

**Univerzita Karlova**  
**Filozofická fakulta**

Bakalářská Práce

By Robert Martin

**Development of strong adjectives in Early Middle English**

**Vývoj silných tvarů přídavných jmen v ranné střední angličtině**

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Under the supervision and with indispensable aid of  
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Prague 2018

*Without the aid of doctor Tichý, up  
When night was blacker for the nearing morn  
My ship would ne'er have safely shorn  
For I knew not the tongue-waves of the sea.*

*Prohlašuji, že jsem bakalářskou/diplomovou/rigorózní/dizertační práci vypracoval/a samostatně, že jsem řádně citoval/a všechny použité prameny a literaturu a že práce nebyla využita v rámci jiného vysokoškolského studia či k získání jiného nebo stejného titulu.*

## Abstrakt

Tato bakalářská práce se zabývá systémovou změnou koncovek adjektiv v závislosti na korespondenci se staroanglickými silnými a slabými formami, proběhnuvší z větší části během první poloviny středně anglického období. Analýza v ní byla provedena korpusově, na vzorku adjektiv se dvěma skupinami koncových konsonantických shluků, které byly z korpusu PPCME2 vybrány na základě jejich možné neúčasti v nově vznikajícím ortografickém systému, který užívá dosud koncové *-e* diakriticky, aniž by jím representoval finální vokál, v jehož přítomnosti či absenci opozice mezi dvěma typy adjektiv spočívala. Ona analýza také současně zohlednila přítomnost jiných faktorů, jednak fonologických a ortografických, a pak také pádových, jakož i přítomnost či absenci různých determinerů.

Při analýze získaného materiálu byla pozorována překvapivá tendence rozšiřovat silné a slabé formy i na adjektiva v dativním pádě, a to v průběhu první čtvrtiny období. Analýza fonologických faktorů potvrdila, že pozorovaný jev musel být morfologického charakteru. Nicméně, jakkoliv silná se tato tendence v datech zdá, nepřetrvala, a v materiálech z pozdějších období byla konstatována ztráta dativních koncovek jako takových. Pro přímý pád analýza potvrdila očekávání zcela, pro dřívější období vykazoval silné tendence silné a slabé formy zachovávat. Avšak už v druhé čtvrtině období byl konstatován pokročilý stav rozpadu jeho koncovek. Do jisté míry se však opozice mezi oněmi dvěma formami musela udržet až do pozdního období.

Klíčová slova: přídavné jméno, střední angličtina, stará angličtina, fonologie

## 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 orthographic 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 casual, 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.

Keywords: adjective, Middle English, Old English

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### **List of Abbreviations:**

#### Nominal and/or Phrasal Categories:

Nom. – the nominative case

Gen. – the genitive case

Dat. – the dative case

Acc. – the accusative case

Sing. – singular

Pl. – plural

Def. – definite

Indef. – indefinite

Fem. – feminine

Masc. – masculine

Neut. – Neuter

#### Period Designations:

OE – Olde Englishe

ME – Middle English

MdE – Modern English

PDE – Present Day English

*e (before a period designation) – early Period*

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## 1. Introduction

Middle English, by the virtue of the terminology itself, is inevitably to be regarded as standing at the threshold of a rebirth of English Personified from a language richly fleective and overwhelmingly Germanic into a cosmopolitan one, with strong analytic tendency. It is specifically the earlier part of this period that stands witness to what appears to be a swift systemic rearrangement, and even the latter inherits a decentralised ensemble of borrowings, forms, and phonologies (all three of which are immortalised in the famous Caxton *eyren* anecdote). As much as what we inherit may or may not be representative of the actual changes and their actual pace, there can be little doubt that the Adjective is, in its changes, the *poster child* of these processes.

While in Old English, the adjective would have been morphologically on par with or surpassing, variability-wise, the noun, early Modern English inherits it as virtually indeclinable. What is more, the scope of the entire class is essentially halved by the loss of the strong/weak opposition (in which virtually all adjectives had been before able to participate), a range of its semantics being ceded, Fisher (2006) suggests, to the nominals. But rather than study unsteady shifts of semantic load, the aim of this paper is to elucidate the formal opposition, and that especially where it would tend to disappear into the murk.

Certain as it may be that the strong forms are not thriving in speech by the end of the fourteenth century (even while still being maintained with varying degrees of consistency in poetry) the precise state of affairs is laid obscure by spelling that begins to reflect the pronunciation less and less, in looking instead towards foreign models and using what Roger

Lass would call “diacritical” use of certain letters (mainly E) and by dialectal variation.<sup>1</sup> It is the purpose of this paper to a) examine the use of these forms in a wide variety of texts available in the Helsinki Corpus and determine the degree to which they should represent either the strong or the weak form, and b) whether and how these forms are tied to some of the specific functions they would have had in the older forms of the language.

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<sup>1</sup>J. A., Burrow & T. Turville-Petre, *A book of Middle English* (Malden, Mass: Blackwell Publ, 2011) 20-21, 29-30

## 2. Theoretical Background

### A. A brief formal overview

#### I. Origins in OE

Unlike the state of affairs in the later periods, the two adjectival declensions are fully distinguished from one another in every case of the singular, nominative-accusative plural, and, depending on the dialect, genitive plural. The strong gen.pl. ending *-ra* is, according to Campbell, extended to the weak declension very early on, the original nominal ending in *-ena* being found sporadically save in early West-Saxon. In (middle) West-Saxon, there would be a tendency to level dat.pl. *-um* to *-an*, and much later on, in late West-Saxon, to also extend this to the new gen.pl. *-ra*.<sup>3</sup> These analogical extensions precede the most likely phonological developments described below.

The origin of the weak forms lies with the n-stems of PIE, the case endings having mostly disappeared as a result of sound changes, and PIE ablaut variation levelled by analogy.<sup>4</sup> With the original endings gone, the thematic element is essentially converted into a new set of endings, having lost its nominative *-n*. Mustanoja presents a different theory that is perhaps less credible but notable for its interpretative power: "It is assumed that the Germanic weak adjective, like similar formations in other Indo-European languages, was formed by adding a demonstrative pronoun (*\*en/on*) to the stem as a sign of definiteness and substantivisation. In other words, this demonstrative suffix served as a kind of definite

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<sup>3</sup>A. Campbell *Old English Grammar* (Oxford: Clarendon Press 1959) 272

<sup>4</sup>Campbell 248-249

article<sup>5</sup> While the simultaneous presence of the *weak substantive* declension makes this explanation rather implausible, it is of some interest with regard to the functional opposition of strong and weak adjectives. If this should be a possible morphological reinterpretation at any point of the language's history, it can play a role in the use of the weak adjective.

The strong declensions, on the other hand, contain a heterogeneous mixture of endings, at least some of which are unquestionably of pronominal origin. These are the aforementioned gen.pl. *-ra*, *-um* and *-re* in the dative and fem.gen.sg., and most notably the very characteristic *-ne* in the mas.acc.sg. This "admixture of pronominal endings"<sup>6</sup> is not limited to OE in the Germanic language group. The non-pronominal OE forms are usually identical with the corresponding *strong noun* declension. What might be of particular interest to this paper is that a few endingless forms appear, mostly but not only dialectally, even very early in the OE period. The strong/weak opposition is productive for nearly all adjectives in the OE period, only few are limited to strong declension or indeclinable, in addition to comparatives and superlatives in *-ma*, that are always weak.<sup>7</sup>

## II. Development into early ME

While morphological analogies do simplify the OE system in some places, most of the developments are most likely phonological. Two major currents of change can be distinguished: The first is the neutralisation of the final nasal, and its eventual elision altogether. Both steps are morphologically conditioned in that they are restricted from affecting lexical morphemes, and affect participle and adjectival endings each at a different

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<sup>5</sup>T. F. Mustanoja, *A Middle English syntax* (Helsinki: Société Néophilologique 1960) 232

<sup>6</sup>Campbell 261

<sup>7</sup>Campbell 261-263

pace (the nasals, therefore, retain their phonemic status in final positions as familiar to PDE speakers). The second is the merger of unstressed vowels, which can be further segmented into several stages. At the early OE stage, vowel length ceases to be distinctive in unaccented syllables. Later, by the late OE period, the front and back reduced vowels have all merged into generally front *e*-like quality, and back into a back *a*-like quality, this excluding *i* in certain suffixes, such as *-ing*. Finally, by eleventh century, the two reduced vowels merge into a single, presumably central, value.<sup>13</sup>

The above changes are by themselves far insufficient to explain the transformation of the inflectional system, and the adjectival inflection in particular, as that is where the most drastic changes occur. What they certainly can do, however, is reduce clarity enough to motivate morphologically driven changes. Thus, as Mustanoja establishes, in “even the earliest ME texts the strong and weak declensions frequently become confused, and [...] there is a strong tendency towards the uninflected form.”<sup>14</sup>

Thus, while the table of endings offered by the Book of Middle English for Lagamon's *Brut* contains familiar OE-like endings in *-ere* and *-en* for dative, *-es* and *-ne* for mas. gen. and acc., (as much as the possibly intentionally archaising nature of the text may not be representative of the state of English at the time) it also features many cases of nunnation, the addition of a final *-n* to nominal declensional endings that might not have originally

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<sup>13</sup>Blake, (Ed.) *The Cambridge History of the English Language* vol. 2. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992) doi:10.1017/CHOL9780521264754\_65, 77-79

<sup>14</sup>Mustanoja 276

possessed one.<sup>15</sup>

In the earliest ME, the dialectal *parting of ways* is perhaps most strongly felt in the variations of the adjectival declension. The more northern dialects in general level its morphology at a much higher rate, and the relative lack of function of the adjectival agreement allows for an unrestricted levelling of adjectival endings. Thus, a text like the *Ormulum* appears morphologically closer to the Chaucerian situation below, than to its southern contemporaries. In the more conservative regions of the south, most of the endings that are not directly affected by the above changes do not level but a century into the ME period. Owl and the Nightingale, a slightly later text, displays a paradigm much less rich, but nevertheless preserves some traces of gender distinction, with feminine accusative ending still an *-e*, but the neuter *-o* having already supplanted the masculine *-ne*. The final *-e* also appears as the dat.sing. ending.<sup>1617</sup>

By the time of Chaucer, and significantly earlier in the north, the declension, prior to disappearing completely, has been reduced to a pronunciation spelled *-e* in all but the nom./acc. sing. of the strong declension.<sup>18</sup> These *-e* endings need not have the same pronunciation value, however, as Robert Lass suggests that the plural endings are more stable than those of the dative or genitive, number being a more important grammatical category in English at the time (as it is now). The strong dative endings can sometimes be

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<sup>15</sup>Burrow & Turville-Petre 30, 80, 95

<sup>16</sup>Burrow & Turville-Petre 30, 80, 95

<sup>17</sup>Mustanoja 276

<sup>18</sup>Burrow & Turville-Petre 29

omitted, while the plural ones cannot.<sup>19</sup> At the same time, the vocative becomes an outlier because of its incompatibility with the articles (see section C).

Much like the PDE nominal inflections, the ME adjectival inflections are complicated by the borrowing of non-native morphology, in this case that of French. Typically, this means an -s plural ending (not to be confused with the occasional -s plural of the independent adjective of some dialects of early ME). It is by no means all of the French adjectives in everyday use that take the ending, but rather those of higher register, more learned or specialised ones, and that usually in the works affected strongly by the French language themselves, wherein, in fact, native adjectives can occasional take on the -s as well.<sup>20</sup> These adjectives also sometimes exhibit other French features, such as postposition outside any of the circumstances that would typically require or even enable it in ME.<sup>2130</sup>

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<sup>19</sup>Cambridge 110

<sup>20</sup>Mustanoja 277

<sup>21</sup>Cambridge 214

<sup>30</sup>Cambridge 214

## B. Phonological and Morphophonological Considerations

### I. Elision of Schwa

Because the forms of the strong and weak adjectives are only distinguished by a reduced vowel sound, schwa, their opposition is that of an inherent instability, even outside of context of apocope, other sound changes, or variability in bi-dialectal speakers.

Evidence for one such neutralisation is found in ME verse: owing to, presumably, euphonic *enchainment* phenomena, the final *-e* is, where it represents an unstressed schwa sound, lost if its presence would result in a VV segment. The *-e* is also lost if the following syllable is unstressed and begins with an *h*-.<sup>34</sup> This is, in some positions and specific periods at least, interpreted as evidence of the loss of the *h*- in question.<sup>35</sup> The dropping might also be conditioned by the degree to which the two words function as a single semantic unit.<sup>36</sup>

### II. Amount of Syllables

It is generally accepted that the ME adjective was only inflected if it was monosyllabic in but the earliest decades of the period<sup>4041</sup>. On the other hand, the one syllable paradigm in eME is in fact productive enough to apply to some French loanwords, such as *bref/breve*.<sup>42</sup>

### III. Syllable Weight

Since the times of OE, in both the strong noun and the strong adjective, the ending *-u* may,

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<sup>34</sup>Burrow & Turville-Petre 56-57

<sup>35</sup>Cambridge 62

<sup>36</sup>Cambridge 80

<sup>40</sup>Burrow & Turville-Petre 29

<sup>41</sup>Mustanoja 276

<sup>42</sup>Mustanoja 276

depending on syllable weight, appear in fem.nom.sg. While this was probably a predictable and transparently meaningless variation at the time, the aforescribed reduction of the unstressed syllables would yield a ME *-e*, thereby resulting in its masquerading as the nominative of a weak adjective, if the irregularity had not been levelled prior to that. This occurs in nouns with a light syllable before the inflections, but polysyllabic nouns ending in a sonorant, or three-syllabic, middle syllable syncope ones may behave differently. The behaviour of nom.pl.neut is essentially the opposite, it is endless,<sup>47</sup> and would thus have been inherited as appearing to be the singular strong form. That these forms (especially the latter) should play a major role in the end result is unlikely to be the case, however, as much as their presence could have made the system significantly more chaotic at some stage. If adjectival declension forms from part 1 of *Brut* are considered, it becomes clear that in some regions, the confusing feminine ending is levelled out of the system relatively early on. On the other hand, *The Owl and the Nightingale*, though a considerably later text, preserves it, where all non-nominative case endings have been lost otherwise.<sup>48</sup>

Such a weight dependent property presents a peculiar type of a challenge if it is to be prevented from obscuring the data. Not only is it unclear when and if the levelling of *-u* to *-o* would have occurred, but length (of vowels, at least) which plays an important role in syllable weight, is almost never reliably marked in texts. Fortunately, ME tends strongly towards the heavy accented syllable. That is to say, light stressed syllables are often lengthened, and the superheavy shortened. A typical example of this would be the open syllable lengthening, as much as no

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<sup>47</sup>Cambridge 234-236, 262

<sup>48</sup>Burrow & Turville-Petre 30

explicitly strong adjective nominative form can satisfy its criteria (the weak declension has no nominative ending if the root of the noun/adjective ends in a vowel, therefore rendering these cases formally ambiguous<sup>49</sup>). More useful are the several pre-cluster shortenings, wherein a long vowel is shortened in –V:CC- environments, which produce uniform and likely orthographically distinct strong syllables. Likewise, the -VSC- lengthening produces reliable heavy or superheavy syllables, in homorganic clusters, specifically *-mb- -nd- -ng- -rs- -rl- and -rth-*.<sup>50</sup> One problem with the former is that if the cluster is a geminate, later degemination would cause it to be short. However, that the ending should be reintroduced to these words at this point is unlikely. It is even possible that the majority of the final schwas is dropped before the degemination is complete.

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<sup>49</sup> Campbell 250

<sup>50</sup> Campbell 120

## C. Morphological and Morpho-syntactic Considerations

### I. Gender (and Number) Agreement

The gender-dependant variation described above is problematic for the identification of forms from either *declension*. ME is the period of the dissolution of the OE gender system, in which the distinctions are not only gradually lost, but also fluctuate, in that a noun a) of a particular OE gender is often assigned a different gender in ME, b) might be assigned many different genders based on dialect, and c) like in OE, its grammatical gender may or may not be the same as the so called *natural* gender. Where the demonstrative inflection persists, the articles may agree with a different gender than is expressed by the pronouns referring to the head noun.<sup>5657</sup> Indeed, the ME noun could be said to have two genders.

