may refer to an important speech whereby an announcement is made following a dialogue or dispute, or to a gathering where the participants discuss a given topic. The term has also traditionally been used to designate those texts that were meant to be read aloud by a group of students in order for them to improve their rhetoric or to practice their speaking skills in a different language, especially in monastic schools.

Ælfric of Eynsham’s *Colloquy* is perhaps one of the best-known examples of this particular usage of the term. This text dating from the late tenth century consisted of a scripted conversation between a teacher and his apprentices, who were learning Latin as part of their instruction at a Benedictine monastery. The *Colloquy*’s historical and pedagogical relevance was first ensured by Ælfric Bata, a student of Ælfric of Eynsham to whom the survival of the text can be largely attributed, given that he edited and possibly enlarged the original document, as will be discussed later in this study. Ælfric Bata also wrote his own colloquies, 29 to be exact, although they differ in register and content from that of his master. Considering that Bata’s work can be understood as a continuation of that of Ælfric of Eynsham, these texts will be analysed together in this paper, going through the observations that other scholars have also made on the texts, be it separately or as part of a comparative study.

The topic of Latin learning in Anglo-Saxon England and, more specifically, the role and use of the colloquies written by these two monks have been extensively examined, with Ælfric of Eynsham being a relevant figure of his time and also an important exponent of the English Benedictine Reform, a movement that transformed monasticism and religious life in the late Anglo-Saxon period. Before that, in the ninth century, Alfred the Great and his translation programme had had a profound influence on the perception of English and Latin as languages of education and culture, an aspect which will be further elucidated in the ‘Historical background’ section. This chapter (no. 2) will comprise a short introductory text as well as four subsections on the aforementioned Alfredian translation programme, the Benedictine Reform, the life and works of Ælfric of Eynsham and those of his pupil, Ælfric Bata. This section intends to provide an overview of the sociocultural and religious milestones of the time in which these two authors wrote their colloquies.

After having looked into these issues, chapter 3 will be dedicated to reviewing the current approaches to the works of Ælfric of Eynsham and Ælfric Bata, paying special attention to the existing scholarship on their colloquies. This section will serve as a literature review but will not only be devoted to papers and studies on these two figures, since it will also revolve around notions of authorship as well as the editions of the colloquies which will be then used in this paper. This is particularly important considering that the texts to which this study is anchored are from the tenth and eleventh centuries and have gone through the hands of many, which essentially means that some editions of the texts may be less legitimate or not as faithful to the surviving manuscripts as others. The Latin version of Ælfric's *Colloquy* is preserved in four different manuscripts (Garmonsway, 1978, p. 1); however, some contain an incomplete version of the text. This is also the reason why, as will be pointed out, there is now a consensus on the preferred editions to study Ælfric's *Colloquy* and Ælfric Bata's texts.

The 'Literature review' section will be followed by a shorter chapter (no. 4) on the methodology of this research paper, where the reasoning behind the subsequent section titled 'Comparison of the texts' will be explained. In that section, a comparative analysis of the colloquies by Ælfric of Eynsham and Ælfric Bata will be conducted in order to establish diverging points as well as similarities between them. The presence and importance of the interlinear glosses will also be dealt with in this chapter. The last question that will be addressed in this part of the dissertation will be that of the colloquies' novelty value, which has perhaps remained relatively unattended in most of the literature regarding this topic for the lack of information on other similar works which may have been produced during the Anglo-Saxon period or earlier.

As mentioned above, the works of Ælfric of Eynsham and Ælfric Bata are not an unprecedented area of study in themselves. There are several publications on the lives and colloquies of these authors, both separately and sometimes also mentioning or comparing the two. This paper intends to provide a fresher look into the colloquies by analysing their pedagogical implications and the novelty that they may or may not have posed in the history of conversational learning and language-learning practices. These are precisely the aspects that will be covered in the 'Pedagogical Implications' and 'Conclusions' sections together with other reflections on the topic.

### ***1.1. Research questions***

Given that this paper focuses on Ælfric of Eynsham's and Bata's colloquies, as well as on the possible comparisons that can be made between these texts and contemporary teaching practices, the main research questions are as follows:

- 1) What do the colloquies have in common and in which ways do they differ from a pedagogical point of view?
- 2) Which were the implications of these works as regards Latin learning?
- 3) Do these tools allow us to draw comparisons with modern techniques of foreign language learning?

## **2. Historical background**

Throughout the ninth and tenth centuries, the territory that we now refer to as 'England' underwent a series of substantial political and administrative changes. There are several historical events that are relevant for the study of the life and works of Ælfric of Eynsham and Ælfric Bata, among which are the above-mentioned Alfredian translation programme and the Benedictine Reform. It was precisely during the reign of Alfred the Great in the second half of the ninth century that the education standards as regards Latin and the status of English would be reconfigured, giving way to a fundamental reform and to the creation of a court-based programme that promoted the elevation of the vernacular as a literary medium. As will be elucidated in the next subchapter, this had a profound impact on the way in which Latin would be learned in the following century.

After the Viking invasions, new kingdoms were created by means of alliances and the idea of a unified England flourished and was ultimately accomplished in the first half of the tenth century under the reign of King Athelstan, who described himself as *Rex totius Britanniae* (Firth, 2017, p. 72). Continental monastic reforms reached this newly consolidated kingdom and efforts were made to accelerate a reorganization of the English Church. Ælfric of Eynsham was a leading exponent of this movement known as the Benedictine Reform, which will be briefly touched on in this section so as to provide a better understanding of the purpose and content of the works of both authors.



## ***2.1. The Alfredian translation programme***

In order to fully comprehend the status that Latin and Old English held in late Anglo-Saxon England, it is necessary to explore the education reform and the literacy initiatives put forward by Alfred the Great (c. 849-899), King of the West Saxons until 886 and King of the Anglo-Saxons until the year of his death. During his reign, England suffered major Viking raids which he was eventually able to suppress, thus preventing his kingdom from falling under Danish rule. He – like many of his contemporaries – was of the opinion that these raids were in fact a divine punishment for the nation’s sins and lamented the decline into which learning had fallen among his people. This was linked to the fact that many of the works that were thought to be essential for educated men to know and understand had only been available in Latin, which led him to develop a translation programme so as to make these works available in the vernacular and thereby to raise an “awareness of national identity” (D’Aronco, 2007, p. 56).

This court-centred programme has been traditionally linked to a number of texts such as the translation of St. Gregory’s *Pastoral Care*, that of the first psalms in the Bible and St. Augustine’s *Soliloquies*. Although some of these works have been commonly attributed to Alfred himself, others (e.g., Orosius’ *Seven Books of History against the Pagans* and Bede’s *Historia ecclesiastica*) are thought to have been translated by other authors based on their lexical and stylistic features. As Rory Naismith points out, “[i]t is more plausible to think of [these] texts as perhaps springing from the court-centred team of scholars Alfred had assembled, perhaps with some input from the king, and certainly distributed with the king’s imprimatur” (2021, p. 265).

