Abstract

This bachelor’s thesis is concerned with the systemic change affecting the endings of adjectives as corresponding to the Old English strong and weak adjectival forms, which took places largely during the first half of the Middle English period. The analysis contained therein was executed using the PPCME2, from which adjectives ending in two types of consonant clusters were selected based on their possible lack of participation in the emerging orographic system that, to this day, uses the final -e diacritically to indicate qualities of the root vowel without it’s having the value of the vowel wherein the opposition between the two types of adjectives lay. This analysis took into consideration other factors, phonological and orthographical, but also casal, as well as presence of various determiners.

The analysis underway, a surprising tendency was observed in the examined material: to extend the strong/weak opposition to adjectives in the dative case, and that during the first quarter of the period. Analysis of phonological factors confirmed that this phenomenon must have been morphological in nature. Strong as this tendency may seem, it didn’t last, and materials for the later periods reflect the disappearance of the dative endings altogether. For the direct case, the analysis confirmed the expectations in their entirety: for the earliest period, it tended strongly to maintain the distinction between strong and weak forms, in the second period, however, it was observed to have already acquired a high state of dissolution of the endings. To a degree, the opposition would persist on a larger scale well into the second half of the Middle English period.