In spite of this, it is improbable that the adjective should agree with the pronominal gender rather than the nominal gender where the two share the same phrase. That this should always be the case with predicative or independent adjectives (especially with analyses such as that with a dummy pronoun with zero realisation following) is not nearly so clear (although some substantivised adjectives cease to show gender very early on<sup>58</sup>). Neither is the case-dependant variation especially enduring, considering its reliance on the nominative/accusative opposition, which disappears very quickly in the beginning of our period.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>56</sup>Mustanoja 43-45

<sup>57</sup>Cambridge 107

<sup>58</sup>Cambridge 222

<sup>59</sup>Burrow & Turville-Petre 39

The situation is slightly different when it comes to the grammatical number. This feature, for one, survives into PDE and so does the formal clash with both *this folk* and *these folk* being possible (and with respective specific meanings), and as this example also shows, these can cause discord within the boundaries of a single noun phrase.<sup>60</sup> *See also section D)*

## II. Case and Case Usage

Because the distinction between strong and weak forms is not found in later ME, anything that might trigger a case different than nominative-accusative is prone to obscure the distinction.

The most straightforward examples of this are the syntactic or phrasal positions that inherently require a specific case, such as the indirect object (which is also frequently periphrastic as in PDE, but whose periphrases nevertheless use the dative case, see below) and the modifying genitive.<sup>66</sup> Were this not the case, the latter could possibly pose a problem of interpretation as to the definiteness of a phrase as a whole, as the modifying genitive noun can itself take articles. In its other functions, the genitive is also used with superlatives and numbers, and in absolute adverbials.<sup>67</sup>

Much more numerous are the cases of a dative triggered by a preposition. There are preposition that can followed by the other cases, but the dative dominates, the accusative (not infrequent in OE) having become marginal.<sup>68</sup> Even *of*, though often a replacement of the

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<sup>60</sup>Cambridge 367

<sup>66</sup> The latter is in PDE also much more likely to be restrictive, although this was not the case in ME

<sup>67</sup>Mustanoja 88-91

<sup>68</sup>Burrow & Turville-Petre 39-41

original genitive, usually takes the dative.<sup>69</sup> The prevalence of dative is such that, according to Robert Lass, the noun dat.sing. endings are levelled to zero, or vary freely between schwa and zero, owing to their redundancy, as opposed to the identical, but more *meaningful*, and therefore longer surviving, plural ending. The latter state is found in the *Ormulum*, where the variation is put to metrical use.<sup>70</sup> This could perhaps be supported by the fact that the dative endings had been (in strong nouns) uniform for both numbers since the times of late OE.

For a discussion of vocatives, see III. immediately below.

### III. *Definiteness Agreement*; of the Adjective(s) and the Article

The relationship between the definite article and the weak adjective is one that is integral to the development of the whole system of definiteness. As has been mentioned, the supposedly phonological loss of final vowels and consonants is often actually conditioned, or rather blocked by the functional load of the morphs in question. If the *category of adjectival strength* was to be lost completely, there first had to be a process through which its roles would be taken over by something else in the system..

The coincidence of the demonstrative/article and the weak adjective in the function of signalling the retrievability of the referent of the modified noun is initially probably just that, but eventually becomes a form of *agreement*, upon which the system is liable to begin yielding its adjective strength distinction. This is additionally accompanied by the emergence and grammaticallisation of the indefinite article.

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<sup>69</sup>Cambridge 110

<sup>70</sup>Cambridge 110

Even in early ME, it is possible for the adjectives not to *agree* with an article in the same phrase. The definite article can occur with the strong adjective quite freely,<sup>77</sup> much like in OE, where the adjective in question would have also typically been postponed. There, it would have also been more rarely possible for an indefinite article to occur with a weak adjective. Finally, the two adjective types could, under no less special circumstances, coexist in the same noun phrase. Both the former and the latter typically if the weak adjective had a close semantic link with the head noun, i.e. if the two formed a single unit<sup>78</sup> (compare PDE diminutives). *More in section D)*

There is little reason for these constructions to be discarded initially, while much of the OE inflectional system is preserved. The later into our period, however, the closer the relationship between the adjective and the article must necessarily be, if to culminate smoothly in the MdE state, to the point where the *adjective strength* no longer has any semantics of its own, and the forms are conditioned by number and definiteness of the phrase alone.<sup>79</sup>

An outlier of this process is inevitably found where the article system falls short: Because a noun employed as a vocative cannot take the definite (or the indefinite) article, the vocative, in spite of having originally possessed no morphology of its own, acquires a degree of idiosyncratic behaviour. In the *Ormulum*, vocative adjectives can be both strong

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<sup>77</sup>Mustanoja 233

<sup>78</sup>O. Fischer, "On the position of adjectives in Middle English" *English Language and Linguistics*, 10(2), 253-288.

doi:10.1017/S1360674306001924 257-258

<sup>79</sup>Cambridge 115

and weak, the latter if a pronoun precedes,<sup>80</sup> at the stage of Chaucer, however, the vocative always appears to be weak.<sup>81</sup>By the Chaucerian stage, the adjective opposition has been neutralised where the opposition of the two articles is also neutralised.

#### **D. Phrasal-Syntactic and Semantic Considerations**

##### **I. Plural Treatment of Collective Nouns**

Nouns that denote a group of individuals trigger plural agreement already in OE, and this tendency grows throughout the ME period. In OE, this is syntactically conditioned, with the plural constructions appearing in subordinate sentences only. In ME, the plural character of these nouns is universalised. Nouns behaving like this include in particular those that refer to the individuals directly, rather than figuratively. Even should the agreement of one verb be plural, the modifiers or indeed other verbs might not follow suit,<sup>86</sup> which state seems to have persisted from the times of OE (necessarily, owing to the subordination constraint) to those of PDE.

While for verbs, proximity to the subject plays a large role in whether and how the agreement may be realised, this is, for obvious reasons, not so with adjectives.

The pronouns *man* and *hit* are treated as plural freely.<sup>87</sup><sup>88</sup>

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<sup>80</sup>Mustanoja 275

<sup>81</sup>Cambridge 115

<sup>82</sup> The latter could also be analysed as a specific case ending that is –e for both declensions

<sup>86</sup>Mustanoja 62-63

<sup>87</sup>Mustanoja 65

<sup>88</sup>Burrow & Turville-Petre 39

## II. Position of the Adjective

In most general terms (and outside verse), a single ME adjective precedes the noun, as is the case in PDE.<sup>94</sup> This is especially the case if the adjective is also weak and/or the phrase is definite. Among the exceptions to this is the usage of certain borrowed French adjectives, and that especially if they are deployed with agreement in its French morphology. As in PDE, specific adjectives simply have an abnormal chance to occur in post-position. Likewise, if the adjective itself is modified, the tendency to place it after the head noun is greater. Unlike PDE, however, a prepositional phrase modifying the adjective does not always necessitate its post-position, and, conversely, the PDE analogues of the intensifying constructions with *so* and *a/* would perhaps trigger this more rarely- these structures can also cause the adjective in question to appear before the determiner.<sup>95</sup>

The relationship between position and *strength* (or possibly, expression of the latter by the former) has its roots in OE, where, under normal circumstances, only the strong adjective could appear after the head noun. This relationship was far from fixed, however, as the strong adjective also appeared pre-posed, and this in fact more commonly so than not.<sup>96</sup>

The tendency towards a single postponed adjective is notably small in ME. The role of the strong adjective in the choice of position must necessarily again yield to the overall phrase definiteness, i.e. depend on the article. Outside of definiteness, morphological features of the adjective matter as well. Deverbal or otherwise verb-like adjectives are more

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<sup>94</sup>Burrow & Turville-Petre 44

<sup>95</sup>Cambridge 214-216

<sup>96</sup>Fischer 256-257

likely to be postponed, as are adjectives with the endings *-ful* and *-ly/-liche*, which Fischer (2005) argues to be inherently closer to verbs of larger phrases. The possibility to postpone adjectives in definite phrases, while diminished, continues to exist, and is typically semantically conditioned. A peculiar case of this is the modification of one head noun by several contrasting adjectives.<sup>97</sup>

In spite of the aforementioned fact, that the positional variation can possibly function independently of the strong/weak adjectival opposition, the system inherited into MdE and PDE is virtually free of postponed adjectives<sup>98</sup> (aside from the cases necessitated by the modification of the adjective itself) and it can therefore be inferred that, throughout the ME period, adjectival postmodification must be on decline.

### III. The Amount Number of Modifiers, and Connectors

In both OE and ME, the noun phrase is “essentially flat” in that adjectives could not be simply stacked directly after one another, as they can be in PDE. Instead, a connector, typically *and*, is used. Another strategy is to use the modified noun itself to separate the two adjectives, but even then, towards the later stages of ME, the *and* also appears between the head noun and the postponed adjective if there is at least one preposed adjective, although very large noun phrases continue to *omit* it. This is in fact the more frequent means through which an adjective can make its way behind the noun.<sup>102103</sup>

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<sup>97</sup>Fischer 263, 267-274

<sup>98</sup>Fischer 253, 268

<sup>102</sup>Cambridge 214

<sup>103</sup>Fischer 264-265

While cases of PDE type chained adjective appear, this is typically in cases where the adjectives exhibit a degree of mutual modification and/or are very close to being nouns themselves.<sup>104</sup>

The obligatory presence of the *and* as a connector is of particular interest, because it invariably neutralises any so coordinated adjective in regard to strong/weak forms.

#### IV. Adverbial Modification

In OE and early ME, it is not possible for the weak adjectives to be modified by adverbs, most importantly intensifiers. As outlined above, the possibility for the adjectives to modify each other may be the alternative option. Throughout the ME period, however, likely to do with the erosion of the formal distinction between the two, this rule is generally lost.<sup>106</sup>

#### V. Semantics Information Structure and of the Strong/Weak Opposition

In OE, the two adjectival declensions had semantics in and of themselves, regardless of position or of the definiteness of the whole noun phrase. While the latter two also correlated with, and could therefore be used to signal the same properties, the strong/weak opposition was the only one that was directly tied to the informational one, and had no exceptions. The opposition in question concerns topicality and restrictiveness. The weak adjective connects the modified item to known information – is thematic, and thus serves to restrict the identity of the head. The strong adjective is used to provide new information, evaluate, etc. – is rhematic, and approaches predicative function.<sup>110</sup>

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<sup>104</sup>Fischer 268-269

<sup>106</sup>Fischer 262, 269

<sup>110</sup> Fischer 256-258

The positional variability of the OE and to a degree ME adjective has to be analysed in the light of the above. Word order necessarily influences the order in which the information is processed, and naturally, what precedes is used to contextualise what follows, which is in turn used to interpret what precedes.<sup>111</sup> But as has been already said, the number of modifiers plays a major role, and perhaps larger role when it comes to phrasal structure.

While the theme/rheme function is weakened in ME in favour of the articles, traces of it still persist. Where the endings become less clear and less able to bear the semantic load, the articles and position are used to express it instead. The post-posed adjective in the indefinite phrase, which combines all the features in both OE and ME persists. In definite phrases, however, postponed adjectives generally only appear when they are mutually contrasted, i.e. where it is unlikely that the head noun could possess both of the attributes at the same time.<sup>112</sup> This way, the number of modifiers once again comes to play an even greater role, albeit indirectly.

## **E. Miscellaneous: Discussion of a Specific Case of Orthography**

### **I. The Type *Seeke/Seke***

Owing to lengthening phenomena described in part B), the final *-e* acquires a diacritic character in English, having the function of lengthening vowels in certain positions, which use persists into PDE as well (with the additional property of shifting vowels *acquired* during the Great Vowel Shift). One of the foremost difficulties of deciphering unstandardised historical documents is the functional load of this letter, in that it might indicate length, represent an ending, or both. It stands to reason however, that should a word that already indicates the length of its stressed vowel in other means be encountered, the chance that the final *-e* should have a value of its own is much

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<sup>111</sup> Fischer 254-259

<sup>112</sup> Fischer 269-271

higher. Thus we find in Chaucer's General Prologue: "The hooly blisful martir for to seke,/ That hem  
hath holpen whan that they were seeke." Here, it is clear that *seke* and *seeke* rhyme, but the  
adjective *seeke* indicates its length by a vowel digraph, presumably so that its stem can be  
represented by a single allograph, whether it takes the strong or the weak form.

### 3. Material and Method

#### A. Collection of Data

This section details the choice of the adjectives to be examined – that is, their form – as well as other criteria according to which these adjectives are going to be sorted in order for the degree to which their orthographic variation might correspond to a morphological one, i.e. to what degree it is functional, to be determined. Reasoning for and consequences of the choice of these categories are provided in the respective sections. The means through which this data is obtained from the second edition of the Penn-Helsinki Parsed Corpus of Middle English via the ANNIS interface hosted by the Czech National Corpus is also discussed.

##### I. Choice of Roots

In order not to significantly dilute the data, only adjectives with monosyllabic roots are included, as (see the discussion in 2.B.II.) polysyllabic adjectives lost their inflection at a much earlier date. Furthermore, it would be challenging for such adjectives to properly determine on which of their syllables the stress was placed, something that would be nearly impossible to do for all the adjectives (at least outside of rigidly metered poetry) given the fluctuations precisely in this system peculiar to the ME period: even given the mostly standardised spelling of PDE, it is still impossible to read an unknown word correctly with any certainty if the position of its stress cannot be determined

A similar case is presented by syllable weight. As outlined in 2.B.III. as well as in the discussion of forms in 2.A.II., adjectives ending on a light syllable wouldn't have, if following predictable sound changes, always resulted in having a zero ending of the strong nom. sing. form. For this reason, only adjectives consisting of one strong syllable are examined here. To assure that only heavy syllables are chosen, only such whose spelling seems to indicate a consonant cluster in the coda are selected. This also means that the voicing function of a final -e, such as in PDE *wave* or *wreathe*, does not have to be taken into consideration. In addition, homo-organic clusters with a pre-

final sonorant (see once again 2.B.III.) are separated from other clusters because of their inherent lengthening or “opening” properties. The cluster *-st*, owing to its unique behaviour (such as is displayed in the PDE opposition between *past* and *paste*) is not included, nor are geminates, once again for lack of reliability.

Finally, the adjectives are also sorted by the quantity of their root vowel, or rather the representation thereof, the rationale for that being that a root vowel being recorded as a digraph gives that much more weight to the final *-e* (see also 2.E.I.) , if the adjective has one (although adjectives without any ending are also sorted this way for the purposes of control), and that especially considering that the quantity of the vowel in question should already be determined by the presence of either a lengthening or a shortening cluster respectively. For the purposes of this, the vowel /u/ in the digraph *qu-* is not counted; however, there are few adjectives beginning with *qu-* in the corpus that would also satisfy the above criterion of ending in a consonant cluster. *-gh-*, *yogh*, and *-h-* or *-hh-* in the final position are also not considered vowels, as they can be safely assumed to have represented consonantal sounds in most cases – and are therefore treated as such, with instances of both a vowel digraph and a final *gh* variation being present in the corpus (such as *straight*).

Beside the form of the adjective itself, the data is also sorted for the onset of the following word, the modified noun in the vast majority of cases, as vocalic onsets are likely to affect the adjective (for linking phenomena, see 2.B.I.), although the spelling need not always reflect this.

## II. The Head Noun

As explained in 2.A.II. and 2.C.I., grammatical number is one of the most powerful negators of the opposition. It follows that adjectives modifying plural head nouns are excluded from the search. When it comes to collective nouns, however, or any case where a noun is construed as such, such cases cannot be identified through the use of the annotation of the PPCME2, which treats them simply as singular nouns. This is because “In early texts, before the universalization of plural *-S*, it can

be quite difficult to distinguish reliably between singular and plural.”<sup>113</sup> Likewise, gender will not be considered by this work statistic-wise simply because of the impracticality of such an endeavour.