Irrespective of whether these texts can be credited to Alfred the Great or if they were directly commissioned by him, this programme had a lasting effect on the perception that Latinity and literacy had to be restored, and it was probably the first instance whereby an Anglo-Saxon king stressed the need for the vernacular to acquire a certain degree of authority and prestige and for it to become a language into which England’s received wisdom had to be translated. The view that the clerical knowledge of Latin had declined was also shared by Ælfric of Eynsham long after the Alfredian education reform was introduced, and, in contrast to Alfred the Great, who saw no potential dangers in rendering Latin knowledge into the vernacular, Ælfric expressed his concern about possibly misleading translations that could not capture the “precise sense and form of the Bible in English” in his *Preface to Genesis* (Godden, 2011, p. 144). This reflection on the

importance of restoring Latinity in England, along with the monastic ideal that was being pursued in continental Europe in his time and that would then inspire the Benedictine Reform in England, would have a fundamental bearing on Ælfric's teaching.

## ***2.2. The Benedictine Reform***

During the tenth century, English kings valued the clergy for their loyalty, and monasticism was steadily rebuilt, which led to the Church assuming considerable power and authority in society. After the death of King Athelstan and Edgar the Peaceful's accession to the throne in 959, the need for a reform that sought to reinstate appropriate Christian practices in England progressively became more obvious, and an entire movement based on the Carolingian model and on what Bede had regarded as the apogee of Christendom gathered strength. As McKinney puts it:

The reform movement in England was tied to what Bishops Æthelwold, Oswald and Dunstan had seen as the high point of Anglo-Saxon Christianity, the seventh-century Church under the Canterbury archbishopric of Theodore of Tarsus, as described by Bede in the [*Historia Ecclesiastica*]. [...] In the *Regularis Concordia Anglicae nationis monachorum sanctimonialiumque* [...] Æthelwold, Bishop of Winchester (963-984), articulated nostalgia for a lost time in the seventh century when the Anglo-Saxon Church had flourished, and the need for a tenth-century 'restoration' to the standards of this Bedan past. (2011, p. 168)

All these events surrounding the Church and the prestige of the clergy affected the way in which Latin and the Bible came to be perceived. Especially in the upper class, religion was present in most, if not all, spheres of life in early medieval England, and it was often noblemen, monks or other members of the clergy who had an evident interest in learning Latin in order to be able to read and spread God's word. Generally speaking, language learning was only deliberately planned in religious settings, and it was not aimed at fostering the students' communicative competences but at grammar and translation exercises. This state of affairs largely influenced the production of texts and the methodologies used to teach foreign languages (in this case, Latin) in England, since learning processes had a prime objective: that of expanding one's knowledge of the scriptures.

Orthodoxy and the need to return to appropriate Christian conventions are aspects whose representation in the colloquies would perhaps deserve a thesis of their own, given that the translation theories of Ælfric of Eynsham and Ælfric Bata and their ideal of religious instruction can be said to differ greatly, as will be clarified later in this paper. There is a great gap between these authors as far as faithfulness to the original text and learning dimensions are concerned, since Bata's eccentric language radically deviates from the stylistic dogma that characterised Ælfric's work and which made him be regarded as an exemplary Benedictine schoolmaster.

### ***2.3. Ælfric of Eynsham***

Ælfric 'Grammaticus' of Eynsham (c. 955 – c. 1010) was an English abbot and pupil of Æthelwold of Winchester, who advocated the restoration of monasticism during the times of the aforementioned Benedictine Reform (Jones, 2011, p. 69). There are several gaps and discrepancies regarding where and when Ælfric actually lived, although scholars agree that he was born in Wessex and served as a monk and priest in the Old Minster at Winchester and at Cerne Abbas (Hill, 2011, pp. 35-36). According to Joyce Hill, "[i]n c. 1005 he transferred to Eynsham (modern Oxfordshire) as abbot, and it was presumably there that he died" (ibidem, p. 36), which is also the reason why he is typically referred to as Ælfric 'of Eynsham'.

Man of faith as he was, he is best known for his practical approach to the teaching of Latin and his *Colloquy*, although his *Homilies*, *Lives of Saints* and *Grammar* from which his nickname 'Grammaticus' originated are also influential works that continue to be studied nowadays. His *Grammar* was a rather innovative work considering that it explained Latin grammar through the use of the vernacular rather than Latin, as it had normally been the case, and also for his reflections on the importance of practical works that assisted the pupil in the task of understanding and spreading the word of God (Hill, 2007, pp. 287, 299, 300). Even though the vernacular had already achieved a certain degree of prestige after the translation into Old English of Bede's *Ecclesiastical History* (Davies, 2013, p. 261) and thanks to the Alfredian translation programme, it was not common to find texts meant for Latin language learners written in English.

By using the vernacular as a means to describe grammar to speakers of Old English, he could have introduced a cross-linguistic viewpoint that was ahead of his time

and can thus be considered one of the first English linguists. That is assuming that his perspective on language learning was partly based on pragmatic issues rather than merely on tradition and on an ideal conception of a grammar-translation method that was perhaps not as functional when it came to actually creating independent users of the foreign language in question.

Among his numerous works, three stand out for their pedagogical nature: the *Colloquy*, *Grammar* and *Glossary*, often referred to as Ælfric's triad (Hall, 2011, p. 215). All of them share a creative essence that reflects the vocational aptitude for which Ælfric is still regarded as one of the most committed teachers of Anglo-Saxon England, and which also explains why many of his pupils and the scholars who have studied his works speak of him as a committed pedagogue and not simply as a writer of grammars and hagiographies (ibidem, p. 193).

In *A Companion to Ælfric's* introductory chapter, Hugh Magennis highlights that although Ælfric has "occupied a central place in Anglo-Saxon Studies throughout much of the history of the scholarship of the discipline" (2011, p. 5), he has been of lesser interest to other fields of study. In this respect, revisiting his works from a diachronic perspective appears to be a reasonable task as far as their educational component is concerned, irrespective of the fact that Ælfric of Eynsham and his *Colloquy* have traditionally been conferred considerable attention in the study of late Anglo-Saxon England.

