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THE PRESENT PARTICIPLE MARK-*ING* IN EAST MIDLAND MIDDLE ENGLISH: A CORPUS STUDY

Abstract

The present paper contains a description of the distribution of the typical forms of the present participle marker in the East Midland dialect, one which also incorporates the relatively autonomous dialectal areas of East Anglia and London. The major contrasting characteristic of the conservative and the advanced types was materialised in the opposition between the old *nd*-forms and the new *ng*-forms. The evidence for the present study comes from the prose and poetic texts of the 13th–15th centuries compiled in the electronic versions of the *Innsbruck computer archive of machine-readable English texts* (ICAMET), *Penn-Helsinki parsed corpus of Middle English* (PPCME2), Chadwyck-Healey's *English poetry full-text database, The Auchinleck manuscript*, and the Michigan *Corpus of Middle English prose and verse*. The selected texts are those from localized manuscripts, established on the basis of the *Catalogue of sources for a linguistic atlas of Early Medieval English* (LAEME) and *A linguistic atlas of Late Mediaeval English* (LALME). The present contribution is another instalment in a series of papers devoted to the rise and spread of the present participle form *-ing(e)* in Middle English.

1. Introductory remarks

Although the provenance of the present participle marker *-ing* remains unclear it seems certain that its rise was connected with the regional transformation of the Old English present participle marker *-ende* to *-inde* in Middle English. Following the merger with *-ung* of the Old English gerund, the form *-inde* may have substituted the sequence *-ng-* for *-nd-* and finally become *-ing(e)*, soon recognized as a standard form in the East Midland.

The present paper, part of a much larger study, contains a description of the distribution of the typical forms of the present participle marker in the East Midland dialect, one which also incorporates the relatively autonomous dialectal areas of East Anglia and London. The major contrasting characteristic of the conservative and the advanced types was reflected in the opposition between the old *nd*-forms and the new *ng*-forms

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This contribution is another installment in a series of papers devoted to the rise and spread of the present participle form *-ing(e)* in Middle English, the earlier studies being Budna (2007, 2009, 2010, 2012).

2. Present participle forms in verse and prose

The corpora under scrutiny contribute texts from the three main areas of the East Midlands: northern, central and southern. The only text localized in the northern East Midlands is the *Ormulum* (MS Junius 1 SC 5113, Bodleian Library, Oxford), an early poem dated to c1200. The text was composed by a monk named Orm and comprises a set of metrical homilies written in regular 15-syllable unrhymed iambic lines with a caesura after the eighth syllable. This relatively early Middle English text, localized in Southwest Lincolnshire, still retains the inherited Old English dialectal marker *-end(e)*. The spelling used by the author is unique: consonants are doubled to indicate the preceding short vowel so that the present participle marker obtains an additional *-n*, i.e. *-ennde*.

(1) O þatt allterr haffgenn þeȝȝ (*Ormulum*, l.1066)
     Glowennde gledess arrkedd (*Ormulum*, l.1067)
     Þurrh Drihhtin blettcedd, & to ben (*Ormulum*, l.2289)
     Allwældennd Godess moderr. (*Ormulum*, l.2290)

More numerous texts, dated to c1200–1425, are localized to the central East Midlands, cf.:

(2) c1200 *The Peterborough chronicle* (MS Laud. Misc. 636 E, Bodleian Lib., Oxford)
   c1300 *Proverbs of Alfred* (MS Maidstone)
   c1314 *Guy of Warwick* (MS Auchinleck, Advocates, 19.2.1)
   c1400 *English sermons* Wycliffite (MS Additional 40672, Brit. Lib., London)
   c1425 *The cloud of unknowing* (MS Harley 674, Brit. Lib., London)

The studies on the manuscript of *The Peterborough chronicle* attribute its first lines (up to 1131) to a single scribe, who also copied the earlier material from the other manuscripts of the *Anglo-Saxon chronicle*. The Final Continuation (1132–1154), added by the second copyist differed in its "case-marking systems, showing a progressive deterioration with some interference in the First Continuation from the West-Saxon Standard" (*Penn-Helsinki corpus of Middle English texts*, 2nd ed.). Worth mentioning is that even though various scribes dealt with the manuscript, the text seems to be rather homogeneous in terms of the language and its dialect. *The Peterborough chronicle*, which comes from Northamptonshire, still exhibits the Old English present participle marker *-ende*:

(3) (a) Ða Willelm Englalandes cyng, þe þa **wæs sittend**e on Normandige forðig he ahte ægðer ge Englaland ge Normandige (...) (*The Peterborough chronicle*, 8/5)
   (b) & þær him comon to his witan and ealle þa **landsittende** men þe ahtes wæron ofer eall Engleland (...) (*The Peterborough chronicle*, 9/5)
   (c) & þurh yfelra manna rædas þe him æfre gecweme wæran & þurh his agene gitsunga, he æfre þas leode mid here & mid ungylde **tyrwigende wæs**, forþan þe on his dagan ælc riht afeoll & ælc unriht for Gode & for worulde up aras. (*The Peterborough chronicle*, 27/13)

Another text, *Proverbs of Alfred*, dated to 1300, is preserved in six manuscripts. Although the manuscript chosen here, part of the MS Maidstone originating in the Northampton area (Laing 1993: 121), reveals the authorship of several hands, its language is homogeneous. Despite the fact that the text represents Early Middle English, it unexpectedly shows a slight prevalence of the innovative form *-ing*(*e*) over the conservative *-ende* (3 instances vs. 5 in *-inge*).

The other texts from the 14th–15th century central East Midland dialect show more variation in the present participle marker. Thus, *Guy of Warwick* (couplets and stanzas), the text from Auchinleck MS, apparently shows

a rivalry between the dialectal variants *-inde* (74 tokens), *-ende* (2 tokens) and a 'gerund-like' form in *-inge* (61 tokens), but it also contains the suffix *-and(e)* (3 tokens) which is regarded as a northern dialectal form. Present participle forms like *-inde/-iende*, *-ande* or *-inge* are commonly found alternating in the same text, even in rhymes:

(4) (a) He seye wiþ þat a grom **cominde**
　　　 To himward fast **erneinge**. (*Guy of Warwick*, l.5419–5420)
　　(b) When þe douk Loer herd þis tiding,
　　　 Þat Gij & Tirri were **coming.** (*Guy of Warwick*, l.6203–6204)
　　(c) Wiþ þat come Gij **prikeinde**
　　　 & a small tvige in his hond **bereinde**. (*Guy of Warwick*, l.2342–2343)
　　(d) Wiþ þat come Tirri **prikeinge**
　　　 In his fest his brond **bereinge**. (*Guy of Warwick*, l.2088–2089)
　　(e) No of þat sorwe neuer þe mo
　　　 Þat him was **comand** to (...) (*Guy of Warwick*, l.1125–1126)
　　(f) Wiþ þat come **prikeand** Tirri
　　　 Of Gurmoise þerl sone Aubri (...) (*Guy of Warwick*, l.2035–2036)

As regards the present participle markers the scribe of *Guy of Warwick* is rather inconsistent. Apart from attaching various present participle markers to the same verb he uses either of two forms within the same rhyme, so that the forms in *-nd* rhyme with forms in *-ng* frequently. It looks as if the plosives in these clusters were lost.

(5) (a) He seye wiþ þat a grom **cominde**
　　　 To himward fast **erneinge**. (*Guy of Warwick*, l.5419–5420)
　　(b) Bi þat side was Otous **fleinde**
　　　 In his hond his swerd **kerueing.** (*Guy of Warwick*, l.4857–4858)
　　(c) Of þre kniȝtes so wele **doinde**
　　　 Oȝain þen Loreyns **fiȝting**. (*Guy of Warwick*, l.4765–4766)

The last two central East Midland texts, *English sermons* and *The cloud of unknowing*, contain numerous present participle forms in *-ing*, but differences in the formation of the present participle ending remain. The analysis of the Wycliffite *English sermons*, dated to c1400 and probably originating in the Northampton/Leicestershire area, brings interesting results. Although the text offers a considerable number of *-yng/-ing* tokens (133), it also contains a few instances of forms different from *-ing*, e.g. 5 instances of *-enge* and 2 instances of *-ynde*.