### III. Sorting by Presence of Other Words

There are two more factors taken note of, which are not directly related to the form of the adjective. The first of them is the presence or lack thereof of a determiner in the noun phrase. While the initial presumption operated with here is that there is no difference between the two, possessive pronouns are given a category of their own (largely because queries are used to find phrases that contain them specifically), in addition to also being considered definite, the same in this respect as the definite article and the demonstratives. The latter two are not separated in the research, seeing as their shared history (wherein they can both be traced to the same set of forms) ties either to the weak adjective just as much (2.C.III.).

In very much the same vein, the indefinite article and the absence of any determiner (in the most general sense, i.e. the vacancy of the *position determiner*) as much as both are indicators of indefiniteness, and therefore can trigger the strong form, are sorted separately. While this is once again simply convenient, the indefinite article is a stronger indication of indefiniteness, and in fact quite marked due to its limited distribution.

Those cases where the determiner position is occupied by a noun in the genitive case/use are classified as definite and possessed – and are quite rare.

The second factor is the presence of a preposition dominating the noun phrase in which the adjective is present, i.e. whether the noun is in the dative case/use. As can be seen in sections 2.A.II. and 2.C.II., the preposition is a powerful negator of the strong/weak opposition, although perhaps

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<sup>113</sup> Beatrice Santorini “Collective Nouns” *Annotation manual for the Penn Historical Corpora and the York-Helsinki Corpus of Early English Correspondence*. [http://www.ling.upenn.edu/ppche/ppche-release-2016/annotation/differences.htm#collective\\_nouns](http://www.ling.upenn.edu/ppche/ppche-release-2016/annotation/differences.htm#collective_nouns) April 2016 accessed 24.7 2018

not as so as the plural number. In addition, while the plural forms should always end with a pronounced schwa, the value of the dative, according to Roger Lass, is less clear and less stable overall. Nevertheless, the dative is not excluded here, but instead made use of for comparison with the nom./acc.. Not only does it provide a model of what meaningless variation looks like, but it can be used to examine the relationships between the individual phonological or formal criteria.

Beside noun phrases dominated by a prepositional phrase, the indirect object is also considered dative for the sorting purposes. However, the number of adjectives that modify indirect objects in the PPCME2 is extremely small.

#### IV. Some Variables not Considered

While the vocative undeniably behaves in a way that would warrant special treatment, and does participate in the strong/weak opposition where the genitive and dative have long ceased to (see 2.C.III.), there is simply not enough data in the corpus to examine the vocative in any depth. That is not to say vocatives are excluded, as their forms and the circumstances in which they assume them are nearly identical to that of nominatives, save that they cannot take either of the articles. In accordance with the behaviour observed in the *Ormulum*, those vocatives that are modified by possessive pronouns are sorted as definite, whereas those with no determiner, indefinite. The subtype that takes the pronouns *thou* and *ye* as though they were its determiners is syntactically peculiar, requiring a query designed specifically with it in mind, it is also considered definite.

The genitive case, were it considered here, would not provide for a robust sample. The majority of genitives in the PPCME2 are of proper nouns (the same is true for the genitives that appear as determiners of the noun phrases described above) and an overwhelming minority, only about one or two percent, of such genitives are modified by an adjective.

Much more notable a group to be excluded here, phrases whose sole determiner is a quantifier pose a challenge in that indefinite pronouns are as a group much more diverse, and would perhaps require sorting finer than that carried out here. For this reason, they are excluded save in cases

where the noun phrase also contains an additional determiner, by which the phrase can be sorted (as definite or indefinite) instead.

#### V. Position

Postposition being more frequent with the strong adjective (see 2.D.II), position of the adjective in the phrase is expected to have strong impact on which form of the adjective is employed. In addition to simply distinguishing premodifiers and postmodifiers, such adjectives that precede another premodifier are separated from other simple premodifiers. This is because such adjectives eschew the ME tendency to move additional modifiers into postposition, as described in 2.D.III.; this position, therefore, exposes their *weakness* doubly.

Because of the already small sample size of postmodifying adjectives, presence of additional premodifiers in such phrases is not taken into account, in spite of their aforementioned tendency to “push” an otherwise weak adjective into post-modification so that stacking of adjectives on either side of the noun may be avoided.

As per what Olga Fischer writes on the subject, postmodifying adjectives separated from their head noun by the conjunction *and* are assumed to be no different to the standard postmodifying kind, but are nevertheless obtained by separate queries due to a difference in phrasal annotation that the PPCME2 makes between the two. Such phrases are also considered to be generated in the pre-modifying position, leaving a ghost behind. For the purposes of this work, this ghost is ignored, and pre-modifying adjectives are sorted as though it weren't there.

#### **B. Construction of Queries**

The data used in this work was collected using roughly one hundred fifty queries, not all of which can be individually described here. What can be found below instead is the description of ready-made parts from which most of the queries were assembled, as well as some commentary on the sorting methods.

## I. Regular Expressions

In order to avoid some undesired clusters while excluding as few valid ones as possible, the examined coda types, lengthening and “shortening”, are split into two separate expressions. Each of those is further divided based on whether it includes one or two vowel graphs, resulting in eight regular expressions, which are used in the majority of the total queries.

Some of these cover more ground than others, resulting in a need for different approaches to sorting the adjectives that correspond to each. As will be specified in 3.B.II., regular expressions that correspond to a large quantity of adjectives are reused in a set of queries that simplify their sorting as much as possible. *Smaller* expressions are instead sorted manually, reducing the number of total queries, as well as ensuring a higher quality of data where quantity may perhaps be lacking. A list of the expressions used may be found below:

1. **[bcdfghjklmnpqrstvwxyzp̥ɔ̥]{0,3}[aeiouyæœ]{1}[lmn]{1}[bdg]{1}**: this regular expression finds monosyllabic tokens ending with those lengthening clusters that begin with / or with a nasal. Because there are 1950 such adjectives in the PPCME2, this expression is among those that are reused in a larger set of queries. *Old* and *dumb* are some of the adjectives of this type.

2. **[bcdfghjklmnpqrstvwxyzp̥ɔ̥]{0,3}[aeiouyæœ]{1}r[dl̥nszɸ̥ɔ̥]{1}**: tokens ending in lengthening clusters with a prefinal *r* are separated from the others on account of both the many various clusters that can be formed with a prefinal *r* and of their lesser reliability. If need be, the results obtained via this regular expression can be easily separated from those of the preceding. The PMCME2 returns 511 such adjectives, this type is therefore analysed in many queries. Adjectives the type found using this expression include *hard* and *fers* (fierce).

3. **[bcdfghjklmnpqrstvwxyzp̥ɔ̥]{0,3}[aeiouyæœ]{1}[aeiouyæœjw]{1}[lnm]{1}[bdg]{1}**: the vocal digraph twin of the first expression, this is one of the *smaller* ones, at 231 results. As such, only a few queries are made using it, and are sorted manually. Results such as **3eunge, or young are expected of these queries.**

4. **[bcdfghjklmnpqrstvwxyzpðʒ]{0,3}[aeiouyæœ]{1}[aeiouyæœjw]{1}r[dlɪnszɸð]{1}**: like the above, a variation on the second regular expression. Only 151 such adjectives exist in the corpus, meaning this expression is also used for manually sorted queries. *Fiers*, and *dearne* (secret) fulfil the requirements of this expression.

5. **[u]{0,1}[bcdfghjklmnpqrstvwxyzpðʒ]{0,3}[aeiouyæœ]{1,1}[bdghkqtzvpðʒlmn]{1}[h]{0,1}[cfjpqsvzppðʒ]{1}**: the first of the consonantal series, this one for all the clusters that do not end on a (post-)final *t*. One peculiar feature of this regular expression is the expansion of its allowed onsets by a single additional *u*, which is only allowed to appear before any other consonant(s): modified this way, this expression now covers the results of the north-west initial fricative voicing where the original *f*- has come to be indicated by *u*-, garnering 437 adjective hits in the corpus, warranting a many-query approach. A smaller expression, **[u]{0,1}[bcdfghjklmnpqrstvwxyzpðʒ]{0,3}[aeiouyæœ]{1,1}r[h]{0,1}[bcfgpqvzpz]{1}** is used to find the heterorganic *r*-initial clusters, that have to be omitted from its larger sister, as it would otherwise have a major overlap with number two, and is sorted manually with 176 additional results. *Damp* and *false* make for good examples of what this expression searches for.

6. **[bcdfghjklmnpqrstvwxyzpðʒ]{0,3}[aeiouyæœ]{1,1}[bcdfghklmnpqrstvwxyzpðʒ]{1}[h]{0,1}t[h]{0,1}**: the complementary expression to number five, this seemingly limited regular expression actually corresponds to a much larger amount of adjectives in the corpus, 1157 that is. It is therefore spread over a larger number of queries, and **[bcdfghjklmnpqrstvwxyzpðʒ]{0,3}[aeiouyæœ]{1,1}r[h]{0,1}th**, with measly 63 such adjectives in the corpus (most of which are also predicative) is used to find and subtract its false positives. This regular expression finds some of the most frequent adjectives in the English language, such as *right* (and its countless variants) and *left*.

7. **[bcdfghjklmnpqrstvwxyzpðʒ]{0,3}[aeioyæœ]{1,1}[aeiouyæœjw]{1,1}[bdfghkqrstvwzppðʒ]lmnr{1}[h]{0,1}[cjpqvzpz]{1}**: derived from number five, but with a vocal digraph, and *r* included

among the prefinal consonants – the latter because only 15 such adjectives exist in the corpus, and can be easily sorted manually. One of these is the adjective *schearp*.

8. `[bcdfghjklmnpqrstvwxyzpð3]{0,3}[aeiouyæœ]{1,1}[aeiouyæœjw]{1,1}[bcdfghklmnpqrzvpð3]{1}[h]{0,1}t[h]{0,1}`: largely a variation of number six, but sporting an additional vowel symbol, this expression corresponds to 89 adjectives in the PPCME2. It is therefore sorted manually. *Straight* is one of the few adjectives found using this expression.

## II. Queries Proper

Two sets of thirteen queries are used per a major regular expression to find all the adjectives in the immediate pre-modifying position. Queries 1-5 target phrases with a demonstrative or an article, queries 6 and 7 phrases whose determiner is a possessive pronoun, and queries 8-13 phrases with no determiner at all. To avoid combining negative instructions (i.e. such that use the “is not equal to” operator), which seem to clog the corpus manager, deliberately overlapping queries are instead subtracted from one another. This is also the reason for which (as well as the fact that to find a phrase that dominates no determiner directly seems to be impossible in ANNIS) six queries have to be dedicated to phrases without a determiner, as the *leftmost child* function is used, necessitating the use of separate queries for such adjectives that are dominated by adjectival phrases. The results of an indirect object query (or OB2, the second object, which, according to the corpus annotation manual, “includes indirect objects and other oblique uses”<sup>114</sup>) are then subtracted from the results of the first thirteen queries. A second round of the same queries is then performed for noun phrases dominated by a dative phrase, to which the indirect objects are added.

Miscellaneous queries are performed for the *smaller* regular expressions, as well as for specific syntactic situations and adjective positions, as well as to correct in places where the main series fall

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<sup>114</sup>Beatrice Santorini “First object (NP-OB1) and second object (NP-OB2)” Annotation manual for the Penn Historical Corpora and the York-Helsinki Corpus of Early English Correspondence. April 2016 accessed 23.7 2018

short, such as the aforementioned issue of syntactic ghosts, or vocatives with a personal pronoun in apposition. Where possible, direct precedence is used in preference to other functions, as it seems to slow the search the least and so generate the least timeouts.

### **C. Methods of Analysis**

This section details in what fashion the already sorted data is analysed in the fourth chapter. It is further divided into instrumental and final analyses, only the latter dealing with actual strong forms, with the former intended to simply provide a deeper understanding of the data so that it may be better evaluated afterwards.

#### **I. Instrumental Analysis**

Owing to the comparable size of the dative and non-dative portions of the data, the former can be utilised as a sort of a testing ground, where the impact of other factors, particularly the representation of the vowel, the consonant cluster in which the adjective ends, and the onset of the following word can be observed in what is presumably absence of an actual underlying inflectional variety. Overall trends in every period can also be established.

The expected results of such an analysis are either an even spread of *-e* final and bare forms throughout the definite and indefinite categories, or such deviations that can be explained by a corresponding deviation in other formal factors, with an endingless form eventually becoming the norm sooner than later.

#### **II. Final Analysis**

In order to ensure that the findings are not simply due to the whims of random distribution or some circumstance not controlled, the tendencies of the non-dative group are always going to be compared to those of an equivalent segment of the dative group (i.e. the actual random distribution). Depending on which of the formal factors are found to have the least impact on the result, some may be disregarded in favour of the *terseness* of the final result (as comparing segments

smaller than necessary would needlessly impair the intelligibility). Because each of the groups is already of a slightly different size, only fractions of two values in each group will be compared to avoid having to assign different weights to the compared values.

The expected result of the final analysis is a gradual decline throughout the ME period, with nearly random distribution of the final -e in the earlier late ME, and values more or less equal to the dative group in the last quarter of our period.

## 4. Analysis

### A. A Quantitative Overview of the Data

To establish the trustworthiness of the findings, it is necessary to show how large an amount of data they represent. The PPCME2 is separated into what they call periods, but what is actually nine combinations of when the document in question is thought to have been made, and, if it is a copy, when the text in that document is first attested. The last digit in the name of a period represents the time of the manuscript, and any preceding date the date of composition, with four real time periods used, designated as 1 – 1150-1250; 2 – 1250-1350, 3 – 1350-1420; and 4 – 1420-1500.<sup>115</sup>

Below is a chart detailing the sizes of the respective periods.

Chart 3: The Periods of PPCME2<sup>116</sup>

Period	MX1	M1	M2	M23	M24	M3	M34	MX4	M4	Total
Word Count	62596	195494	93999	17013	35591	385994	99994	5168	260116	1155965

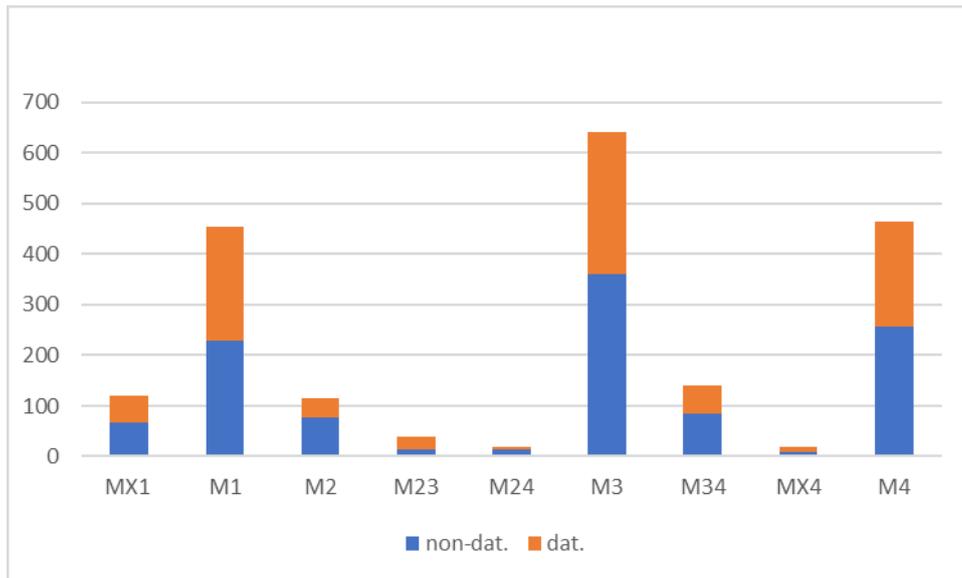
This research uses 2012 adjectives in total, with the distribution over the nine periods shown in the graph below:

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<sup>115</sup> Beatrice Santorini "Corpus description, PPCME2" *Annotation manual for the Penn Historical Corpora and the York-Helsinki Corpus of Early English Correspondence*. <https://www.ling.upenn.edu/hist-corpora/PPCME2-RELEASE-4/index.html> April 2016 accessed 27.7 2018

<sup>116</sup> Santorini <https://www.ling.upenn.edu/hist-corpora/PPCME2-RELEASE-4/WORDCOUNT-PPCME2>

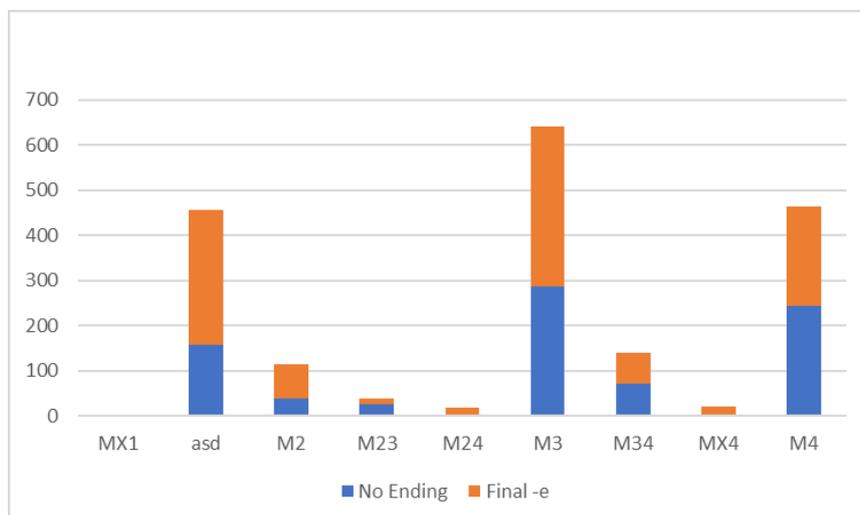
Graph 17: Distribution of Examined Adjectives



This graph also shows how many of the examined adjectives are in prepositional phrases or modify indirect objects(dat.), there being a total of 903 of these. As the graph shows, M23, M24, and MX4 are underrepresented in the data, and the former two in particular appear to be outliers, with a very uneven ratio of datives to non-datives.

