THE DEVELOPMENT OF GERUNDS AS OBJECTS OF SUBJECT-CONTROL VERBS IN ENGLISH (1400–1760)*

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0. *Introduction*

The aim of this paper is to examine the earlier history of the catenative constructions illustrated in (1)-(3):

(1a) Harry desires to talk to you.
(1b) *Harry desires talking to you.

(2a) Harry avoids talking to you.
(2b) *Harry avoids to talk to you.

(3a) Brian would loathe to live in the country.
(3b) Brian loathed living in the country.

All three sets of examples involve subject-control verbs, that is, verbs governing a complement clause whose unexpressed subject (designated as PRO in current generative transformational literature) has the matrix subject as antecedent or 'controller': *Harry* in both (1)-(2), *Brian* in (3). As is clear from the first two pairs of examples, in Present-day English (henceforth: PE) usage certain verbs of subject control, like *desire* and *avoid* in the sentences above, are restricted to patterning with either a *to*-infinitive or an *-ing* form, whereas with verbs like *loathe* and a few others a choice of complement is possible, sometimes with a difference in meaning; this last feature, however, will be ignored for the moment.[1]

The functional difference between *-ing* and infinitival clauses as objects of subject-control verbs has often been noted and illustrated, at least as regards late Modern and Present-day English. Comments on the topic can be

[1] Though it is arguable that aspectuals, at least when used with agentive subjects as in *he began to open/opening all the cupboards*, also qualify as subject-control verbs (see Brinton 1988:62ff.), they constitute a topic of major interest in their own right and will therefore be examined in another paper.

found in practically all current handbooks, as well as in major grammars such as those of Poutsma (1904), Jespersen (1940), Quirk et al. (1985), Palmer (1987), and Declerck (1991). More specialized treatments include those by Bolinger (1968), Bladon (1968), Beukema & Verspoor (1991), and, particularly, Rudanko (1989). On the other hand, as regards earlier stages of English, Visser (1963–1973 §§1177-1194, 1772-1783) remains practically the only approach to the topic to date.

In what follows, I will first briefly review the Present-day English data and the views on the factor or factors triggering the selection of one or the other type of complement, this in order to examine in later sections how those factors tie in with the use and development of gerunds after subject-control verbs over the period 1400–1760. Then in Section 2, I will consider the earlier history of both the infinitival construction and that with an -*ing* form. Section 3 contains an account of the corpus on which my research has been based, and expounds the findings of the present study. Finally, a summary of the major conclusions is given in Section 4.

1. *Verbs of subject-control in Present-day English*

As regards Present-day English (henceforth: PE), the fullest analysis of subject-control verbs is doubtlessly Rudanko (1989). Setting aside a few marginal items that call for little comment here, Rudanko classifies most subject-control verbs on the basis of the semantic feature 'volition', which he envisages as comprising three categories or degrees, namely desideration, intention and endeavour, plus their negative counterparts. He is thus able to distinguish six subclasses, illustrated respectively by items like *want* (desideration), *intend* (intention in addition to desideration), *venture* (endeavour, desideration and intention), *abhor* (negative desideration), *forbear* (negative desideration and intention) and *avoid* (negative desideration, intention and endeavour).

By comparing the overall numbers of verbs in each class, Rudanko (1989:47) manages to show that "in each category of positive volition verbs governing infinitival complements predominate, whereas in each category of negative volition gerundive complements predominate". Further, he suggests (p.149) that "the preponderance of verbs of positive volition [taking the infinitival pattern] may be connected with the old force of *to*, as an element expressing purpose."

Unlike Rudanko's analysis, which is exceptional in its comprehensiveness and in its interpretation of the facts, most other studies of subject-control verbs tend to concentrate on just a handful of predicates frequently occurring in both the infinitival and gerundive patterns in PE, namely the so-called

'retrospective verbs' *forget*, *remember*, and *regret* and emotive verbs of liking and hating like *dread*, *hate*, *like*, *love*, *loathe* or *prefer*.

As regards retrospective verbs (for the label, see Quirk et al. 1985:1193), all treatments naturally coincide in pointing out the temporal difference existing in PE between the construction with an infinitive and that with an *-ing* form; as Quirk et al. (*ibid.*) note, "the infinitive construction indicates that the action or event takes place after (and as a result of) the mental process denoted by the verb has begun, while the reverse is true for the participle construction, which refers to a preceding event or occasion coming to mind at the time indicated by the main verb". This difference, which is also mentioned by Palmer (1987: 190, 198), is clearly illustrated in the following pair:

    (4a) I remembered doing it.
    (4b) I remembered to do it.