(6) (a) (...) a poore man **lyeng** at hys gate þat was clepyd Lazarus
　　　 (CMWYCSER, 223.12)

Whan Crist saw_þese leprouse men **crienge** (CMWYCSER, 275.888)
And he say anoon and_sewede Crist **heryenge** God (CMWYCSER, 392.2993)

(b) þe þrydde was þe **stynkynde** careyne þat he qwekude in þe graue (CMWYCSER, I, 284.1031)

þis is Lazar þat lyþ **stynkynde** fowre days in his sepulcre (CMWYCSER, I, 284.1039)

þe þridde traueyle herof where to arayle þese **growynde** vynes. (CMWYCSER, 380.2757)

It is hard to determine why the scribe incorporated a small number of dialectal forms in *-enge/-ynde*, considering his frequent use of the most advanced form *-ing*. But pairs of present participle forms spelt *-enge/-inge* or *-ynde/-ing* are occasionally found:

(7) For hit is noo charyte to leue þe ordre þat Crist gaf and to take þese **stynkyng** orders. (CMWYCSER, 328.1825)

He was **cryinge** neþeles he ches to speke more mekely. (CMWYCSER, 342.2063)

It could also be emphasised that in the case of ***growynde*** and its variants in *-yng/-ing* the scribe uses the ending *-ing* to represent the participle (8a) and the gerund (8b):

(8) (a) (...) and þornes **growing** strangledon hit. (CMWYCSER, 384.2836)

(b) (...) but God gyueþ þe **growyng**, al gif_men planten and watren. (CMWYCSER, 380.2766)

For **growing** of cool wortis and oþtre weedis maken malecoly and oþre synnes (CMWYCSER, 381.2780)

(...) and **growing** of þis hooly seed. (CMWYCSER, 384.2824)

The last group of texts to be discussed, localized in the southern part of the East Midlands, contains the following items:

(9) c1100 *Poema morale* (MS Trinity College B 14, Cambridge)
c1200 *Vices and virtues* (MS Stowe 34 (*olim* 240), Brit. Lib., London)
c1300 *King Alisaundr* (MS Auchinleck (Advocates) 19.2.1)
c1330 *Arthour and Merlin* (MS Auchinleck (Advocates) 19.2.1)
c1350 *Prose psalter* (MS Additional 17376, Brit. Lib., London)
c1395 *The Old Testament* Wycliffite (MS Royal 1.C.8, Brit. Lib., London)
c1400 *Mandeville's travels* (MS Cotton Titus C16, Brit. Lib., London)

The earliest south East Midland text, *Poema morale*, shows no attestations of the present participle. *Vices and virtues*, a text from a slightly later period and produced by three scribes, contains corrections incorporated by at least three other hands. According to the PPCME2 sources,

> "a scribe of the northern border of the South-Eastern area has turned a composition in the dialect of the Middle or Western South into his own, with occasional retention of Southern forms. After a considerable interval his version was copied with little alteration by the three scribes of the Stowe manuscript",

which suggests that the language of the manuscript is older than the date of the copy. As regards the present participle markers, *Vices and virtues* exhibits the alternation of *-enge* and *-inde*. Additionally, the parsed text of the *Penn-Helsinki corpus* classifies the only present participle form as that in *-inge* (Code of oDes *sueriingge*). Assuming that the data is reliable, one may draw the conclusion that the form *-inge* in the East Midlands appeared for the first time in *Vices and virtues*, which seems not to be the case. The item *sueriingge* in the prose text apparently functions as a verbal noun and its meaning is 'of oath's swearing' or 'swearing of an oath'.

The scribes of the Auchinleck manuscript, containing the East Midland poems *King Alisaundr* (1300) and *Arthour and Merlin* (1330), written in Essex/Middlesex, use various markers to signal the present participle. *King Alisaundr* contains the ending *-ing*, but also *-in*, and shows the deletion of <g>.

(10) Swete odour ʒiueþ, ywis,
Gelofre, quibibbe & þe mace
Gingeuer, **comin** ʒeueþ odour of gras. (*King Alisaundr*, l.6787)

In *Arthour and Merlin* the scribe's favourite present participle suffix is *-ande*, the commonest northern form. Out of the 49 present participle tokens in the poem, 34 are *-ande*, 12 attach the Midland suffix *-inde/iende*, and only 3 verbs feature the contemporary *-ing* marker.