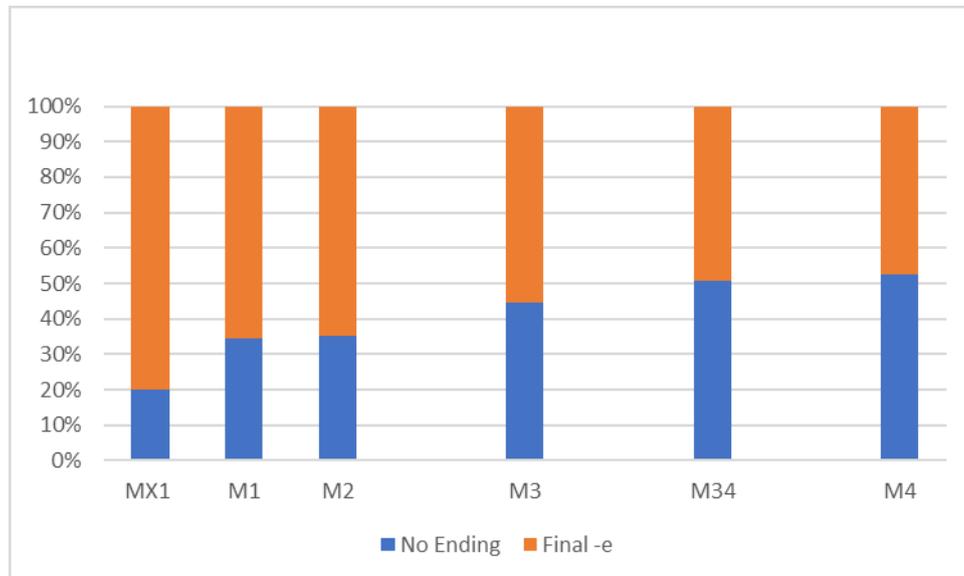
As to the ratio between the forms with final *-e* and those without, while less even than that in the previous graph, is still fair at 1157 *-e*-final forms and 855 bare forms.

Graph 18: Distribution of the Final *-e/-0*



Here again, the three least represented periods are outliers, with M23 in particular being completely contrary to the trend throughout time, which can be brought out if we remove these periods and use a percentage graph instead:

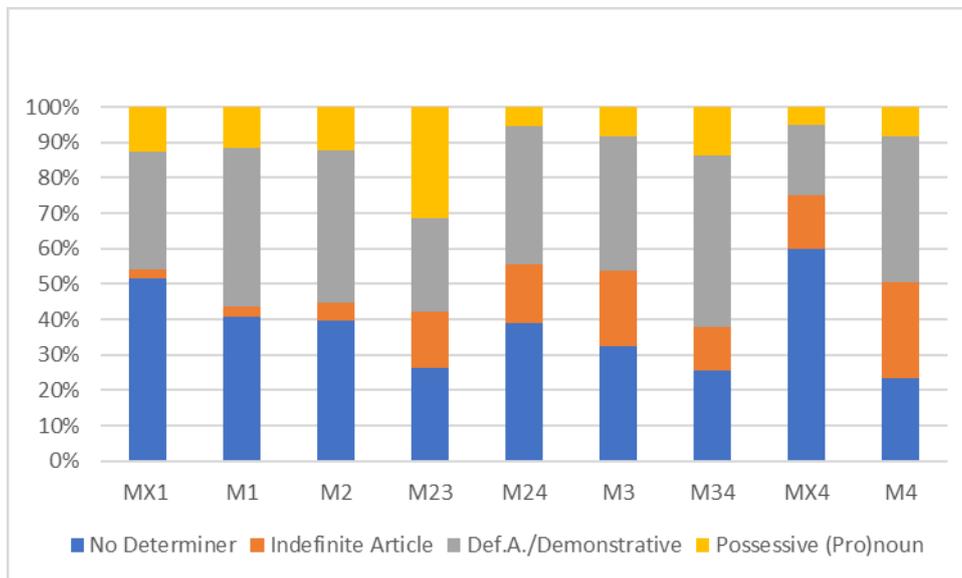
*Graph 19: Distribution of the Endings, Percentages*



This way, the development of the spelling of these types of adjectives appears to be quite smooth, with the bare form serving a very specific function initially, and therefore being underrepresented, but gradually becoming only a spelling variation.

Finally, the balance of determiners in the data is well struck, at 989 indefinite to 1023 definite phrases. Of course, throughout ME the indefinite article is in the process of grammaticalization, and in fact, the majority of the phrases considered here as indefinite do not contain any determiners, with the indefinite article attaining a majority only in the M4 period. The definite article and demonstratives, and possessive pronouns, on the other hand, seem to enjoy a more stable relationship:

Graph 20: Definiteness of the Examined Phrases



In this graph, a particular feature of the M34 period is revealed: more examined adjectives therein are in definite phrases than in any other period. This is not by chance, as reviewing the results queries with a large return for this period, such as query number 39, reveals that it contains several listings in which specific types of one thing are listed and explicated. Numerals are therefore overrepresented in this period, as are definite phrases, and the few head nouns used in such lists (typically *sin*). While there is no reason to presume that such *adjectives* behave in a radically unexpected fashion, such as would make them unfit to be examined here, they nevertheless exhibit an unmistakable bias towards a certain set of properties.

However, the same cannot be affirmed for the very smallest of the periods, M23, M24, and MX4, whose deviations are simply caused by insufficient data. In addition, M24 and MX4 are impossible to pinpoint as to where on the *effective timeline* (i.e. the X axis graphs – if trends are to be observed, it is first necessary to be able to order the periods) they lie – a problem which is much easier to solve for MX1 and M34. For this reason, the three least represented periods will be excluded from further analysis.

Position wise, the postmodifying position is unfortunately infrequent, represented in the data by only 54 adjectives, as is the *distant* premodifier position at only 46.

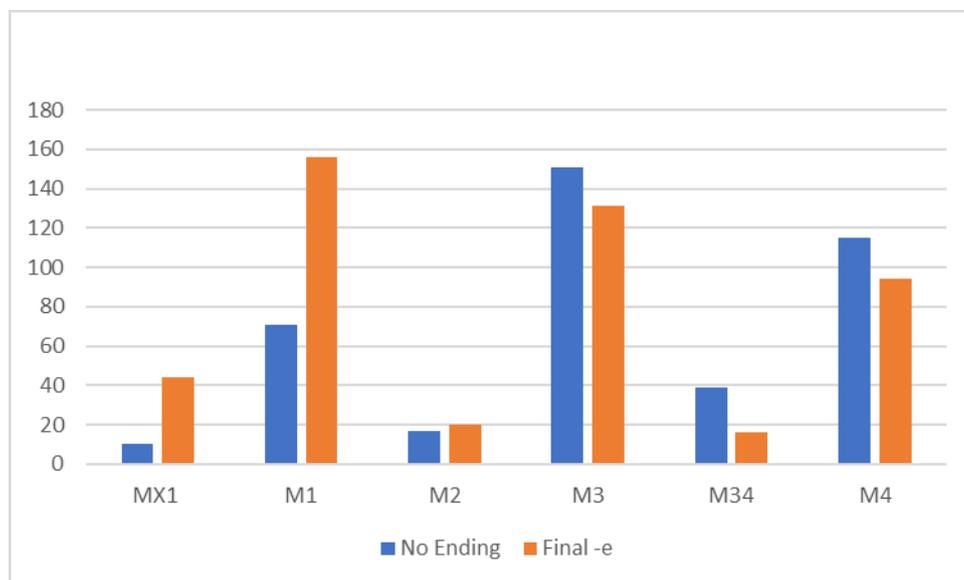
## B. Instrumental Analysis

### I. The Possible Functionality of the Dative Form(s)

While the dative portion of the adjectives is presumed to exhibit a lesser degree of differentiation between strong and weak forms, with due examination therefore being more phonological in character, this presumption need not be entirely correct for every period, and will be verified before the main portion the research commences.

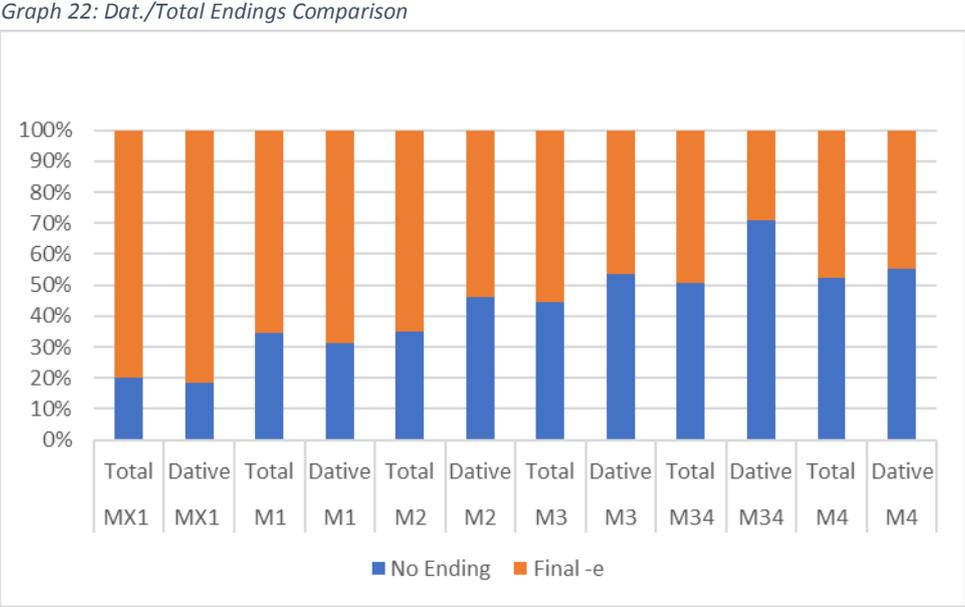
The most straightforward way to do this is to analyse the distributions of the *-e* final and endless forms of the dative adjective. The following graph shows the absolute distribution over the six examined periods:

*Graph 21: Distribution of the Dative Endings*



As can be seen, the initial trend is very much the same as that of the overall final *-e* distribution, but reverses at a higher rate to even climb to a higher than 50% occurrence of the endless form. The latter development is consistent with the loss of the dat. sing. ending, which perhaps predated that

of the weak nom./acc. sing. ending. However, the data in the earliest period is not conclusive, as it is not immediately clear what the endingless forms represent: it could be both, an early sign of disappearance, and that of formal variation. An interspersed percentage graph to allow for an easier comparison may be found below:



This comparison would seem to indicate that there are three approximate states: In MX1 and M1, *dativeness* is as good a predictor of either ending as the lack thereof, with less than a 5% difference between the frequencies of either form, whereas for M2, M3, and M34, the differences range from 9% to 20%. In M4, the difference becomes negligible once more. But whether the fraction of endingless adjectives in the first two is equivalent to that of the overall because they represent strong forms, or whether these are simply early cases of the dative decay remains to be seen.

To explain the observed distributions, it appears necessary to introduce definiteness into the distribution. Because the graph now involves many variables, a chart is also provided to facilitate its reading:

Graph 23: Dat. Endings by Definiteness

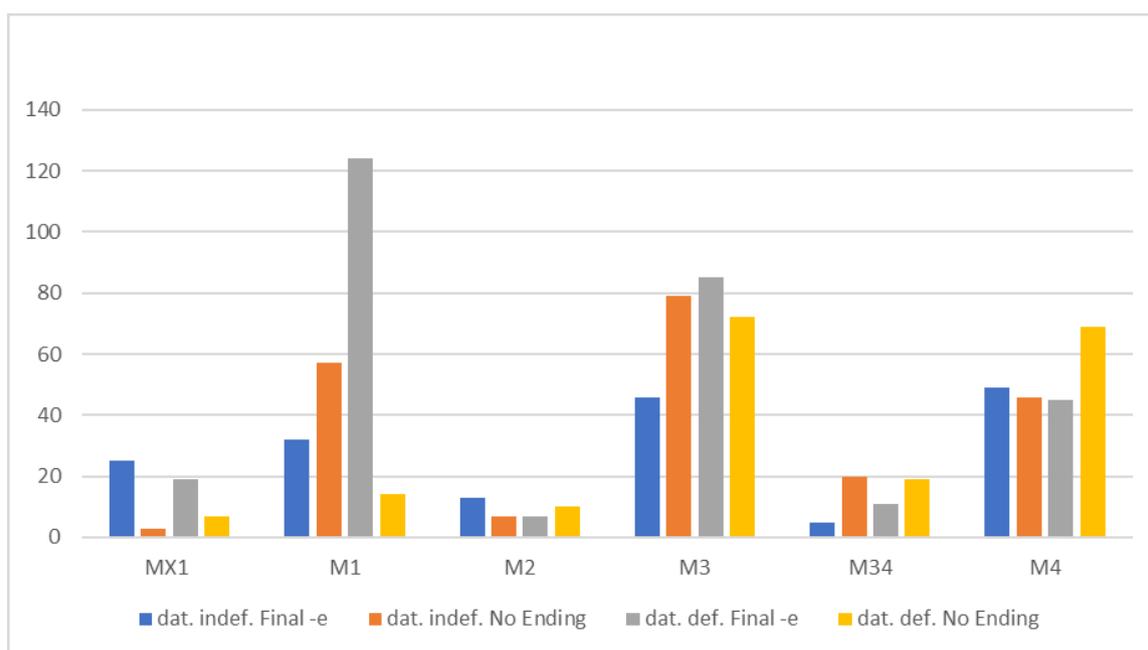


Chart 4: Dative Endings by Definiteness

	MX1	M1	M2	M3	M34	M4	Total
dat. Indef. Final -e	25	32	13	46	5	49	170
Dat. Indef No Ending	3	57	7	79	20	46	212
dat. Def. Final -e	19	124	7	85	11	45	291
dat. Def No Ending	7	14	10	72	19	69	191
							864

Assuming that, if such an ending existed, a strong dat. sing. ending would have been the same as the nom. sing. strong ending, i.e. no ending (and with the weak ending still having an ending to differentiate between the two) the decay of the dative can be observed with some certainty by looking at the endless def. dat. (yellow), which, whether or not there be a distinct form, shouldn't occur. The would-be innovated strong form, indef. (orange) is either strong or once again an indicator that the ending has decayed. The frequencies of the two are comparable in most periods, the largest exception being M1, wherein the endless definite is at its relative lowest, whereas the indefinite is endless nearly twice as often as it isn't. M2, however, seems to resume the trends of MX1 to a degree. In the remaining periods, the results appear even, save that the endless definite

overtakes the endless indefinite, though it is both weak and a dative. The seemingly inexplicable rise of the indefinite -e final form is probably by chance, as will be shown in the final cluster section.