#### **2.4. Ælfric Bata**

Ælfric Bata was a Benedictine monk who lived and taught in the early eleventh century. He had been a pupil of Ælfric either at the abbey of Eynsham or in Winchester (Gwara & Porter, 1997, p. 3) and collected and enlarged much of his master's work. The epithet 'Bata' (Latin for "barrel") has been commonly attributed to his allegedly "stocky" figure (Harris, 2003, p. 113). Bata's name appears in Oxford, St. John's College MS 154, where he refers to Ælfric as "my teacher" and in the very first page of London, British Library, Cotton MS Tiberius A. iii, meaning that he was either the collector or holder of the original *Colloquy* as well as other works written by his master (Gwara & Porter, 1997, p. 2). Bata also claimed authorship of his own colloquies, which has allowed scholars to rightfully attribute them to him. Apart from these mentions, details about his life and

activity are scarce and there is no consensus as to when he was born and died, although the estimated date of his death is c. 1010-1020 (Gwara & Porter, 1997, p. 3). Based on allusions that he made to 29 June being an important feast day at the monastery where he taught, it has been suggested that he was active in a community at either Winchester's Old Minster or St. Augustine's in Canterbury, where Saints Peter and Paul were the patron saints (*ibidem*).

According to Hall, three out of the four extant texts that contain colloquies dating from the tenth and eleventh centuries can be linked to Bata in one way or another. These include the enlarged version of Ælfric's *Colloquy*, Bata's *Colloquia difficiliora* ("the more difficult colloquies") and *Colloquia e libro de raris fabulis retractata*, which Hall decidedly links to *De raris fabulis* (2011, p. 207) but whose authorship, according to Loredana Lazzari, remains "a matter of speculation" (2007, p. 344). Out of these texts, the *Colloquia difficiliora* are perhaps the most interesting from a linguistic perspective, and they are also the reason why authors refer to Bata as bizarre (Jones, 2011, p. 104) and as an eccentric personality (Gwara & Porter, 1997, p. 1).

Bata's colloquies open a window into the monastic reality in a way that those of his master did not, and they have been extensively commented on for their rather expressive nature. Apart from dealing with everyday situations and dialogues, they also bring up other topics that had been left out in most texts describing life in a monastery. These include alcohol and drunkenness and swear words, which appear relatively frequently in some passages such as *Colloquy 25* (Gwara & Porter, 1997, pp. 136-158) and which are able to catch the attention of the contemporary reader for how inventive they are. Consider, for example, how an abusive student refers to his master as a "human turd" and tells him "[M]ay you always have shit on your beard" (*ibidem*, p. 138).

This contrasts with the decorous language used by Ælfric of Eynsham, who tried for his works to reflect his belief that a more conservative approach to religion had to be pursued, and whose style was comparatively plainer. Nevertheless, these colloquies show that Ælfric's works were already setting an example for other authors shortly after their production. Whether Bata's *Colloquies* wielded a comparable influence could also be a topic for further research, but they will be analysed in this thesis and treated as a continuation and as a complementary source to Ælfric's original *Colloquy*, given that the works of both authors are linked in the extant manuscripts containing the colloquies.

### 3. Literature review

After having delved into the historical period during which the colloquies were written and used in monastic schools and having a clearer image of the two authors, it is crucial to take a closer look at the literature on the topic. To this end, a review of the main publications dealing with the lives and contributions of Ælfric of Eynsham and Ælfric Bata is the first step to learn about the ways in which this subject has so far been conceptualised by other scholars.

The most comprehensive publications on the lives and works of Ælfric of Eynsham and Ælfric Bata are respectively *A Companion to Ælfric* (Magennis & Swan, 2009) and *Anglo-Saxon Conversations: The Colloquies of Ælfric Bata* (Gwara & Porter, 1997). The former is a collection of essays on Ælfric that provides the reader with valuable information from varied approaches to the scholar and monk, while the latter offers a closer look at Bata's character and colloquies, presented in Latin beside an English translation. In these two books, the brilliance and historical significance of these monks both from a diachronic and a synchronic perspective is unravelled. There are several other publications where Ælfric and his pupil Ælfric Bata are presented as relevant authors whose contribution to English literature remains uncontested. For example, their names appear quite regularly throughout *The Cambridge Companion to Old English Literature* (Godden & Lapidge, 2013), where the former is described as one of the "most prolific, learned and accomplished authors of Old English prose" (Brooks, 2013, p. 12), and his *Homilies* and *Lives of Saints* are commented on in various chapters. Likewise, in his chapter titled "The literary languages of Old English", Joshua Davis makes direct reference to Ælfric of Eynsham's clear language, which allowed him to "draw the editors closer to the lessons he sought to impart" (Davies, 2013, p. 269).

#### 3.1. Scholarship on the colloquies

This section should begin by addressing the question of authorship, taking into consideration that the notion of 'text' was malleable in the Middle Ages and that it was often hard to confirm whether a document was in fact written or simply edited by a given author; however, in the case of some of Ælfric of Eynsham's works it was Bata that verified his authorship (Hill, 2007, p. 287). In the words of Hugh Magennis and Mary Swan, this effectively implied the following:

[That] his writings —rapidly stripped of explicit mentions of his authorship— were a major influence on succeeding generations. [...] Ælfric seems to loom all the larger as a presence for Anglo-Saxonists because of his firm first-person ‘authorial’ voice and because of the sense of his own identity that he projects. (Magennis & Swan, 2009, p. 1)

There are several works dealing with and containing the colloquies of Ælfric of Eynsham and Ælfric Bata that ought to be mentioned in this dissertation. As for the surviving manuscripts of Ælfric’s *Colloquy*, George Norman Garmonsway draws attention to the fact that the manuscript kept at the British Library (Cotton MS Tiberius A. iii) is possibly the most similar to Ælfric’s original out of the four extant manuscripts (1978, p. 6). Garmonsway’s introduction to his own edition of the *Colloquy* is in turn one of the most referenced (Lendinara, 1999; Harris, 2003; Hill, 2007; Magennis & Swan, 2009; Naismith 2021) and the generally preferred option when studying the text, since it is a complete version that also includes interlinear glosses in Old English and relevant explanations as footnotes.

Similarly, and as mentioned above, the most detailed work on Ælfric Bata’s colloquies is the edited book by Gwara and Porter (1997). It includes the original texts as well as an English translation which is presented next to the Latin and under which further clarifications are given in the form of translator notes. The editors of this book indicate that there are three extant manuscripts which can be undoubtedly linked to Ælfric Bata (Gwara & Porter, 1997, p. 57), while the most complete version of the colloquies is in the Oxford Manuscript (Oxford, St. John’s College MS 154), on which Gwara and Porter’s edition is based. There are not many scholarly publications comparing the colloquies of Ælfric and Ælfric Bata in detail, but one stands out, namely a chapter in the book *Anglo-Saxon Glosses and Glossaries* by Patrizia Lendinara (1999). This chapter (XII) is entirely devoted to examining the colloquies of Ælfric and Ælfric Bata and addressing earlier misconceptions as well as other issues related to these texts. This work offers a thorough analysis of the structure, lexicon and purpose of the colloquies, and will be thus referenced later in this dissertation when comparing the texts.