(11) He was founde þurth **wiching** þin,
Traitour' þai seyd 'verrament
For al þine enchauntement (...) (*Arthour and Merlin*, l.3154–3156)

(12) Þe kniʒt fel ded in a forwe;
In his **falling** brast þe spere -
Bretel bar it no ferþere. (*Arthour and Merlin*, l.3460–3462)

(13) Foules sing in forest wide,
      Swaines gin on **iustinge** ride,
      Maidens tiffen hem in pride. (*Arthour and Merlin*, l.7620–7622)

Apart from incorporating of so many *-and* forms, the scribe does not hesitate to use the alteration of *-and/-inde* markers in the same words. The context is not clear, but apparently the author used both forms freely, introducing the *-and/-inde* variation in words of high frequency (*comand/cominde*, *doand/doinde*, *fleand/fleainde* and *rideand/rideinde*).

Although *The earliest complete English prose psalter* is regarded as a typical East Midland prose text from the Essex area, a considerable majority of the present participle forms seem to be characteristic of the North. Out of 324 present participle tokens in the text, 295 attach *-and*, 23 represent the Southern type (*-yng/-ing*), and only 4 verbs retain the inherited Old English marker *-end*. Two verbs, *wirchen* and *sechen*, contain the specific sequence *-aund* with *-u* insertion typical of French spelling.

(14) (a) Defende me fram te **wirchaund** wickedness. (CMEARLPS, 69.3015)
      (b) (...) þou shal drescen te rigtful God **sechaund** hertes and reiners. (CMEARLPS, 6.238)

The last two items from the list, the Wycliffite *The Old Testament* and *Mandeville's travels*, an anonymous translation of a French work written in the southern part of the East Midlands (PPCME2), were composed at the beginning of the 15th century. The Wycliffite text contains the suffix *-ynge* exclusively, while *Mandeville's travels* displays a number of forms different from *-ing* (i.e. *-enge/-and*). The vast majority of the present participles exhibit forms with the marker *-ynge/-inge* (102 verbs), whereas 16 items end in *-enge*, with only one verb attaching the suffix *-and*, of Northern origin.

(15) (...) and become holle within of whilk þer er many git **standand** in diuerse placez of the world. (CMMANDEV, 45.1111)

The evidence from the East Midland manuscripts shows a gradual decrease in the use of the continuations of the Old English present participle marker *-ende.* The data selected from the East Midland texts suggest that the present participle suffix *-ing(e)* prevailed over the widely used markers *-end(e)*, *-ind(e)* and even *-and(e)* just before 1400.

3. Concluding remarks

The incidence of the present participle forms in the East Midland texts is shown below:

Table 1. Present Participle forms in East Midland texts (13th–15thc)

	Text name	Manuscript	Date	Genre	Pres. Part. forms
East Midland North	*The Ormulum*	MS Junius 1 (SC 5113), Bodleian Lib., Oxford	c1200	Homilies, poetry	-ennd(e) 11 (100%)
East Midland Central	*The Peterborough chronicle*	MS Laud. Misc. 636 E, Bodleian Lib. Oxford	c1200	History	-ende 22 (100%)
	Proverbs of Alfred	MS Maidstone	c1300	Poetry	-end(e) 3 (37,5%) -ind(e) 5 (62,5%)
	Guy of Warwick	MS Auchinleck (Advocates) 19.2.1	c1314	Poetry	-ind(e) 74 (44%) -end(e) 2 (1,2%) -ing(e) 61 (36,3%) -and(e) 31 (18,5%)
	English sermons Wycliffite	MS Additional 40672, Brit.Lib., London	c1400	Prose	-yng(e) 130 (92,8%) -eng(e) 5 (3,5%) -ing 3 (2,1%) -ynde 2 (1,6%)
	The cloud of unknowing	MS Harley 674, Brit.Lib., London	c1425	Prose	-yng 68 (75,5%) -ing 22 (24,5%)
East Midland South	*Vices and virtues*	2Stowe 34 (*olim* 240), Brit. Lib., London	c1200	Prose	-ende 40 (51,2%) -inde 37 (47,4%) -ingge 1 (1,4%)
	King Alisaundr	MS Auchinleck (Advocates) 19.2.1	c1300	Poetry	-in 1 (50%) -ing 1 (50%)
	Arthour and Merlin	MS Auchinleck (Advocates) 19.2.1	c1330	Poetry	-and 34 (69%) -inde/iende 12 (24%) -ing 3 (7%)
	The earliest complete English prose psalter	MS Additional 17376, Brit. Lib., London	c1350	Prose	-and 295 (91,04%) -yng 15 (4,6%) -ing 8 (2,4%) -end 4 (1,2%) -aund 2 (0,76%)
	The Old Testament Wycliffite	Royal 1.C.8, Brit. Lib., London	c1395	Prose	-ynge 60 (100%)
	Mandeville's travels	Cotton Titus C16, Brit. Lib., London	a1425	Prose	-ynge 97 (81,5%) -eng(e) 16 (13,4%) -ing(e) 5 (4,2%) -and 1 (0,9%)