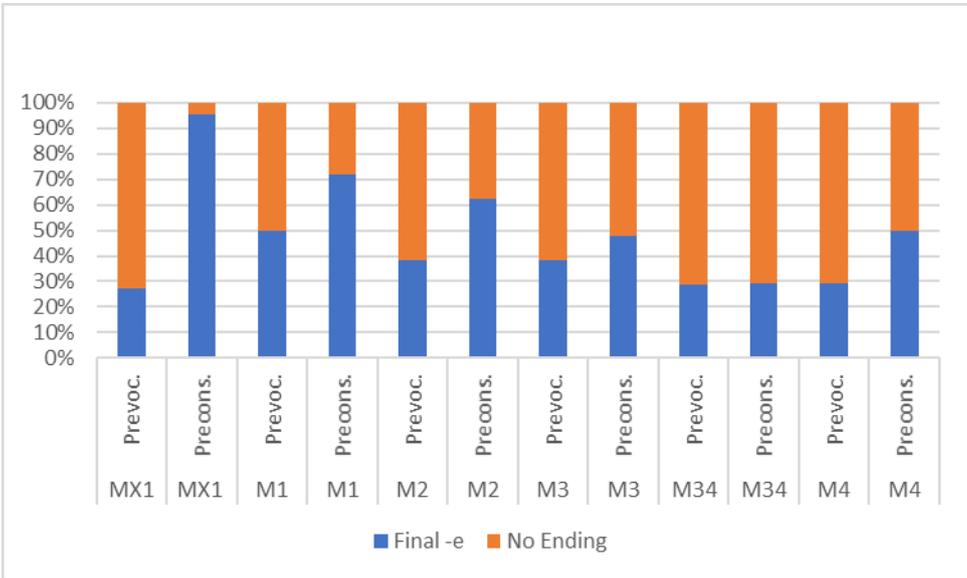
To summarise, it appears that, in the M1 PPCME2 period, an innovation took place only to be later rerolled, and further attempts to make use of the data from this period, and potentially from the periods surrounding it, will have to take this into consideration.

II. Prevocalic Elision in the Dative

Prevocalic Elision (referred to here also as chaining or *enchainment*) is particularly useful a tool because of its rather direct connection to sound, as opposed to merely being a spelling feature, it is a phenomenon that can only arise when the spoken word is put to paper precisely. One unfortunate aspect of attempting to analyse this feature or to use it for further analysis is that, usually, only a small fraction of any given set of adjectives is immediately followed by vowel-initial words. Here, the homogeneity of the M34 period will have become apparent, as it only contains one such adjective to also be in an indefinite phrase. As a result, some graphs in this section have to exclude this period.

While it is true that, outside of very careful writing, prevocalic elision is unlikely to always be represented in the spelling, it would appear that some degree of it can be found in most texts and periods, as indicated by the following graph:

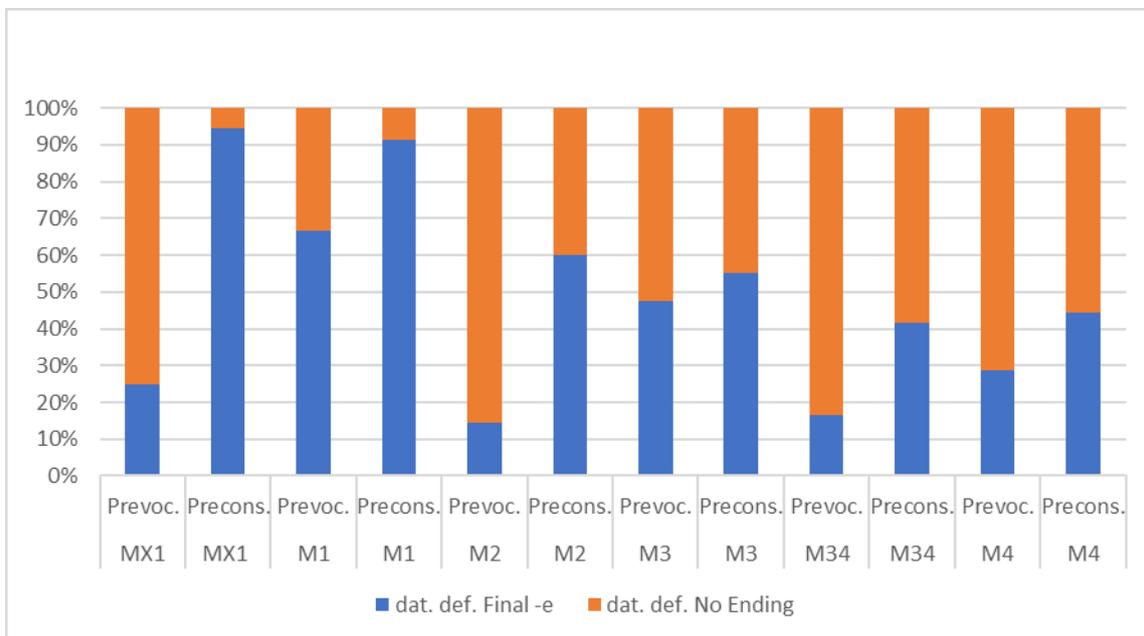
Graph 24: Final -e by the Following Sound



Taking into account the expected sound changes and morphological changes, all of which bleed<sup>117</sup> the process, chaining seems to occur at relatively stable rates throughout our entire period. Because of this, it can be used to gauge the value of any given ending in a given situation, for instance to confirm or deny the status of the dat. sing. strong form in the period M1.

The values for definite phrases should prove the more stable ones, given that such phrases should have a vocalic ending regardless of whether a strong ending exists. The ratios of e-final and endless adjectives preceding a vowel-initial word in such phrases are as follows:

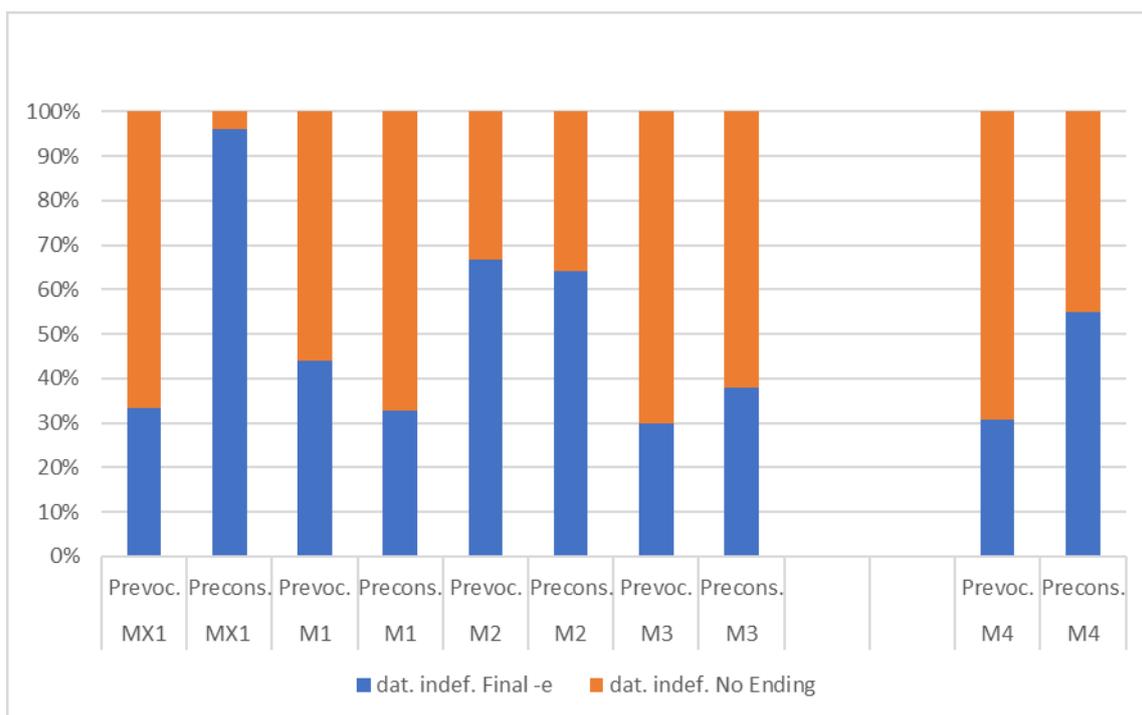
*Graph 25: Dat. sing. definite Ending by the Onset of the Following Word*



As seen in the graph, the differences deepen, confirming the greater reliability of this phenomenon in such environments. This is especially the case for M34, which lacks the data to be shown in the indefinite graph. We can also ascertain that the shift between MX1 and M1 is not due only to the latter possibly having alternative endings in the indefinite phrases, but in fact to do with an actual rate at which chaining occurs in these periods. That is not to say that the former is not a factor, as can be seen in the second graph of the pair:

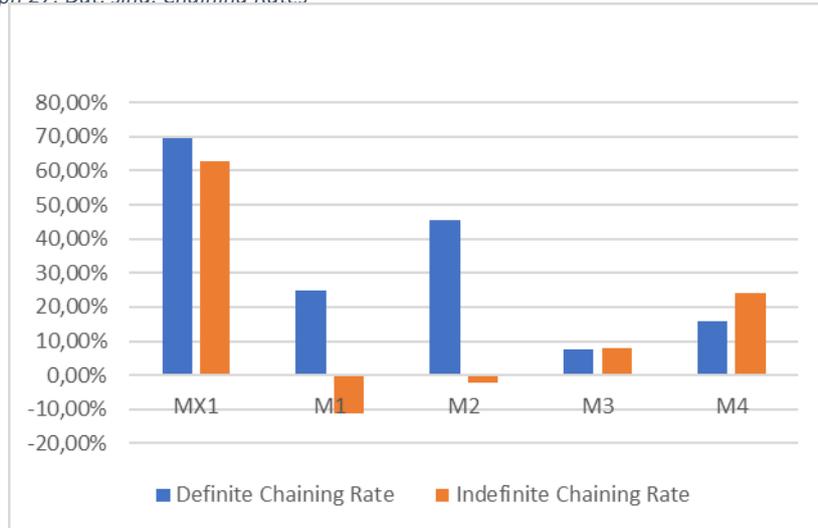
<sup>117</sup> That is to say, it removes environments in which the phenomenon bled systematically applies.

Graph 26: Dat. sing. Indefinite Endings by the Onset of the Following Word



The difference between the two graphs is immediately apparent when comparing periods M1 and M2: the rate of chaining in these periods is so small it appears negative (this is no doubt merely a chance deviation caused by either the method of data collection or the sampling for the PPCME2). This is interesting because an environment with a following vowel inside an indefinite phrase, if the default dative ending is *-e*, should be more conducive to the loss of the ending – there are as it were two features usually associated with the zero ending “stacked” together, albeit the phrase is also governed by a preposition. But in actuality, such phrases feature no (or a negative) change to the frequency at which the final *-e* occurs in M1 and M2. For a better intelligibility of the data, a graph of the difference, here called the “chaining rate” is presented below. “Chaining rate” simply means the percentage of *-e*-final adjectives that appear to be turned into endingless adjectives in the described environment, calculated using the percentage of the forms with a final *-e* for that specific environment for preconsonantic adjectives, and subtracting a percentage obtained via the same operation in the prevocalic environment.

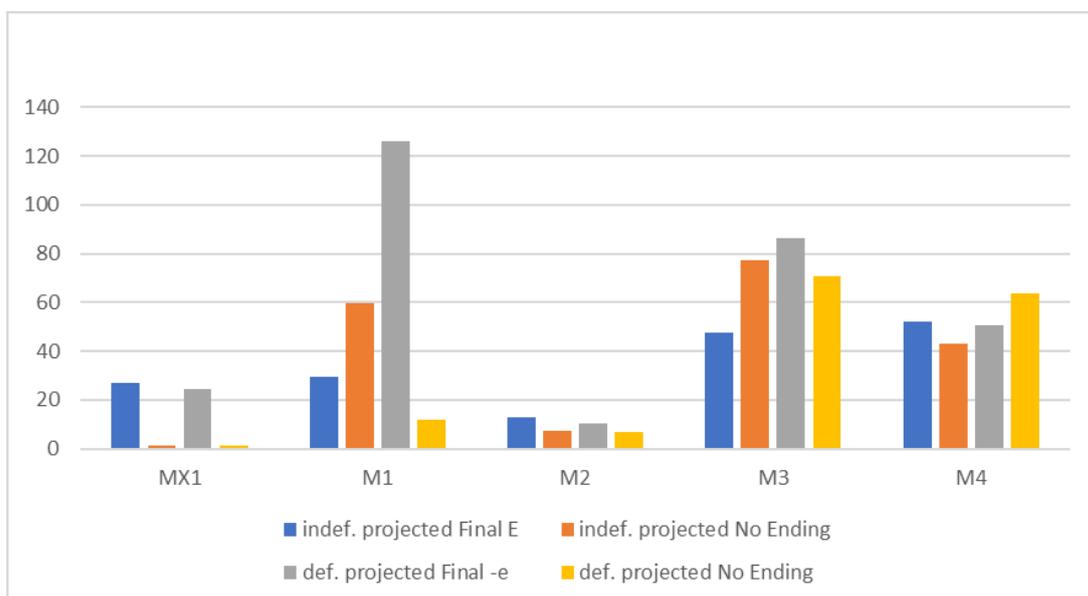
Graph 27: *Dat. sina. Chainina Rates*



The only thing the inexistent indefinite chaining rates could possibly suggest is an absence of an ending to feed chaining. What can be seen in M3 and M4 is quite possibly the aforementioned “stacking” of indefiniteness and a following vowel. In these periods, the distribution of the endings is in all likelihood unpredictable and heavily favouring an endless form, but with final shwas inserted randomly as well. This could possibly create the right conditions for such a “stacking” effect to thrive.

Using the above chaining rates, the pre-vocalic adjectives can be restored to what the presumably would have been had they not preceded adjectives. While this is a tiny operation, moving but percentages of the overall data, it nevertheless returns a graph that appears clearer than those from 4.B.I.:

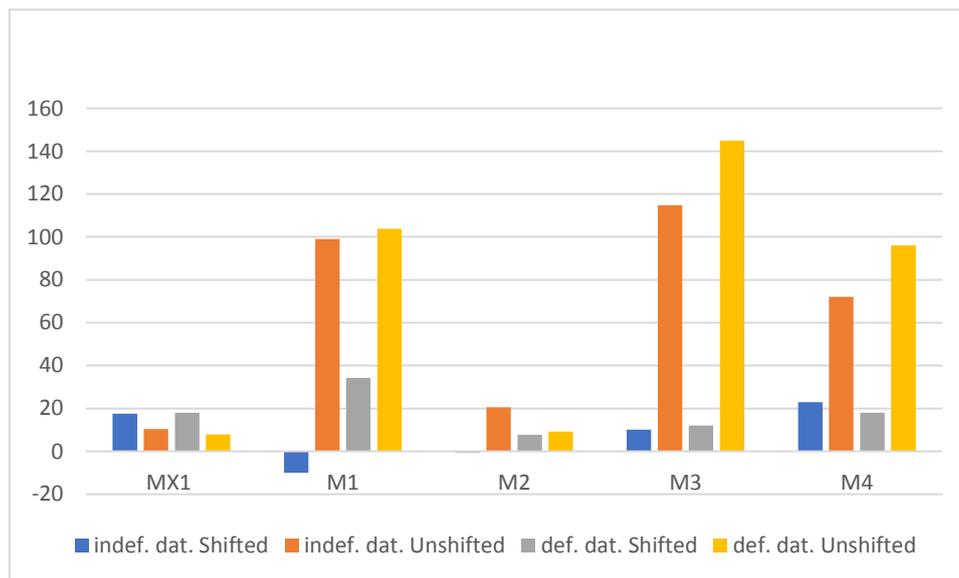
Graph 28: *Projected Values without Prevocalic Elision*



The projected values for MX1 show a nearly non-existent endless dat. sing., and those of M2 a more orderly distribution – partially dissolved, but still partially adhering to the old system, and with the innovations of the first period largely reverted.