The language used in the colloquies has also been extensively discussed. Apart from the bizarre expressions in Bata’s colloquies, the fact that some parts contain a considerable number of tecnicisms has attracted the attention of scholars. In a collection of essays edited by Chardonnens and Carella, titled “Secular Learning in Anglo-Saxon

England: Exploring the Vernacular” (2012), references to Ælfric of Eynsham and Ælfric Bata are fairly recurrent, particularly to the former’s *De temporibus anni*, a handbook of computus, astronomy and natural science. In the chapter by Stephanie Hollis, the author makes an interesting point about Bata’s colloquies and the fact that their seemingly overtechnical register might have actually served the function of training future apothecaries, who were required to learn the names of different plants both in Latin and English (Hollis, 2012, p. 36).

The pedagogical relevance and application of these texts has been addressed by Harris in a section that was entirely dedicated to Ælfric’s *Colloquy* in the book *Medieval Literature for Children* (2003), and also in Hall’s chapter “Ælfric as Pedagogue” (2011), who calls attention to how they may not have been entirely innovative, given that they were inspired by the conversational practices introduced in earlier texts such as the ninth-century *De raris fabulis* (Hall 2011, p. 208).

Even though this paper will not investigate other works by these authors, it is convenient to see where the colloquies stand in relation to them. As mentioned above, Joyce Hill refers to Ælfric of Eynsham’s *Colloquy* as being part of the author’s grammatical triad together with the *Grammar* and the *Glossary* (Hill 2003; 2007), pointing out that the three works complement each other given how they express or imply former knowledge. She describes the *Colloquy* as a text “which exercises what has been learnt in the more abstract form offered by the *Grammar* and the *Glossary*” (Hill, 2003, p. 16). This view is also shared by Alaric Hall (2011) and Patrizia Lendinara, who highlights this in her chapter “The world of Anglo-Saxon learning” (2013). Here, she argues that the vocabulary presented in a given glossary could then be employed in a colloquy (Lendinara, 2013, p. 306). This was the case for Bata’s colloquies, which included many of the terms that appeared in his master’s *Glossary* (ibidem). However, Hill also points out that the way in which the *Colloquy* “sets the text apart” (Hill, 2007, p. 298), considering it was meant as an assisting script for an oral activity, has probably contributed to it being the least popular out of the three books and, moreover, to these texts being transmitted and studied separately and not actually as a triad (2007, p. 299).

The last sections of this dissertation are partly inspired by Ruiz Moneva’s article “Tracing the origins of ESP in Old English Ælfric’s *Colloquy* and *Cosmology*” (2011). Here, the author argues that the *Colloquy*’s structure and expectations are analogous to



those of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) courses and materials (Ruiz Moneva, 2011, p. 51), an interesting viewpoint that will be properly discussed and elaborated on.

#### **4. Methodology**

The first and second research questions, namely ‘What do the colloquies have in common and in which ways do they differ from a pedagogical point of view?’ and ‘Which were the implications of these works as regards Latin learning?’, will be answered in the next chapter by means of a comparative analysis of the texts. The analysis will be of a mixed nature and will include a reflection on the register and language used, side-by-side comparisons of fragments taken from the colloquies and other observations. The Latin excerpts will be taken from Garmonsway’s edition in the case of Ælfric’s *Colloquy* and from the *Anglo-Saxon Conversations* book by Gwara and Porter in the case of Ælfric Bata. The English translation of these passages will be added for clarity. The translations will be extracted from Stephen J. Harris’s chapter on the *Colloquy* and from the aforementioned book by Gwara and Porter, respectively.

The third research question, ‘Do these tools allow us to draw comparisons with modern techniques of foreign language learning?’, will be answered by means of critically comparing the colloquies’ elements and purpose to those of contemporary language-learning practices in order to ascertain whether they can be reasonably linked from a pedagogical and sociolinguistic perspective. This section will be theoretically backed by means of defining conversational learning and English for Specific Purposes. Existing literature on this topic, such as Ruiz Moneva’s article, will also be discussed.

#### **5. Comparison of the texts**

Before analysing the colloquies, it should be pointed out that the title “Colloquy” (or, more precisely, its Latin equivalent *colloquium*) did not appear as such in the original texts nor in any other work by these two authors, which essentially means that this designation was given by later scholars who analysed the pieces and resolved that they belonged to this genre. Instead, what we find in the source texts are metareferences such as the following, that also attest to the works’ oral purpose:

*O pueri, quomodo uobis placet ista locutio?* (Garmonsway, 1978, p. 42)

Well, children, how do you like this speech? (Harris, 2003, p. 124)

*Adhuc ego Bata difficiliorem sententiam addo.* (Gwara & Porter, 1997, p. 178)

I Bata further add some more difficult speech. (Gwara & Porter, 1997, p. 179)

The *Colloquy on the Occupations* is perhaps one of Ælfric's best-known and acclaimed works. It was devised as a planned conversation between a master and his pupils in order for them to practice their Latin and to engage in a dialogue by memorising sentences or reading them aloud (Harris, 2003, p. 112). In this case, the master would be the monk teaching younger students, and the conversation would begin by asking each of the students about their occupations and duties, which they would then describe to the others in a roleplay.

Each student had an assigned profession, and they would have to learn the passage(s) that explained the different tasks that they were doing and why they were necessary in their community (p. 114). There are several reasons to believe that this colloquy was meant for young schoolchildren, one of them being that the language was often simplified for didactic purposes (ibidem). The *Colloquy* was entirely written in Latin, but most versions and translations we can access nowadays also include Old English glosses and valuable information on the main text. For reasons of simplicity, the passages included below are taken from Garmonsway's Latin text and shown beside are their respective translation into English, extracted from Harris' article. The following excerpts are an example of how the colloquy was structured and of the kind of questions that students would be required to answer:

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <p><i>O, bubulce, quid operaris tu?</i></p> <p><i>O, domine mi, multum laboro. Quando arator disiungit boues, ego duco eos ad pascua, et tota nocte sto super eos uigilando propter fures, et iterum primo mane adsigno eos aratori bene pastos et adaquatos.</i></p> | <p>Well, ox herder, what do you get up to?</p> <p>Well, my lord, I work a lot. When the [ploughman] unyokes the oxen, I lead them to pasture, and all night I stand over them watching for thieves. And</p> |
|---|---|

