

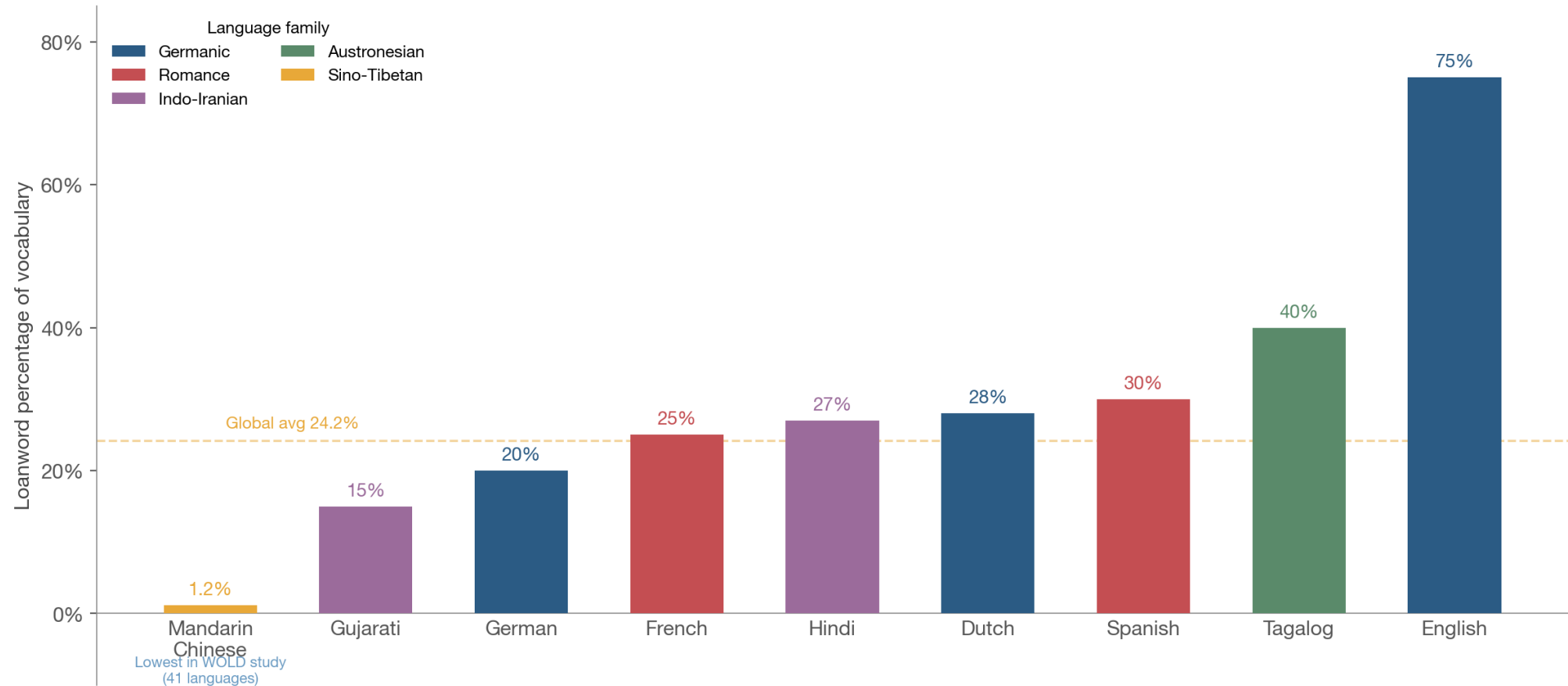
THE MATH OF ENGLISH

How Statistics Reveal a Language's Split Personality

Is English French or German? The answer depends on what you count.