Lastly, since those endings that are swayed by prevocalic elision can be presumed as having the value of an actual vowel with some certainty, the last graph of this section shows the amount of such endings that have or would have presumably been shifted by the phenomenon.

*Graph 29: Projected Tokens Affected by Pre-vocalic Elision*



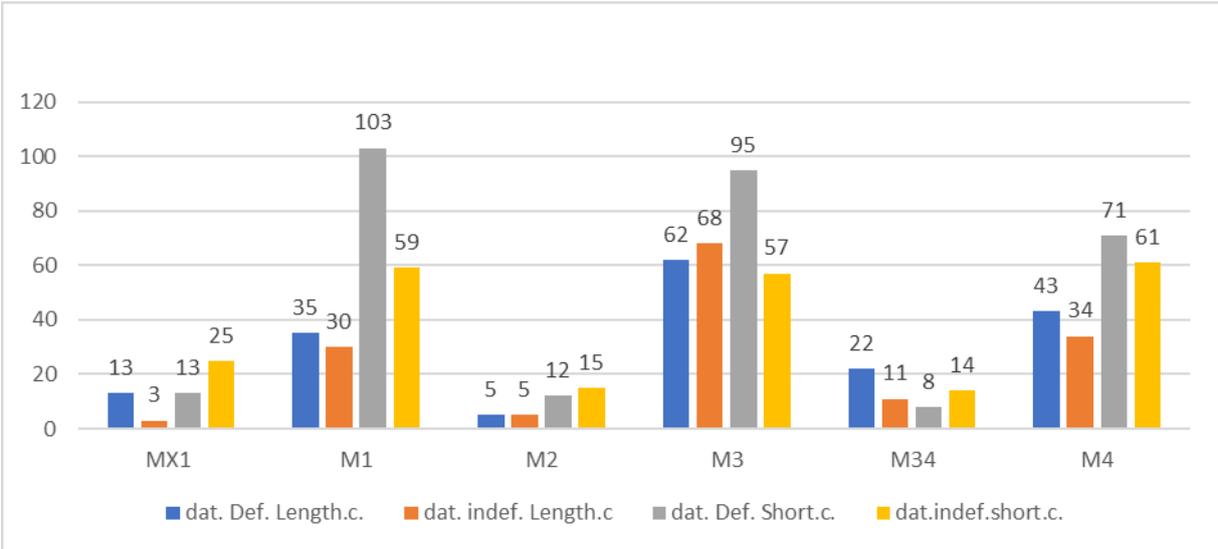
What this graph shows best is the small degree to which the innovation of M1 did survive in M2. The final -e's that do appear in the spelling of the dat. sing. adjective in indefinite phrases simply can't be proved to have value behind the, even if this were the most of them appear in this period. In MX1, the sifted tokens outnumber the unshifted, it can as such be safely said that the rate at which the endings were pronounced was extremely high.

### III. The Influence of the Coda Cluster

While a central tool to this research in eliminating several other orthographic influences, the two cluster types examined here are not without their own biases. Some of these are readily apparent –

as will be seen in section IV. below, for example, vowel digraphs occurs most frequently with the lengthening cluster. In such a case, it is easy to discern the connection, in general, however, specific codas are bound to specific roots that collocate differently, meaning there are limitations to what can be done at this level of analysis without considering individual lexemes. To show how the examined coda types *collocate* with phrasal environment, the following graph will serve:

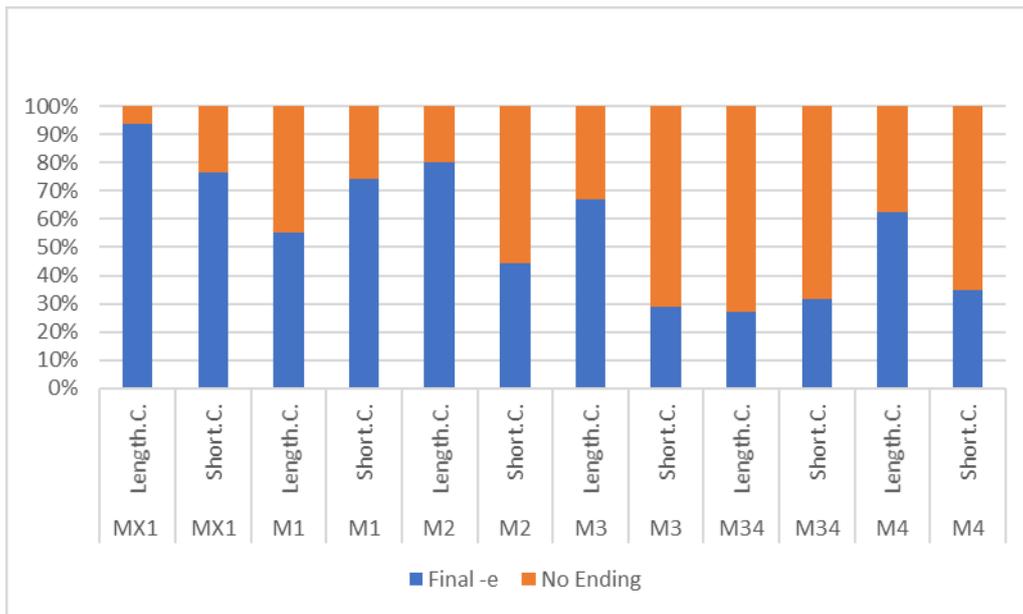
Graph 30: Dat. Clusters' Distribution



The prevalence of the def. shortening group in the larger periods is caused by words such as *right* or *left*, which are some of the most frequent words in the English language.

There are several ways in which the type of the coda could impact the ending. In the roughest terms, it could either lead to a creation or retention of an ending, or it could create conditions that require the diacritic *-e*, i.e. lengthening the peak vowel of the root (this in spite of the fact that clusters other than *-st* should prevent the final *-e* from having its opening effect naturally). The following graph details the distribution of the endings depending on the type of the cluster.

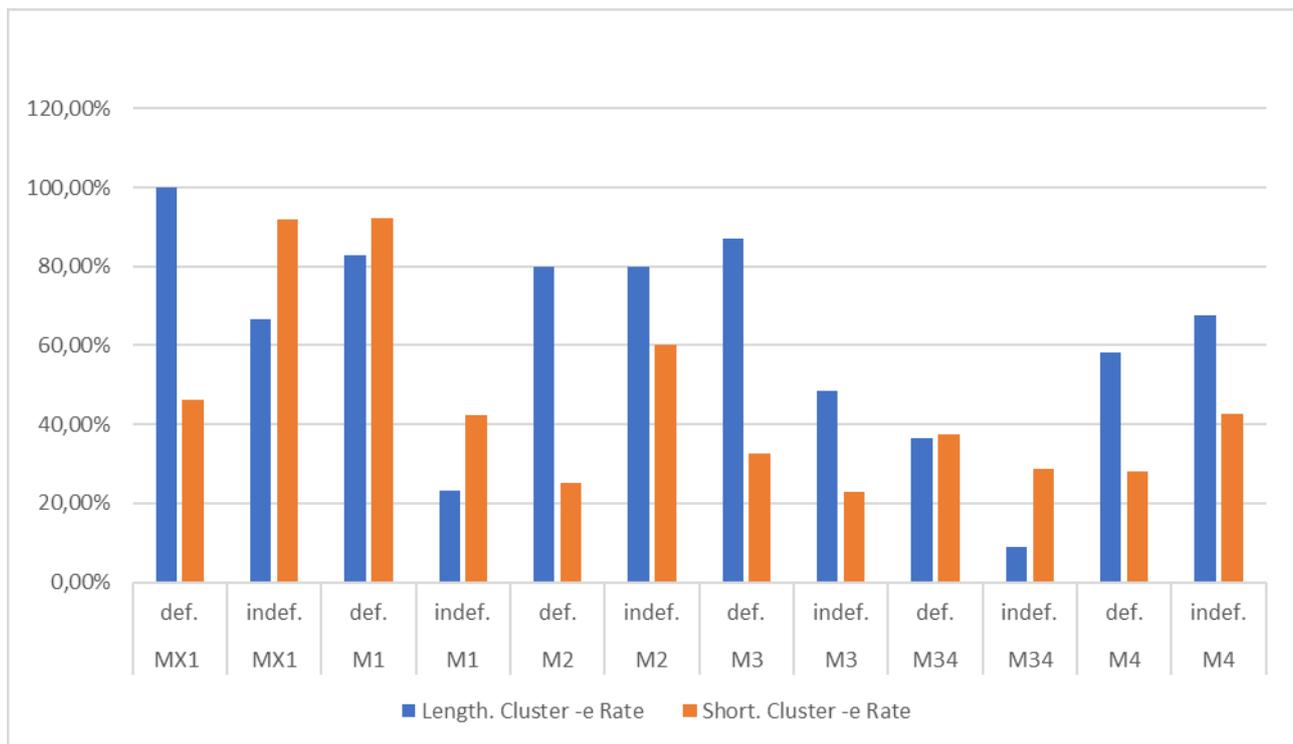
Graph 31: Dative Endings by Cluster Type



As can be seen, the final *-e* generally occurs more frequently with the lengthening cluster than with the shortening, which is not surprising whether its value be of one type or the other. The frequency at which the adjectives with the lengthening cluster lose their endings seems to be lower as well, with the others quickly plummeting under 50% after the M1 period where they decline only gradually. As is usual, the period M1 exhibits the opposite tendency once again, with a larger portion of the adjectives with a shortening coda ending in *-e*.

Taking graph 14 into consideration, however, this distribution is understandable as the ratio of the definite adjectives with a shortening coda dominate the period. While the same is true for all the other major periods, they do not make the distinction between the strong and the weak endings for dat. sing., and so conform to the phonological tendency instead. To confirm this, a graph detailing the distribution with regards to definiteness follows:

Graph 32: Dat. Endings by Code Type and Definiteness

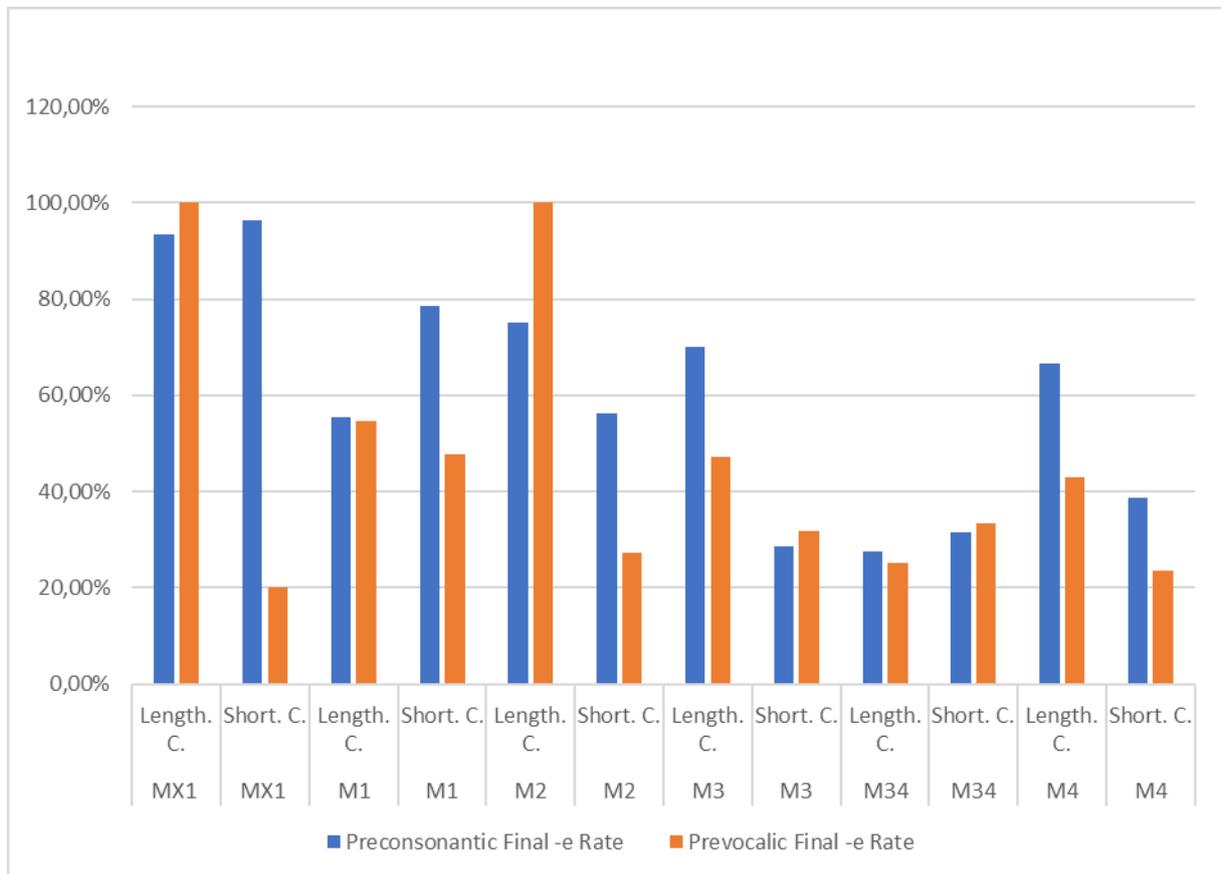


The distribution in the definite dat. sing. of M1 is more even than that of the indefinite. However, its values are still clandestinely different to those of the other periods. A different factor must therefore be in play.

Another surprising feature of this graph is the relatively high value of the short indefinite M2 where the lengthening clusters for both definite and indefinite phrases exhibit about the same behaviour. The same is true for MX1. If the assumption that the lengthening cluster is the more prone to assist in creating *irregularities* of the ending, by preserving old endings or sprouting new ones, then conversely, very high rates of the final -e for the shortening cluster may be a sign of innovation, stripping the old irregularities away in favour of creating distinctions that are synchronically functional instead. While the indefinite of M3 having a lower -e rate than the definite may be an echo of the functional difference in M1, it seems to be carried primarily by the lengthening cluster, with the difference between the shortening clusters being much less noticeable, whereas both clusters participate in M1.

As for the precise value of the supposed endings, chaining can be used once again to establish the relationship between sound and spelling. The following graph shows the frequency of prevocalic and preconsonantal endings for each coda.

Graph 17: Prevocalic Elision in Dat. by Cluster Type



As can be seen, MX1, M1 and M2 are strongly affected when it comes to the shortening clusters, which lose their final -e much more easily, suggesting that it has a real value for these periods. The endings of the adjectives ending in lengthening clusters were not as affected, suggesting that their endings simply signal the length of the stem vowel. This applied to graph 16, it becomes apparent that there is some variation in the indefinite dat. sing. – the innovation did not overwhelm the old system, as might have so far appeared.

Reliability-wise, M3 exhibits the opposite tendency, its shortening cluster-final adjectives being unaffected by prevocalic elision where the Lengthening-cluster final ones were, while the

impact on the two clusters is about even in M34 and M4. In light of the *collocation* between final clusters and definiteness shown in graph 14, namely that the shortening cluster collocates with a definite phrase, this is an indication that the endings of the dat. sing. strong and weak form are once again identical in these periods. With the maintained high amount of final *-e*'s, but an increased changing rate from there on, it seems that it took until M3 for the opening capacity of the lengthening cluster to be fully established, and that its preserving capacity is realised in this period. One could lead to another – if it was suddenly this cluster that most often took meaningful endings, then the independence of the quantity of the root vowel from the presence or lack thereof of a final sound would have been highlighted.