The evidence above indicates that the East Midland texts of the 13th–14th centuries preserve divergent present participle forms, but according to the data extracted from the texts under scrutiny, the substitution of the Old English marker *-inge* for *-ende* was completed before the end of the 14th century. The data from the East Midland texts suggest that the present participle suffix *-ing(e)* prevailed over the widely employed markers *-end(e)*, *-ind(e)*, *-and(e)* just before 1390.

Figure 1 shows the distribution of the present participle variants *-ende/ -inge* in the East Midland between 1200 and 1390:
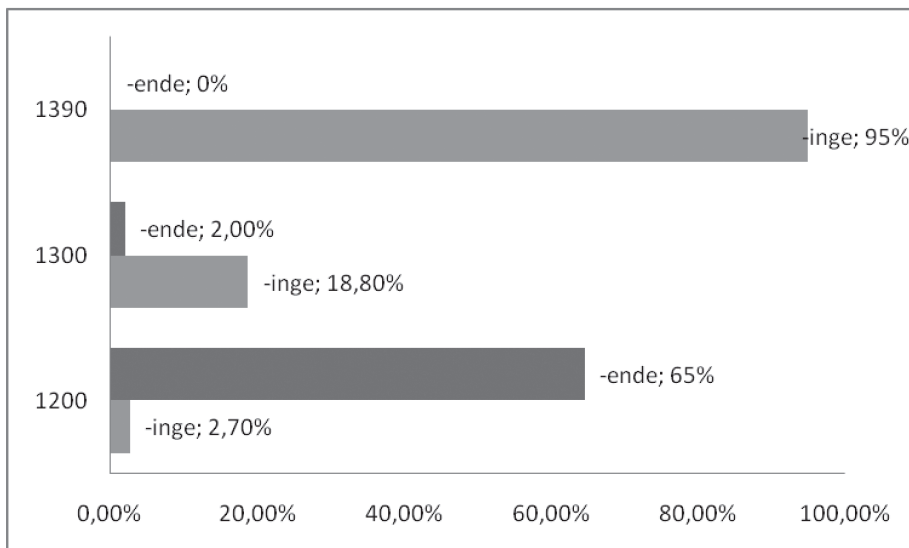

Fig. 1. The distribution of the present participle markers *-ende/-inge* in the East Midlands (1200–1390)

The wide range of prose and poetic texts from between 1200 and 1300 composed in the Central and Southern parts of East Midlands display a gradual disappearance of the present participle suffixes *-ende* and *-inde* in favour of *-inge* at the end of the 13th century. A rapid increase of the prevalence of *-inge* over the other dialectal variants, i.e. *-ende/-inde/-enge* and Northern *-ande*, took place between 1300 and 1400. An intriguing phenomenon is the appearance of the *-and* marker, typical of the North, in several East Midland poems.

To conclude, none of the texts written after 1400 show variation, save one. *Mandeville's travels* shows slight variation with some verbs ending in *-ynge/-inge/-enge* and a single item which attaches *-and*, possibly of Northern origin.

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