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <p style="text-align: center;">Garmonsway, 1978, p. 22</p> <p><i>Tu, sutor, quid operaris nobis utilitatis?</i></p> <p><i>Est quidem ars mea utilis ualde uobis et necessaria.</i></p> <p><i>Quomodo?</i></p> <p><i>Ego emo cutes et pelles, et preparo eas arte mea, et facio ex eis calciamenta diuersi generis, subtalares et ficones, caligas et utres, frenos et falera, flascones et casidilia, calcaria et chamos, peras et marsupia; et nemo uestrum uult hiemare sine mea arte.</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Garmonsway, 1978, pp. 34-35</p> | <p>then, in the morning, I take them to the [ploughman] well fed and watered.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Harris, 2003, p. 119</p> <p>You, shoemaker, what do you do for our general profit?</p> <p>My craft truly is very useful and necessary to you.</p> <p>How?</p> <p>I buy hides and skins, and prepare them through my craft, and work them into footwear of various kinds: slippers and shoes, hobnailed boots and water bottles, bridles and trappings, flasks or canteens and helmets, [spur straps] and halters, purses and pokes; not one of you could winter without my craft.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Harris, 2003, p. 122</p> |
|---|--|

Bata's colloquies are generally structured likewise; as dialogues that could be held between a monk and his pupils and that reveal much about the relationship that would be established between them as well as about the manners that would be expected from the children's part when addressing their masters. The following excerpts are taken from the Latin and English versions included in the book by Gwara and Porter (1997). Henceforth, the excerpts extracted from Bata's texts will be shown in light green columns so that it is clearer whether the fragments on the right correspond to the translation of the text shown beside it, or to a side-by-side comparison between an excerpt by Ælfric (unshaded) and

one by Bata. Should the latter be the case, the translation of both Latin fragments will be added right below each text within the same column.

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <p><i>Mihi uidetur, quod uespertina hora prope sit modo.</i></p> <p><i>Sic et nobis. Sed non est uespera tamen adhuc.</i></p> <p><i>Domne magister, licet nobis lúdere paulisper, quia modo scimus bene nostros acceptos et nostras lectiones et responsoria nostra et antiphonas nostras?</i></p> <p><i>Etiam licet, quod festiuitas est: ideo uobis licentiam do modo hac uice iocandi usque ad signum uespertinum.</i></p> <p><i>Bene est nobis modo, quod uiuimus. Pergamus omnes simul iocare foris cum baculis nostris et pila nostra seu trocho nostro.</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;">Gwara &amp; Porter, 1997, p. 94</p> | <p>It seems to me it's almost the hour of vespers now.</p> <p>We think so, too, but it's still not vespers yet.</p> <p>Master, sir, let us play a little while – since we very well know our assignments, lections, responses and antiphons already.</p> <p>Very well, you may, because it's a feast day. I now give you permission this time to play until the vespers signal.</p> <p>Now it's good for us to be alive! Let's all go together to play outdoors with our sticks and our ball or hoop.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Gwara &amp; Porter, 1997, p. 95</p> |
|--|---|

However, and in contrast to the modest style that had been cultivated by Ælfric, who deemed brevity and simplicity to be the most beneficial strategies for his pupils (Davis, 2009, p. 323), Bata developed a hermeneutic style whose ulterior purpose was, according to Lendinara, that of displaying “his learning” rather than that of teaching (1999, p. 38). This is made manifest in the relatively extensive use of arcane and unusual words, many of them deriving from Greek terms that could be found in the *Hermeneumata pseudo-Dositheana* (Lendinara, 2013, p. 307). Apart from Ælfric's original *Glossary*, Bata resorted to several other wordlists to formulate his colloquies,

including those contained in the aforementioned *Hermeneumata* as well as in the Antwerp-London Glossaries (Antwerp, Plantin-Moretus Museum, M 16. 2 and London, British Library, Additional 32246) (Lendinara, 1999, p. 39).

Bata's tendency to flaunt erudition cannot only be spotted in the lexicon, but also in the colloquies' phrasing at large. Some of these texts substantially exceed the conventional exchanges that could have been anticipated in this educational setting. His *Colloquia difficiliora* are a good example of this, considering that some of the passages presented in these colloquies are fairly long and elaborate, as their name itself indicates. After all, scholars have classified them as the 'more difficult' colloquies. Some of them could even be studied as prose poetry for their stylistic quality and intricacy. The *Spring* colloquy reads as follows:

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <p><i>En, uirescunt campi uel campuli et saltus et nemora et hortuli et colles, quia imminet uernale tempus. En, mitescunt alta freta oceani. En, marina animalia hilaescunt. En, uolatilia siue aquatilia iubilant et concrepant et pipant nectareis rostris et uaria modulamina Deo modulantur. En, cerui uel ceruuli altas rupes transiliunt. En, agniculi et agnelli mitibus balatibus Deum salutant. En, toruae cornices nidificant in edibus nostris, et iniuriam sepe nobis faciunt procacibus suis uocibus. En, gallinae uel gallinulae similiter faciunt. En, ciconiae alta crepacula exercent. En, canes uenatici ceruulorum et ceruularum agmina in uenatione capescunt. En, apes progrediuntur de</i></p> | <p>Behold, the fields, the woods, groves, gardens and hills are growing green, because springtime is approaching. Look! The deep straits of the sea are growing calm. Oh! The sea creatures are made happy. Ah, the winged ones are happy; they are singing, or chirping with their nectared beaks, intoning their various melodies to God. Look! The stags are leaping the high cliffs. Oh, the lambs and young sheep are saluting God with their gentle bleating. The black crows are nesting in our buildings and often offend our ears with their raucous cries. Oh, the hens and pullets are doing likewise. The storks are making their high-pitched crackling. Hounds are pursuing herds of harts and hinds</p> |
|---|--|

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <p><i>suis canistris per arua uirida, ut de multis flosculis arborum et herbarum in rure crescentium conficiant mirabiles fauos.</i></p> <p>Gwara &amp; Porter, 1997, pp. 188, 190</p> | <p>in the hunt. Oh, the bees are proceeding from their wattled hives through the green fields so they can produce their wonderful honeycombs from the myriad blossoms of trees and herbs burgeoning in the countryside.</p> <p>Gwara &amp; Porter, 1997, pp. 189, 191</p> |
|--|---|

Aside from these stylistically divergent points, the colloquies by Ælfric and Bata bear obvious similarities. Essentially, they rest on the belief that sacred knowledge must be passed onto the pupils, and that this knowledge is to be transmitted and scaffolded by the master in a way that is easily intelligible. There are several passages in which the children express their regard for their master, who they ultimately see as a source of divine wisdom and hold in considerable respect. Furthermore, it appears that in order for them to gain this wisdom, they must accept a sort of intellectual shortcoming that ought to be remedied by external help, since the “holy mysteries” are perhaps too daunting a task to undertake on their own. Their desire to extend their knowledge is succinctly expressed in various excerpts, albeit with a relative prudence that is reflected in the level of formality. The following passages have roughly parallel structures:

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <p><i>O pueri, quomodo uobis placet ista locutio?</i></p> <p><i>Bene quidem placet nobis, sed ualde profunde loqueris et ultra etatem nostram protrahis sermonem: sed loquere nobis iuxta nostrum intellectum, ut possimus intelligere que loqueris.</i></p> | <p><i>Doctor bone, utinam uelles ostendere plane mihi uel aperte manifestare lectionem hanc, seu hoc testimonium, siue istam mysticam scripturam, quia hanc sententiam non possum intelligere sine doctore. Ualde difficilis est mihi ad intellegendum, et non habeo tam profundam doctrinam,</i></p> |
|--|---|

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <p style="text-align: right;">Garmonsway, 1978, p. 42</p> <p>Well, children, how do you like this speech?</p> <p>We like it well, but you speak very profoundly and you draw forth speech beyond our ability. But speak to us according to our intellect, that we may understand the things you speak about.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Harris, 2003, p. 124</p> | <p><i>ut animaduertere ualeam haec sacra mysteria.</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;">Gwara &amp; Porter, 1997, p. 118</p> <p>Good teacher, I wish you would show me clearly or plainly reveal to me this reading, or this testimony, or this mystical scripture, because I'm not able to understand this text without a tutor. It's very difficult for me to understand. I don't have deep enough learning to discern these holy mysteries.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Gwara &amp; Porter, 1997, p. 119</p> |
|---|--|

The pupils' longing to become knowledgeable and to be seen by the monks as well-behaved goes so far as to accept physical punishment for their mistakes, sometimes even anticipating those they have not received yet and naturally assuming that their master will know when, or if, a whipping would be a reasonable response. In the texts below, which are only two examples of the various passages where punishment is explicitly mentioned, the pupils communicate their will to mend their ways in a rather remorseful and conciliatory tone.

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <p><i>Uultis flagellari in discendo?</i></p> <p><i>Carius est nobis flagellari pro doctrina quam nescire. Sed scimus te</i></p> | <p><i>Certe ideo debes flagellari.</i></p> <p><i>Hoc scio bene, magister, quia dignus sum, et mea culpa est. Sed indulge</i></p> |
|---|--|

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <p><i>mansuetum esse et nolle inferre plagas nobis, nisi cogaris a nobis.</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;">Garmonsway, 1978, pp. 18-19</p> <p>Will you be flogged in order to learn?</p> <p>We would rather be flogged on behalf of wisdom than not to know it. But we know you to be mild and unwilling to lash out against us unless you're compelled by us.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Harris, 2003, p. 118</p> | <p><i>mihi hac uice, et, si tua uoluntas sit, permitte me cras reddere, et sic totum déinceps emendare uolo, si Deus uult.</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;">Gwara &amp; Porter, 1997, p. 92</p> <p>You really ought to be whipped for it.</p> <p>Master, I know very well that I deserve it and that it's my fault. But spare me this time, and let me recite tomorrow if you will. From now on I want to mend my ways completely, God willing.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Gwara &amp; Porter, 1997, p. 93</p> |
|--|--|

Given that the aim of these colloquies was primarily that of familiarising the students with a wide range of Latin words and expressions, the resulting texts are somewhat artificial (Lendinara, 1999, p. 16). This can be detected in the overly grammatical speech of fishermen and oxherds in the *Colloquy* (Harris, 2003, p. 113), and also by the fact that many of these exchanges are fairly unnatural and unlikely to happen, regardless of whether a monk living in these monasteries could have encountered or engaged in a conversation with a cobbler at a given time. The dependency of both Ælfric's and Bata's colloquies on their respective complementary glossaries is evidenced by several excerpts where the dialogues are rather an enumeration of semantically related words (see the following text to the left) or sentences whose purpose is for the students to memorise a definite series of items, e.g., ordinals or the days of the week. This suggests that the pupils would most likely have to learn entire passages by heart rather than improvise on them.



*Quid capis in mari?*

*Alleces et isicios, delfinos et sturias,  
ostreas et cancros, musculas,  
torniculi, neptigalli, platesia et  
platissa et polipodes et similia.*

Garmonsway, 1978, pp. 28-29

What do you catch in the sea?

Herring and salmon, porpoises and  
sturgeon, oysters and crabs, mussels,  
winkles, cockles, plaice and flounder  
and lobster, and many similar things.

Harris, 2003, p. 121

*Tu, stulte frater, quare noluisti legere  
nec cantare hac nocte? Qualem  
lectionem debuisti legere, aut qualem  
responsorium debuisti cantare?  
Debuisti legere primam lectionem aut  
secundam aut tertiam uel quartam aut  
quintam uel sextam aut septimam uel  
octauam seu nonam aut decimam siue  
undecimam aut duodecimam?*

Gwara & Porter, 1997, p. 110

You, stupid brother, why wouldn't you  
read or sing tonight? What lection  
should you have read? What response  
should you have sung? Should you  
have read the first or second or third or  
fourth or fifth or sixth or seventh or  
eighth or ninth or tenth or eleventh or  
twelfth lection?

Gwara & Porter, 1997, p. 111

The above-mentioned politeness and formality which characterise most of the exchanges between the master and the students are countered by the scatological language of some of Bata's colloquies. *Colloquy 25* is possibly the most colourful instance of profanity, considering that it abounds in curse words and makes direct references to the evil forces that dwell among the "harmonious", thus menacing the monastery's peace. This theatrical language sharply contrasts with that of Ælfric, who merely threatens with physical punishment but does not go so far as to attribute the insubordinate behaviour of his pupils to the Devil's hand.

*Scriptura namque dicit, 'filius discordiae, filius diaboli,' et 'filius concordie uel filius pacis filius Dei' uocabitur. Tu filius discordiæ et non concordiae uel uere pacis, sed susurro es et malus homo et uulpis malus. [...]*  
*Nullus enim doemon peior quam filius discordiæ uel susurro inter concordēs et pacificos.*

*Potestatem habes, o mi inimice, et uoluntatem propriam dicendi et loquendi de me misero quicquid uis. Quid dicis aut quid loqueris contra me?*

*Tu sochors! Tu scibalum hedi! Tu scibalum ouis! Tu scibalum equi! Tu fimus bouis! Tu stercus porci! Tu hominis stercus!*

Gwara & Porter, 1997, pp. 136, 138

For scripture says: "The son of wrangling is the son of the devil." And the son of God will be called the son of harmony and the son of peace. You're a son of discord, not of harmony or true peace. You're a murmurer, a bad man a bad fox. [...] No demon is worse than a son of discord or a murmurer among harmonious and peaceful people.