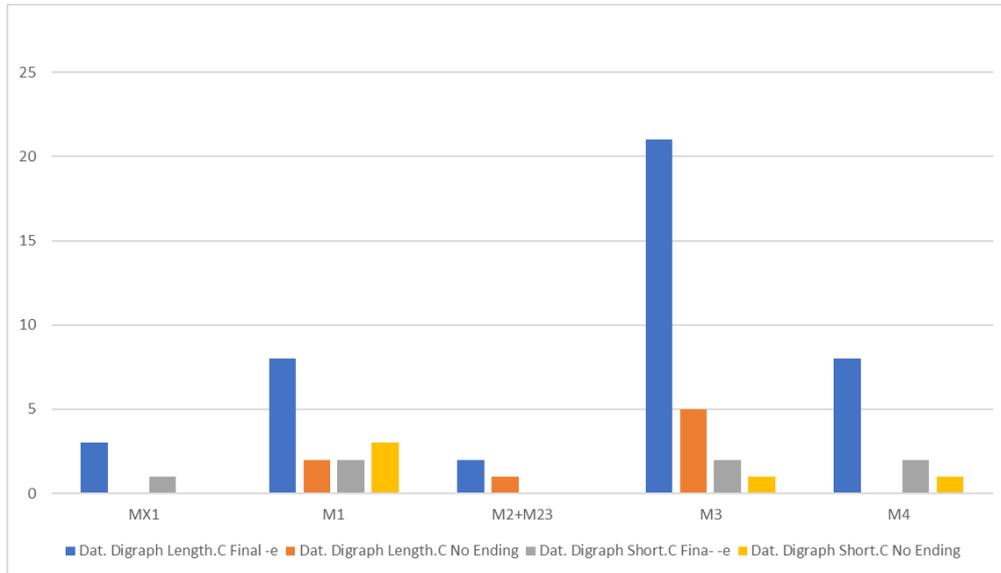
In short, this section has shown that the adjectives with a shortening cluster are more reliable when examining the earlier period, whereas those with a lengthening one are the better in the period M3 in particular, but also in the entirety of late. ME. As for the strong dative forms, the findings for the M1 period could be replicated, but their degree was lesser owing to the above understanding, as the most radical of the values for this period come from adjectives with lengthening clusters, the shortening suggesting rather that the innovated system alternated with the old system.

#### IV. On Vowel Digraphs

Any attempt to establish the tendencies of adjectives with a vowel digraph in the dative group has to deal with the small size of the sample. In an attempt to bolster the particularly weak M2 group, for the purposes of this section, M23, whose distributions appear relatively similar as far as vowel digraphs are concerned, has been added to it.

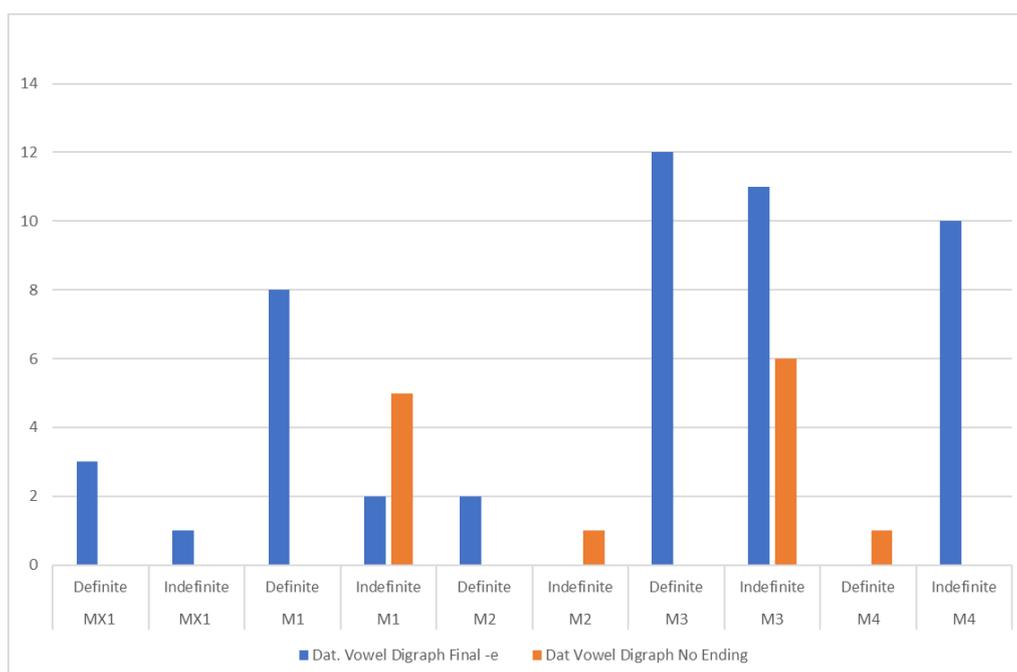
The final cluster of the adjective is a large factor, as explained before, as it dictates the quantity of the root vowel. The correlation of a digraph vowel with the lengthening cluster is therefore understandably high, as the graph below details:

*Graph 18: Dat. + Vowel Digraph by Final Cluster and Ending*



Of the three larger periods, M3 is where the digraph is at its most frequent. Furthermore, the digraph in the adjectives with a lengthening final cluster correlates highly with the final -e, whereas that in those with a shortening one less so. The situation in M3 is of some interest when the apparent development in the opening ability of the lengthening cluster is taken into consideration. Such digraphs are therefore triply redundant, with three features that can each indicate length individually. There is indeed a “stacking” nature to this period. This can be confirmed by viewing the distribution of the vowel digraph based on definiteness of the phrase:

Graph 19: Dat. + Vowel Digraph Endings by Definiteness



As seen in the graph, the combination with the final -e occurs only in definite phrases in M3, whereas in indefinite phrases, the endings vary, presumably under the influence of the strong form and due to the dative endings decaying. In fact, save M4, the former is true for all the periods. In M1 and after, the endless variant gains foothold in indefinite phrases, which is again broken only in M4. It would appear that the decay of the dative is truly completed by M4, but in order for these distributions to apply, a sizeable portion of datives, at least in definite phrases, must have maintained their endings up until M3.

### C. Final Analysis

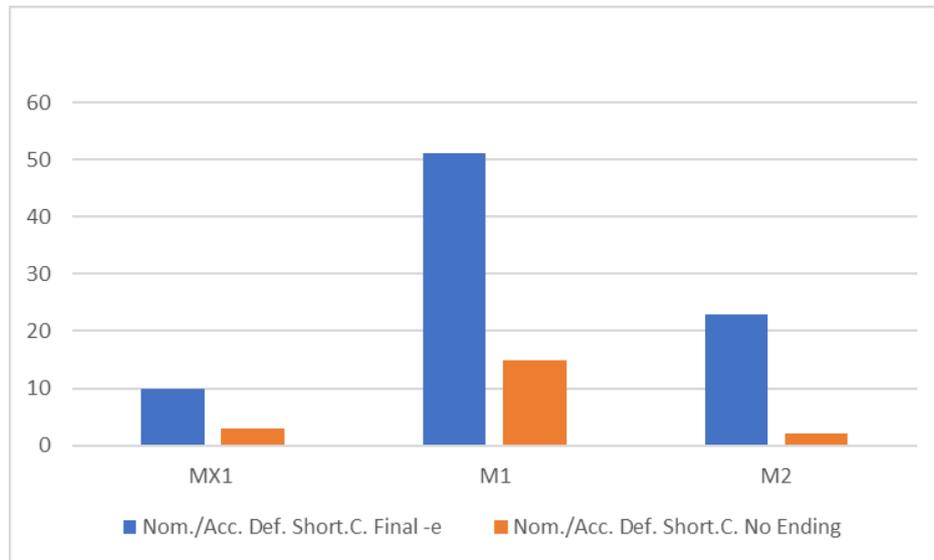
#### I. Early development in Definite Phrases

With the weight of the phonological factors well established, the Nom./Acc. group can be described using only the most efficient methods. For the earlier periods, the shortening cluster provides a more stable environment to examine the value of the endings. Because all periods save M4 are presumed to contain some degree of the strong/weak opposition, radically different results

are presumed for definite and indefinite phrases for each of them. These are therefore analysed separately.

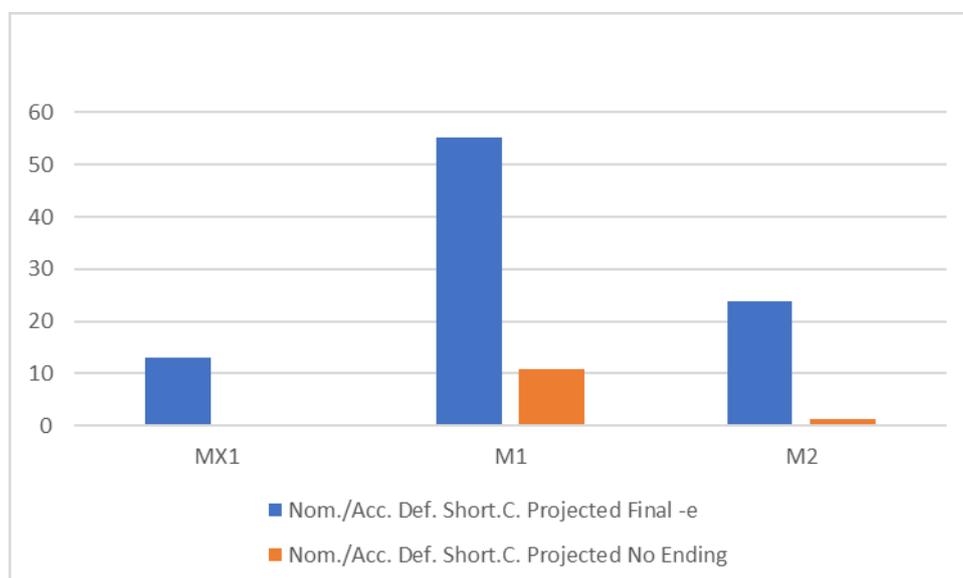
The distribution of the endings of adjectives with shortening final clusters in definite phrases in early ME is as follows:

*Graph 20: Non-dative Definite Adjectives with Shortening Final Clusters in eME*



The final *-e*, as expected, dominates in all three periods. However, that is not to say they are equal in this regard. The chaining rates in these periods are 60%, 38,2% and 15% respectively, meaning that the endings of the M2 are not as valuable, especially considering how high its chaining rate was in the dative group. With these chaining rates, the graph can be corrected to projected values:

*Graph 21: Projected Non-dative Definite Adjectives with Shortening Final Clusters in eME*



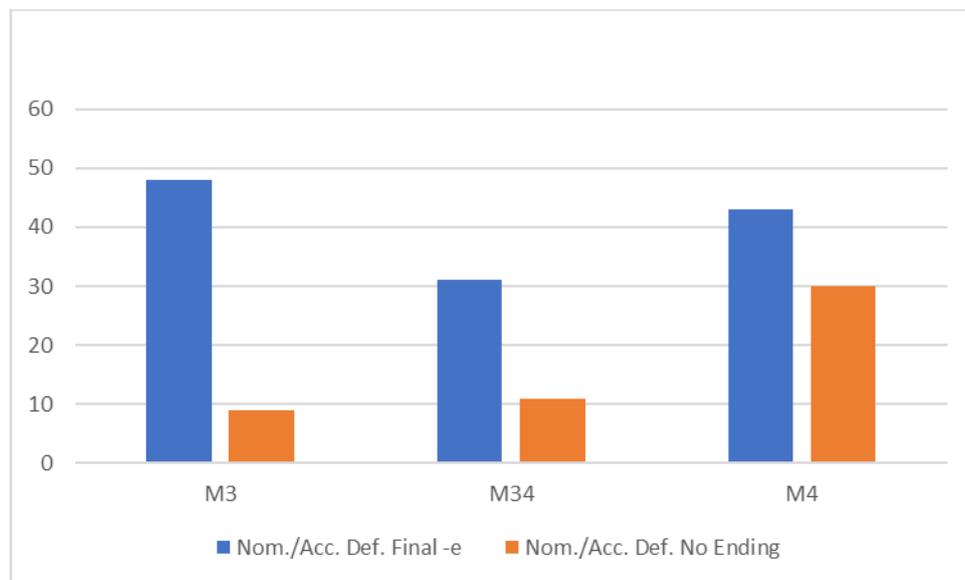
Even after corrections, it seems that M1 is the least stable period, albeit the chaining rate is consistent with a higher correspondence between the final *-e* and a pronounced vowel. The development in M3 will therefore be crucial to proper understanding of how exactly the early period culminates.

## II. Later development in Definite Phrases

For M3 and later, lengthening clusters have been established to produce a more stable environment.

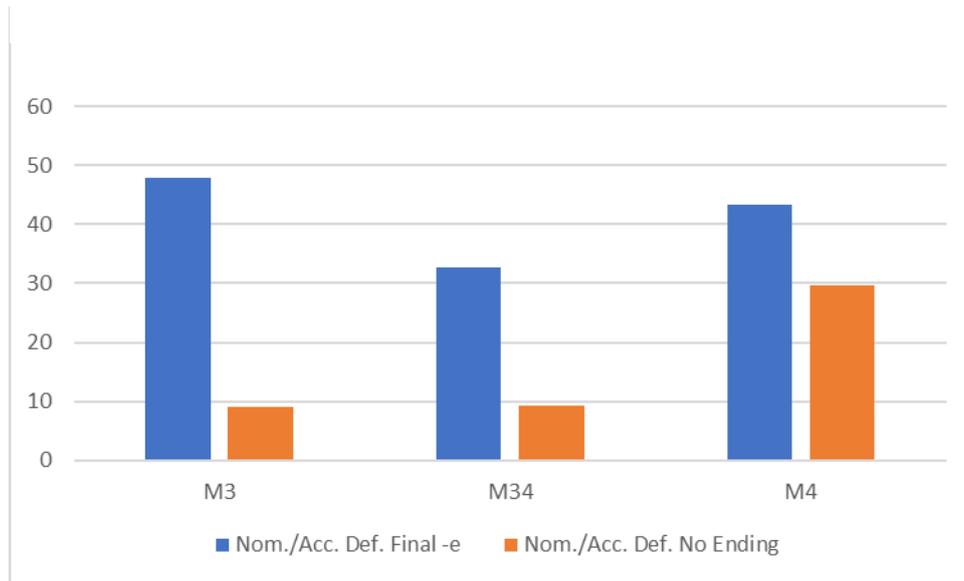
Below is a graph of the distribution of endings of such clusters:

*Graph 22: Non-dative Definite Adjectives with Shortening Final Clusters in Later ME*



M3 and M34 resemble M2, but M3 has significantly lower chaining rate at -1,7%. This rate is 27,8% for M34. M4 has a very low chaining rate of 9,4% for its relatively even distribution of the endings. These values suggest a tendency to simply drop the endings for both M3 and M4. In M34, the final *-e* appears in the spelling less, but the underlying pronunciation value seems to be the same, as will be shown in a graph with projected values without vowel elision. Note only very rough estimates may be made for M34. The following graph shows projected values without elision:

Graph 23: Projected Non-dative Definite Adjectives with Lengthening Final Clusters in Later ME

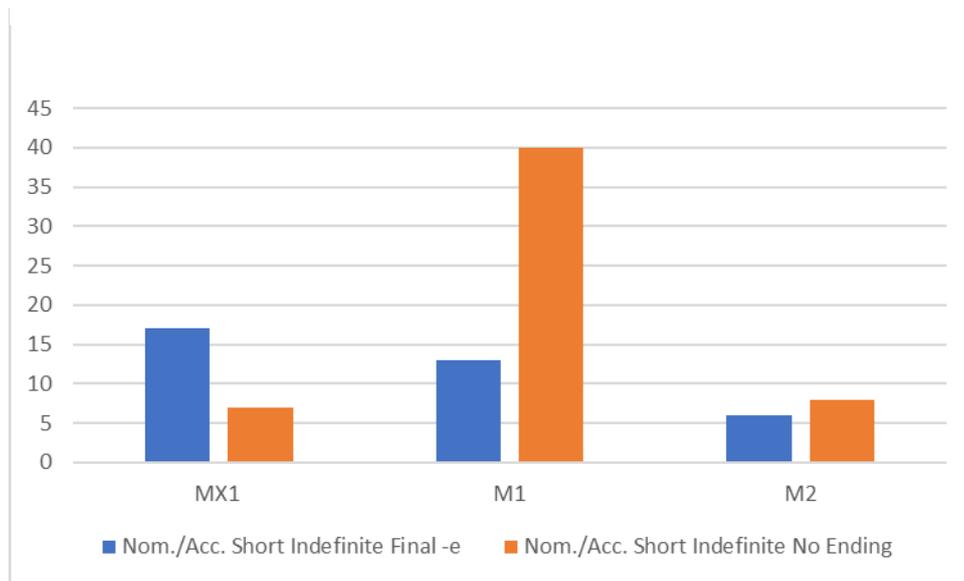


As evident from this graph, the chaining rate is not a strong factor in the distribution. Although it is low for all of the periods, the high percentage of the final *-e*'s indicates some degree of retention of the ending. Referring to Graph 7, a significantly larger percentage of dat. sing. adjectives is endingless in definite phrases. This indicates that the loss of the dative, as presumed, precedes that of the strong/weak opposition in the nom./acc. sing.