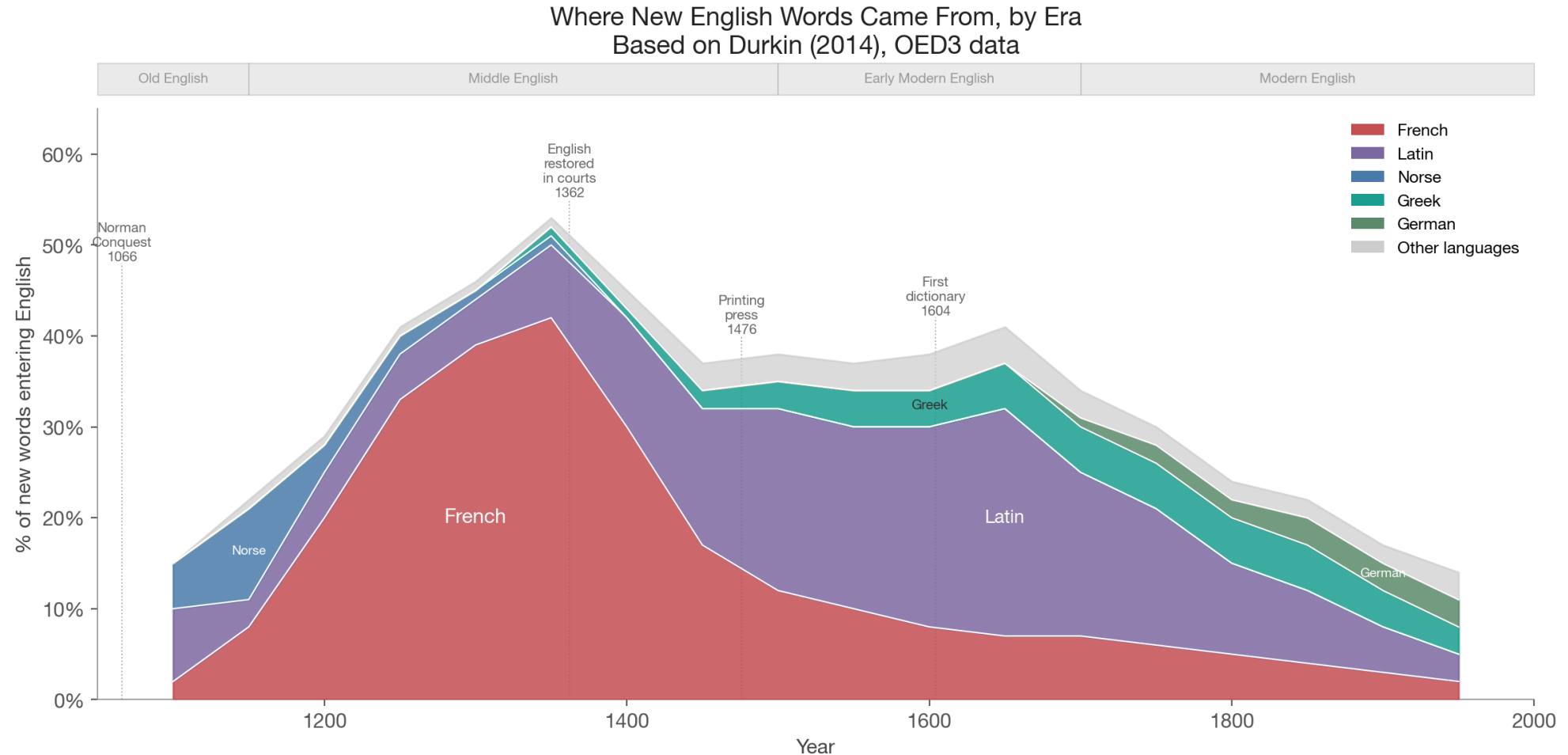
ENGLISH IS A GLOBAL OUTLIER

How Much Does Each Language Borrow?
English is a global outlier



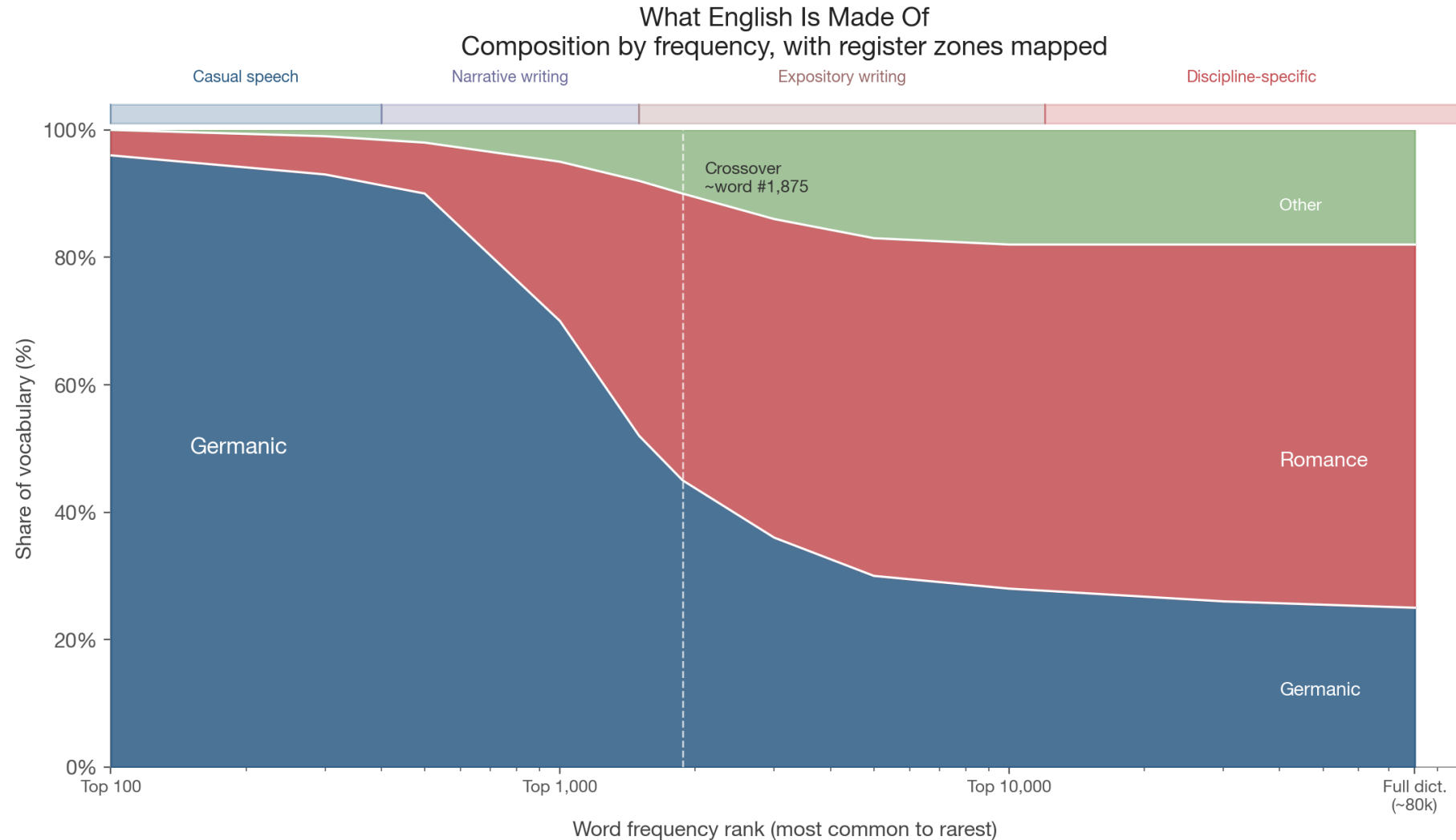
- French: justice, parliament, beef
- Latin: fundamental, definition, atom
- Old Norse: sky, egg, knife, they
- Arabic: algebra, algorithm, zero
- Italian: piano, tempo, opera
- Dutch: yacht, boss
- Japanese: tsunami, emoji
- Nahuatl: avocado, chocolate, tomato

HOW IT HAPPENED — THE TIMELINE



- Old English (pre-1150): Mostly Germanic; small Norse spike from Viking settlers
- Middle English (1150–1500): Norman Conquest — French floods in at ~45% of new words
- Early Modern (1500–1700): Latin takes over for science; Renaissance inkhorn terms
- Modern (1700–present): Global diversification; Latin/Greek persist as word-construction kits