You have the upper hand, my enemy, so you can speak and say anything you please about my poor self. What do you say against me?

You idiot! You goat shit! Sheep shit! Horse shit! You cow dung! You pig turd! You human turd!

Gwara & Porter, 1997, p. 139

Similarly, morality and the need to adhere to the heavenly virtues are expressed differently in the *Colloquy* and in Bata's pieces. Whereas Ælfric implicitly discusses gluttony as a cardinal sin to be avoided, and briefly touches on the topic of drinking to conclude that it is not for the children nor for the unlearned, Bata directs much attention to alcohol and drunkenness throughout his colloquies. In some of these passages, the ability of the students to finish a wine jug and to work up their appetite before a gathering so that they can eat more than their peers is vividly praised, which demonstrates that Ælfric and Bata had antithetical conceptions of the motives behind their work.

*Uescor aliquando his cibis, et aliquando aliis cum sobrietate, sicut decet monachum, non cum uoracitate, quia non sum gluto.*

[...]

*Nonne bibis uinum?*

*Non sum tam diues ut possim emere mihi uinum; et uinum non est potus puerorum siue stultorum, sed senum et sapientium.*

Garmonsway, 1978, p. 47

I enjoy at times this food, other times that – with sobriety, as befits a monk, not with voracity, since I am not a glutton.

[...]

*You don't drink wine?*

I am not so wealthy that I might buy myself wine. And wine is not a drink for children nor for the stupid, but for the old and the wise.

Harris, 2003, p. 125-126

*Redde mihi unum cultellum, ut possim cotidie cum eo manducare cibum meum in mea sede cum meis sessoribus in refectorio.*

*Tunc, cum ebrius fueris, statim uis transfodere sessorem tuum, puto, cum illo.*

Gwara & Porter, 1997, p. 114

Give me a knife, so every day I can eat my food with it while I sit in my place with my benchmates in the refectory.

But then when you're drunk, right away you'll want to stab your benchmate with it, I think!

Gwara & Porter, 1997, p. 115

*Etiam. Da huc, et porrige mihi ánaphum. Ego bibam usque ad profundum.*

Gwara & Porter, 1997, p. 100

Yes. Give it here; hand me the wine jug. I'll drink to the bottom!

Gwara & Porter, 1997, p. 101

### 5.1. *On the Old English interlinear glosses*

Even though Ælfric's original *Colloquy* was entirely written in Latin, most of the surviving manuscripts include glosses of some kind, be it in the form of marginal notes or as an interlinear translation of the text, which could have been used to elucidate given terms or structures. In fact, it is fairly common to find editions of the *Colloquy* that are exclusively based on the Old English glosses, and which have become a valuable source of information for the synchronic study of English, since they allow linguists to observe how the language actually looked as well as how other grammatical elements were evolving over time. Eric G. Stanley even deemed them to be "part of the Anglo-Saxon literary heritage" (1980, p. 249). The relevance of the glosses appears to be such that in Garmonsway's edition the order was reversed so that the Old English text would come before the Latin, regardless of the fact that it once had been a translation thereof. The Old English is even presented in a bigger font, whereas the Latin translation of each line is shown underneath in italics, as if it were "more" foreign than the Old English for the contemporary reader. This could also be rather confusing for those who are not familiar with the *Colloquy* itself, since it could mislead the reader into believing that the Old English text is in fact the one that was glossed in Latin, and not vice versa.

Bata's colloquies are also glossed and usually presented beside a translation in the vernacular. While the aforementioned correspondences between Bata's colloquies and his master's *Glossary* possibly indicate that he glossed his own works, this is not as clear in the case of Ælfric. Some authors point out that there are several occasions where the Old English term that is shown alongside the Latin is not directly equivalent, which suggests that the glosses in Ælfric's texts could be linked to Bata or to a different scribe (Harris, 2003, p. 113). Nevertheless, Lendinara also directs attention to how a seemingly inaccurate translation of the Latin often responds to the stylistic requirements of the target text, considering that the Old English interlinear glosses had a coherence of their own and were not a "mere juxtaposition" of words (1999, p. 25).

From a pedagogical point of view, these glosses are an important attestation of Latin learning through the means of the vernacular, since the latter's purpose was that of clarifying the Latin and assisting pupils or other potential users of the manuscripts. This goes to show that there was a solid interaction between the two as far as language learning was concerned (Gretsch, 2013, p. 277). Moreover, the significance of these interlinear glosses is to be assessed knowing that they began to be introduced at a time when the

English language was slowly but surely transitioning from a synthetic to an analytic language, meaning that grammatical categories and the Latin inflexional system would have been substantially more challenging for the Old English speaker (Gneuss, 1990, p. 9) and clarifications in the form of glosses could have been particularly helpful.

Glosses, according to Treharne, were a way for Ælfric's readers to make their presence felt and reveal that his works (as well as Bata's) were scrutinised and did not go unnoticed (p. 399). In a sense, these interlinear glosses constituted a scaffolding strategy and expose the approaches that were taken towards language learning materials; that is, they evidence how these texts were dealt with. In the words of Gretsch, "interlinear versions [...] served the dual purpose of language acquisition and elementary instruction in the principal texts for young clerics and monks" (2013, p. 280), given that they were not only used to learn Latin but also as training materials for prospective language teachers. In this respect, the vernacular fulfilled a vital function in the instruction of professionals, although the belief that the vernacular would be most convenient for learning was not only limited to language experts, since Bata also acknowledged the importance of Old English for aspiring medical practitioners in fields such as herbal healing (Hollis, 2012, pp. 17, 36).

In short, interlinear glosses are to be studied not only as complementary or secondary material, but as relatively self-supporting sources that can reveal much about (language) learning in the Anglo-Saxon world.

### ***5.2. The colloquies' novelty value***

Assessing the colloquies' novelty value became an easier task once these works undoubtedly earned a place in Anglo-Saxon scholarship and their sources were further elucidated. To a certain extent, colloquies of this kind stem from the language-learning dialogues that had existed since classical antiquity (Hall, 2011, p. 215); however, Ælfric's pedagogical triad (and subsequently Bata's production) can be regarded as innovative for several reasons. Together with the *Grammar* and the *Glossary*, works that account for Ælfric's ability to adapt afresh the deep-seated classical grammars of Priscian and Donatus (ibidem), the *Colloquy* and the contributions of Bata would amount to a comprehensive body of texts and established a sustained language-learning methodology.