### III. Early development in Indefinite Phrases

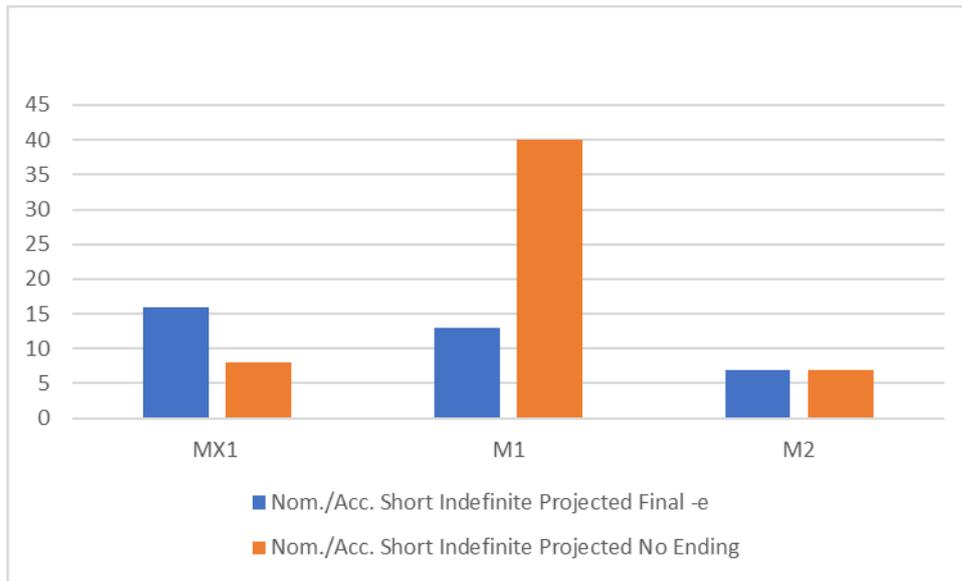
Nom./Acc. adjectives in indefinite phrases of early ME are where the strong form presumably thrives. This section is more of an ascertainment before the period M3 (which this work has so far used as a sort of a surrogate for the underrepresented period M2) and the later periods can be examined. The distribution of the endings in indefinite Nom./Acc. adjectives is as follows:

Graph 24: Non-dative Indefinite Adjectives with Shortening Final Clusters in Early ME



This graph is rather surprising, as it shows that, in MX1, such adjectives are spelled with a final *-e* in the majority of cases. However, the value of this *-e* is highly dubious, as the chaining rate for the period is -33,3% in this environment. This means that while such words are spelled this way quite often, they were most likely pronounced without a final sound. Compare graph 19, where the chaining rate is a 100% higher for definite phrases, and endless forms occur even more infrequently. The chaining rates for the other two periods are 0,6% and 50% for M1 and M2 respectively. M2 seems to display a fairly advanced state of loss of the strong/weak distinction, but in comparison to graph 19, it becomes clear that some distinction must be maintained. Its chaining rate for indefinite phrases being very high compared to a low chaining rate for the definite phrase certainly betrays a large degree of confusion in the forms even this early. To illustrate, the projected spelling graph shows the degree of decay to have reached so far as to make both variants roughly equal:

Graph 25: Projected Non-dative Indefinite Adjectives with Shortening Final Clusters in Early ME

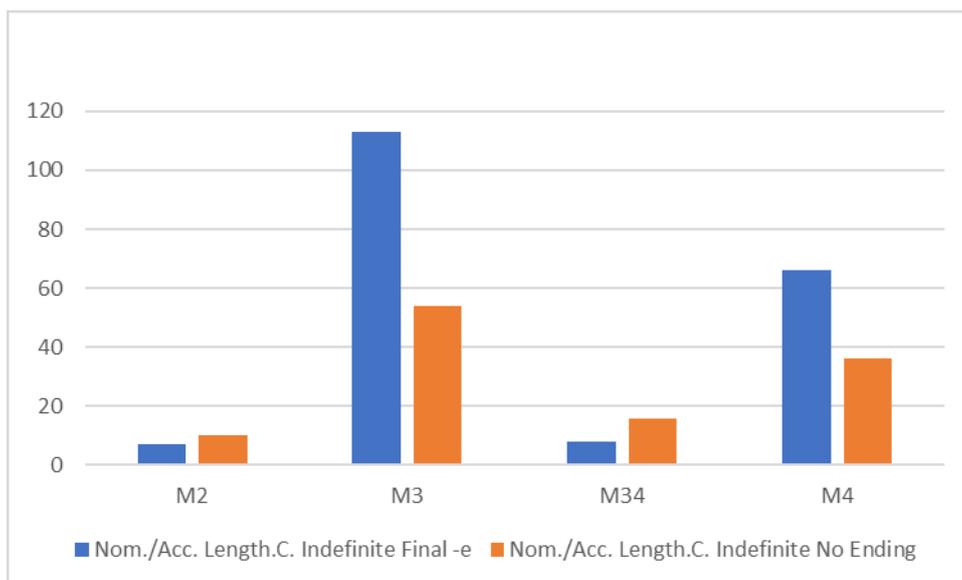


Where there seemed to be great turmoil in the dative part of the system of M1, it is here very stable, with reliable spelling and a prevalence of the endless form.

#### IV. Later development in Indefinite Phrases

Because of the dissatisfactory results in the M2 period, it will be reanalysed with the later periods using adjectives with lengthening clusters in an attempt to obtain better results.

Graph 26: Non-dative Indefinite Adjectives with Shortening Final Clusters in Later ME



The problems encountered in the M2 period are probably caused by an uneven distribution of the cluster/definiteness combinations as shown in graph 14. In graph 25, while the state of the affairs is quite similar for M2, its chaining rate for this environment is -10%, indicating that its final -e usually doesn't have a pronunciation value of its own. The same tendency for this period was shown for datives in graph 17, where a large portion of dative adjectives with a lengthening cluster retained their final -e's in prevocalic positions in M2. This once again shows the redundant opening use of the cluster. M3 displays a very high proportion of e-final findings, and a similar ratio is maintained for M4. M34 remains more conservative, but has a high Chaining Rate of 34,8% - however, M34's low amount of prevocal adjectives makes this rate rather inaccurate an estimate, albeit it seems to stay consistent throughout many different selections of adjectives therein. M3 and M4 have chaining rates of 19,8% and -22,6 respectively. This indicates that the seeming continuity between the two is in spelling only. Some final -e's would have probably been pronounced in M3, and its chaining rate is lower for the definite phrases than for the indefinite ones, making it apparent that a loss of the distinction is taking place. M4 has a negative Chaining rate, which is probably to say that most endings have simply been lost altogether. Comparing to graph 15, it has about the same distribution as the datives have based on final cluster type alone for M4, but also for M3.

## 5. Conclusion

Some of the findings of this work have been quite unexpected. When its methodology was outlined, it was understood that the what was set in stone, and only the when and how left for further examination. In pursuing these, however, this work had a chance encounter with the what – one that took the form of the strong dat. sing. form. Where the dative had been prior presumed to be little more but a testing field, in which the preparations for the proper analysis could be made, it proved to be the very end-goal of the work. Nevertheless, examinations akin to those planned were executed, in part so that they could be tested, but also to analyse this strong dative innovation further. It was found to be contained to the first period of the PPCME2, and have little effect on both, the older texts copied during this period, designated MX1, nor the following period, M2. The data in M1 proper was found to be consistent with a presence of a strong/weak distinction similar to, but perhaps weaker than, that in the nom./acc. sing. Analysis of phonological factors appeared to confirm this, with deviations that would have been very hard to explain if the deviation had not occurred, with the deviation from the expected morphology also being contrary to phonological influences – it therefore had to be morphological in nature.

The properties of the two sets of clusters used in the research were then compared and utilized to determine that this innovation had not overtaken the system fully, but rather vied with the already known systems in play at the time. With that and the examination of the digraph, spelling tendencies for the periods could be established. Rates of vowel elision were discovered to behave in ways that could be used to gauge the pronunciation value of the final *-e* in any given environment or period, and these were used with some success on both the dative and the non-dative group.

Aside from the strong dative, the findings in the dative group did confirm some expectations, such as the ending of the dative becoming either random or zero much sooner than the same could happen to the weak nom./acc. forms. The datives in MX1 were also found to have possessed the expected ending.

In the nom./acc. group, the findings were much more in line with what had been expected, with perhaps one of the most peculiar behaviours being that of the MX1 period, wherein it was discovered that the *-e*-final spelling dominated in both definite and indefinite phrases. However, the indefinite phrases were calculated to have an extraordinarily low rate of the final *-e* elision, suggesting that the endings in that group were not read, whereas the same was not true for the definite group.

Like MX1, M1 was found to exhibit strong forms, but in a much more straightforward way, simply featuring spelling differences, and with a low elision rate for the indefinite phrase, whereas the definite phrases featured a high elision rate, suggesting that the endings of these adjectives were indeed read. Much less conclusive evidence could be given for the period M2, which is underrepresented in the PPCME2. If the data to be had is to be believed, while both strong and weak forms preserve their identity in terms of general tendencies, both are at a stage in their evolution where they can appear in either form quite freely.

While the better represented M3 does seem to retain some notion of what either form's identities are, *-e*-final forms dominate in indefinite phrases as well, and there seems to be no difference between how often these would have been pronounced. Still, the endless forms are more prevalent in indefinite phrases. Nothing very accurate can be said for M34, where the distribution caused by listing skewed what can be said here, but it was probably quite conservative, preserving values similar to M3, and perhaps suggesting the scribe's familiarity with the older language.

In M4, the dissolution of the dative as well of the strong and weak opposition has been confirmed to be largely absolute, and while the death throes of either came sooner than that, all the formal variation in the adjective can be confirmed to be, at this point of the language's history, gone.

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## 7. Resumé

V této bakalářské práci byly analyzována přídavná jména ve střední angličtině, a to prostřednictvím PPCME2, jehož syntaktické značení bylo využito společně s regulárními výrazy, aby byla získána taková adjektiva, jejichž sdělnost co se ortografické realizace byla předem vytypována jako vysoká na základě toho, že jejich koncové shluky souhlásek během mnoha kvantitativních systémových změn přízvučných samohlásek, které v pozdní staré a rané mladé angličtině proběhly, prováděly specifické vlastní změny, díky kterým jsou metrické vlastnosti těchto adjektiv snadno předvídatelné, zatímco současně blokovaly vliv následující samohlásky, z něž je odvozeno následné užití finálního *-e* jako diakritického znaku, který indikuje, že kvantita kmenové samohlásky je taková, jako kdyby po ní takový vokál byl následoval zatímco dlužení probíhalo.

První část práce se zabývá popisem známých forem, jakož i faktorů, které vedly k onomu závěru, že právě taková adjektiva jsou k takovému výzkumu vhodná. Dále jsou popsány další faktory, z nichž byly některé vybrány pro zohlednění ve vytvářené množině dat. Tyto jsou jak fonologického a ortografického charakteru – typ finálního shluku, začátek následujícího slova a reprezentace kořenové samohlásky, tak morfosyntaktického a frazálního – přítomnost, absence a případný typ determinerů, a faktory, které vedou k užití dativní koncovky, přítomnost předložek, či užití modifikovaného substantiva jako nepřímého předmětu.

Práce dále popisuje, jakým způsobem byla data z korpusu shromážděna, a přidává kvantitativní popis dat, které čtenáře seznamuje se zdrojem pro následné závěry. Z důvodů příliš nízké úrovně reprezentace musela některá období být z výzkumu odebrána. Období označované jako M344, které reprezentuje kopie textů ze třetího období pořízené v období čtvrtém bylo ponecháno pro svojí velikost, avšak velká převaha číslovek a specifických frazálních struktur v tomto období učinila jeho sdělnost poněkud nízkou.

V následující části práce analyzuje vliv zejména fonologických faktorů na dativní část vzorku. Předběžná kontrola vlivu morfologických faktorů ovšem ukázala, že v prvním období PPCME2 mohlo

dojít k inovaci, ve které se distinkce mezi silnými a slabými formami, jejíž ztráta se předpokládá mezi před koncem staroanglického období, obnovila na úkor vyjadřování kategorie dativu u adjektiv. Následné testování vlivu různých fonologických faktorů tedy proběhlo za současného zkoumání jejich možné účasti na vytvoření dojmu, že k oné inovaci v první čtvrtině našeho období došlo. Avšak všechny fonologické faktory se zdáli naopak vést pryč od vytváření takového dojmu. Byl tedy učiněn závěr, že k takové systémové změně v prvním období skutečně došlo. Nicméně, analýza následujících období, jakož i starších textů v prvním období přepsaných (a tedy nutně konzervativních – což by v tomto případě naopak vedlo k tendenci si původní rozdíly zanechat) ukázala, že první období popsanou tendenci vykazuje jako jediné. Už u druhého období byl shledán pokročilý stav rozpadu koncovek, a to jak v dativní, tak v nominativně-akuzativní skupině. Vzorek z druhého období je ovšem daleko nižší kvality.

Tendence prvního období se do jisté míry zdá odrážet v období třetím. Nicméně, analýza fonologický faktorů ukazuje, že tak kde nejsou ku pomoci co se zachování či obnově koncovky týče, tam koncové *-e* v tomto období velice snadno odpadá. Zejména dativ byl v tomto období konstatován jako ve velmi pokročilém stádiu rozpadu, avšak koncovky mají tendenci zůstávat, pokud by jejich užití podporovalo více faktorů, jak už bylo zmíněno, fonologických, avšak i ostatních. Může tak vzniknout iluze, že určitý dativ se svými dvěma faktor pro zachování koncovky je slabou formou k silné formě holého neurčitého dativu – a je možné, že skutečně ano, ale taková opozice je zcela závislá na těch nejpříznivějších fonologických podmínkách.

Ve čtvrtém období byl pozorován velký podíl holých určitých dativů, což znamená, že ani kombinace obou faktorů už nebyla dostatečná pro zachování koncovky. Je tedy jasné, že dativ jako takový se svými koncovkami třetí čtvrtinu středně anglického období nepřežil.

Pro nominativně- akuzativní část vzorku byla použita jiná metoda. Jelikož bylo zjištěno, že mají dlouhíci a krátkíci koncové shluky v průběhu celého období různé tendence zastírat výsledky,

v první polovině období byl jak pro určité tak neurčité případy použit zkracující shluk, zatímco pro druhou část byly použity shluky dloužící.

Nálezy v této skupině nebyly zdaleka tak překvapující, s opozicí mezi silnými a slabými adjektivy plně zachovanou v prvním období a v přepsaných starších textech. Avšak staré texty vykazovali neobvykle časté užití finálního *-e*, i v případech, kdy fonologické okolnosti silně nasvědčovali tomu, že není v neurčitých frázích čteno. Naproti tomu, druhé období vykazuje rychlý obrat k velmi pokročilému stavu rozkladu, který se ovšem to třetího období příliš neprohloubil. V tomto období se zdá status neurčitých adjektiv nejistým, avšak určitá adjektiva jsou konzistentně zapisována s finálním *-e*. Nicméně, fonologické indicie indikují, že tato koncovka měla skutečnou výslovnostní hodnotu poměrně málo často. Jednalo se tedy o rozpad z obou směrů, jak morfologický tak fonologický.

Ve čtvrtém období pak byl konstatován jak rozpad popisovaných systémů, tak ztráta případné schopnosti či tendence je i po jejich rozpadu ortograficky zachovávat. Representace adjektiv jak v určitých, tak neurčitých frázích byla zhruba stejná, a hodnota jejich předpokládaných koncovek – nulová.