WHAT ENGLISH IS MADE OF TODAY



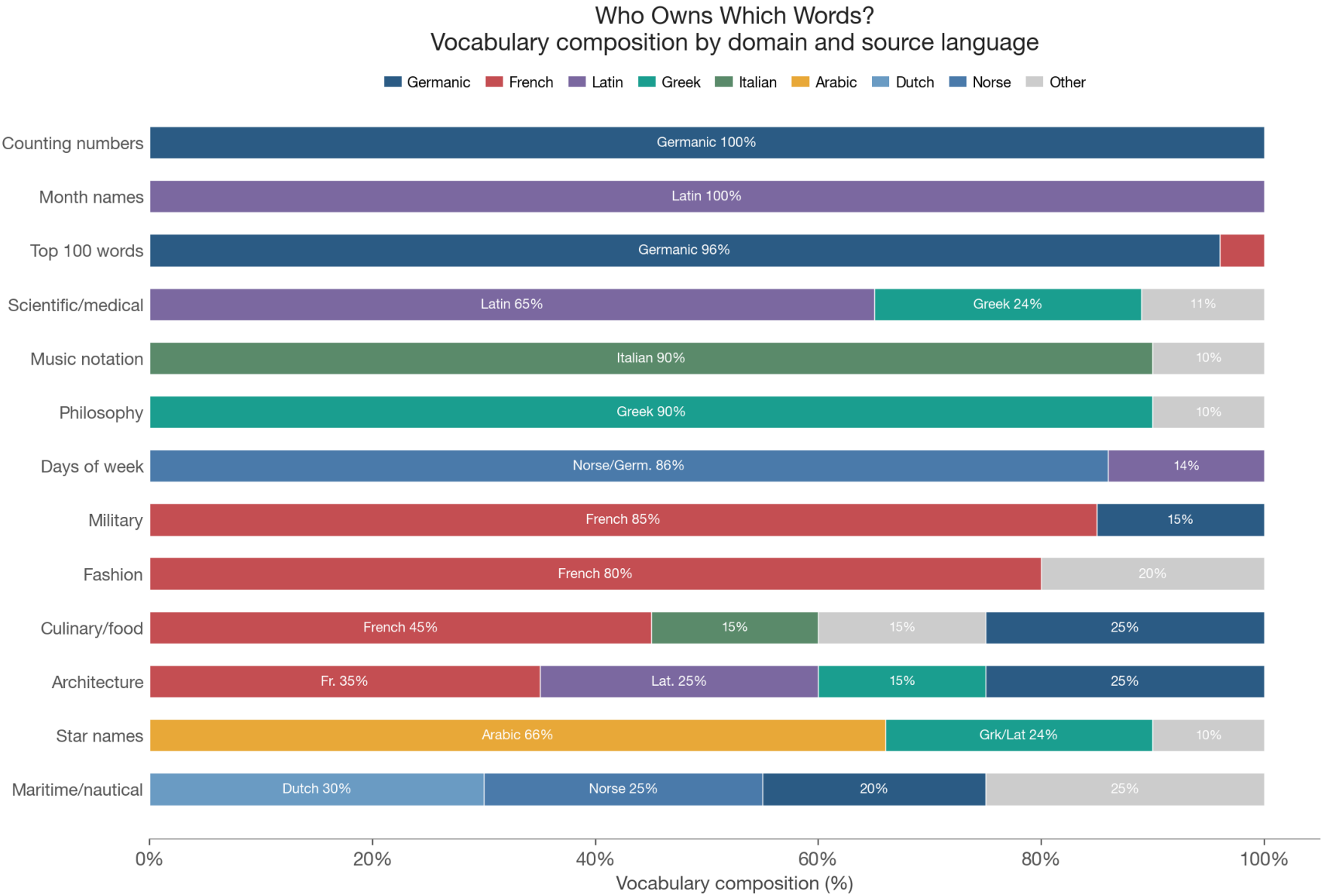
Casual speech: "I think we should go get some food before the game starts."

Narrative: "She decided to abandon her comfortable position and venture into the unknown."

Expository: "The acquisition of linguistic competence demonstrates a significant correlation with socioeconomic status."

Discipline-specific: "Bilateral periventricular leukomalacia manifests as progressive neurodevelopmental deterioration."

WHO OWNS WHICH WORDS



IS ENGLISH FRENCH OR GERMAN?

By the dictionary: **More than half Romance.**

By your mouth: **Overwhelmingly Germanic.**

Both numbers are real. They just answer different questions.

The answer to "where does English come from?" depends entirely on what you're counting — and that's true of most statistics.