Joyce Hill draws attention to how these authors were contributing to an Anglo-Saxon tradition that was already “marked by innovation” (2007, p. 287), given that works similar to theirs had long existed and teaching methods were continually evolving and being adapted to the needs of learners. Among the aspects that make these colloquies stand out is perhaps the way in which secondary characters such as the shepherd are given a voice (Lendinara, 1999, p. 17) and how Bata’s texts account for most, if not all, settings and possible topics of conversation that could arise in the monastery. This demonstrates that both authors were concerned with finding a compromise between what had been established and what could eventually suit and appeal to their intended audience.

## **6. Pedagogical implications**

The works of Ælfric and Bata have been scrutinised and discussed in several disciplines, ranging from synchronic and diachronic linguistics to history and didactics, and thus addressed from different perspectives. Their pedagogical potential is too broad a topic to deal with in a single chapter, so the present section will be devoted to discussing possible links to contemporary language-learning methodologies as well as to making sense of why these works continue to be relevant objects of study.

### ***6.1. Latin for Specific Purposes?***

As has been hinted at before, the colloquies appear to be a major work of Anglo-Saxon literature for several reasons. Firstly, Ælfric’s *Colloquy* provides the contemporary reader, be it a historian or a linguist, with valuable information on the different occupations, strata, and trade in Anglo-Saxon England (Ruiz Moneva, 2011, p. 43). Likewise, Bata’s colloquies reflect the intricacies, hierarchy, impulses and ideals of social norms that existed in the monastery. Another reason behind their historical notoriety would be the fact that the colloquies’ structure and intentions could be, in a way, an example of “Latin for Specific Purposes” (or LSP, if you will). This is an interesting viewpoint that Ruiz Moneva put forward in one of her articles, in which she draws a comparison between the *Colloquy* and English for Specific Purposes (ESP) and argues that contextualised language learning has long existed in different forms.

“English for specific purposes (ESP) refers to the teaching and learning of English as a second or foreign language where the goal of the learners is to use English in a

particular domain” (Paltridge & Starfield, 2013, p. 2). This is a relatively broad definition of said methodology, although its application might turn out to be rather field-specific and technical in some cases. Based on this explanation, one might easily imagine how the colloquies can be thought to be a form of LSP, given that they served the purpose of instructing young monks and allowing them to acquire particular knowledge that would be necessary for them in their daily lives and interactions.

To claim that the *Colloquy of Occupations* or that Bata’s *Colloquia difficiliora* were the precursors of ESP or that ESP rests on their foundations could be a rather reductionist viewpoint, but these works are decidedly crucial in the history of conversational learning. In spaces where this type of learning is introduced or aimed at, “[k]nowledge is created through conversation as learners actively voice their ideas and experiences in conversation and make meaning of the experiences and ideas through reflection” (Baker et al., 2002, p. 41). The active feature of communication was perhaps not as enhanced in those lessons where the colloquies were used as a script for roleplay, but there was always a given degree of involvement in the discussions about which occupation was most relevant to their community or about how to properly address their master. At some point, students would have been expected to fully understand the texts they were assigned with, which would require (or at least encourage) a certain amount of dramatising and active participation, which substantiates the claim that the colloquies were a vivid means of learning.

## ***6.2. The colloquies as a perennial source of interest***

The fact that the colloquies remain a stimulating research topic is evidenced by the amount of scholarly works that have been produced in recent years that either revolve around the *Colloquy* and Bata’s texts or mention them in a way or another. Indeed, many related publications were issued in the 2010s, which indicates that the interest towards the colloquies has not decayed over the years.

As mentioned earlier in this paper, the colloquies have occupied a central space in the study of Anglo-Saxon England and synchronic linguistics as regards the history of the English language. Nonetheless, they are rarely touched on in detail from an educational perspective, perhaps even less so in the field of multilingual education. This is the main reason why articles such as that by Ruiz Moneva or the present paper might clear a path

for other scholars to draw comparisons between these texts and modern methodologies, as well as to analyse the colloquies with a critical eye.

## 7. Conclusions

The colloquies by Ælfric of Eynsham and Ælfric Bata were produced in a time when ideals of divine wisdom and the beliefs about Christendom were being fundamentally transformed by the introduction of the Benedictine Reform. These texts reflect much of what occurred in the monasteries and allow us to critically analyse how a foreign language, in this case Latin, was taught in late Anglo-Saxon England.

Ælfric's *Colloquy* is to be studied together with his *Glossary* and *Grammar*, partly due to the *Colloquy*'s brevity and also in view of the three works' interdependence. They make up what has been traditionally referred to as Ælfric's pedagogical triad and are based on long-standing works by classical grammarians such as Donatus and Priscian and on ninth-century *De raris fabulis*. Bata had been a pupil of Ælfric, possibly during his time in Eynsham or Winchester, and enlarged much of his master's work by means of later editions and glosses. He also composed his own colloquies making use of Ælfric's *Glossary*, which can be treated as being complementary to the original text of the *Colloquy*. It must be noted that colloquies had been a common practice since classical antiquity and Latin grammars were already being adapted in Anglo-Saxon times. In this respect, the contributions of Ælfric and Bata may not come across as particularly innovative, since the methodology itself was not a novelty for Latin learners. Yet, they have proven to be useful sources of information for historians and linguists, since many details about different occupations, activities and the daily tasks that the pupils and masters would perform are fully disclosed in the colloquies, be it implicitly or explicitly.

Ælfric and Bata's texts share several similarities, including the level of formality that was required or expected from the pupils when addressing their masters and the will to acquire the divine wisdom that could only be reached through the scaffolding of the scriptures' "mysterious" language. The moderately artificial nature of the colloquies is another aspect that has been systematically commented on, given that the dialogues often feel forced. On the other hand, the differences between the texts by both of these authors are so remarkable that their parallelisms seem minor in comparison. Among these is the fact that some of Bata's colloquies are longer reflections written in an almost poetical



language that seems too advanced for beginners, hence why scholars assume they were meant for prospective teachers of the language. Bata's eccentric character is furthermore mirrored in the use of swearwords and the expression of evil throughout the colloquies, which make them a less morally restricted and perhaps more compendious source of knowledge from an educational point of view.

The pedagogical implications of these works become more evident when the colloquies' purpose is measured against those of contemporary language-learning methodologies or materials. Conversational learning and English for Specific Purposes are only two examples of how these texts can be studied from a critical perspective using concepts and theories that might be more familiar or accessible to scholars from disciplines other than Anglo-Saxon Studies. Ruiz Moneva's article illustrates how the colloquies can be revitalised by means of bringing up new approaches for discussion. The main idea that can be inferred from the last sections of this paper is that it is possible to unlock the full potential of these texts and to examine their didactic peculiarities in order to draw appropriate analogies that are pertinent to educational researchers.

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