Not rarely, scholars have interpreted the distinction in meaning between the two structures with retrospective verbs as a manifestation of a more general bias of the infinitive towards potentiality, and of that of the *-ing* form towards performance. Thus Bolinger (1968:124), commenting on pairs like (4a–b) above, observes that "the conclusion seems reasonable that there is a properly semantic contrast between the nominalizations carried by *-ing* and those carried by the infinitive. It is a contrast between two aspects: *reification* versus *hypothesis* or *potentiality*"; see also for a similar view Quirk et al. (1985: 1193).

In the case of emotive verbs, views on the possible semantic function, or functions, of each construction are considerably more diverse, and it is not difficult to come across counterexamples showing the inadequacy of practically every criterion proposed in the literature. Quirk et al. (p.1192) invoke the potentiality/performance distinction, which tends to favour the infinitive "in hypothetical and nonfactual contexts", and the *-ing* construction "where the speaker is referring to something which definitely happens or has happened", as in examples (3a-b) above. In other cases, however, they acknowledge that "there is little appreciable difference between the two constructions":

    (5) Do you prefer to cook/cooking for yourself, or to eat/eating
        in a restaurant?

Other treatments, such as those of Poutsma (1904: 622, 625) or Zandvoort ([7]1975:29), oppose reference to a particular occasion (expressed by the infinitive) to a statement of general validity or habit (for which the *-ing* form is

used). Jespersen (1940:192-193), in his turn, notes the following with the verbs *love, like, dislike* and *hate*:

> When the infinitive is used the implied subject of the nexus is the same as the subject of the main verb, exactly as in *I wish (desire, want) to see*. When the gerund is used this need not be the case, the implied subject may be the generic person ('one'): the implied tense may also be generic. Therefore we say: *I hate lying* (the vice in general) / *I hate to lie* (in this particular case).

According to this interpretation, we could thus say that the difference lies in the nature of PRO, the non-overt subject of the complement clause: whereas the infinitive construction would necessarily involve control of PRO by the higher subject, this need not be the case with the gerundive pattern, in which so-called arbitrary, or uncontrolled, PRO could also be at work. Strictly speaking, therefore, in the *I hate lying* example above, *hate* would no longer be functioning as a verb of subject-control.

In an oft-quoted article, Bladon (1968) accounts for the two complementation patterns available with the emotives *like, love, hate, dislike* and *prefer* by suggesting that they belong to two distinct semantic classes:

> a) the class behaving like *want,* which is characterised by the semantic feature [desire] and selects a *to*-infinitive, as in *he likes/loves/ hates/ prefers to learn languages*;
> b) the class behaving like *enjoy,* which encodes the semantic feature [enjoyment] and selects an *-ing* complement, as in *he likes/loves/ hates/prefers learning languages.*

Finally, in a recent contribution to the topic, Beukema & Verspoor (1991) coincide with Bladon in again attributing the different complements of *like, love, hate, prefer* and *dislike* to the fact that these verbs can behave either as volitives (= Bladon's [desire] category), which express prior intentions and select *to*-infinitives, or as evaluatives (= Bladon's [enjoyment] category), which express feelings, emotions and attitudes towards acts, states or events and select *-ing* complements.

2.   *Nominal and verbal gerunds in earlier stages of English*

Whereas the complement type *I love to learn languages* has been on record since OE times, the ancestor of the modern pattern *I love learning languages* is a structure in which the *-ing* form is in fact just an abstract verbal noun functioning as head not of a complement clause, but of an ordinary noun phrase:

> (6) a1387 Trevisa *Higden's Polychronicon* 5.153 [*MED* s.v. *Dreden* v. 2.(a)]: He hadde i-trespassed, and dredde the chastisynge of his maister.

From ME onwards, this type of noun, which as such could occur in syntactic functions other than that of object, gradually acquired a number of verbal properties, namely, a) it became capable of governing an object or a predicative complement (e.g., "I hate playing tennis", "I don't like being ill"); b) it could be modified by adverbial adjuncts restricted to co-occurring only with verbs; c) it showed tense and voice distinctions (e.g., "of having done it", "the necessity of loving and being loved"); and d) it could take a subject in a case other than the genitive (e.g., "I didn't know about *the weather* being so awful in this area"). This process of increasing verbalization of the verbal noun or 'gerund'[2] has been explored by, among others, Mustanoja (1960), Visser (1963-1973 §§1035–1124), Tajima (1985), Donner (1986), Koma (1987), Jack (1988), Houston (1989), and, more recently, by Bourcier (1992). Though further research on the topic is still clearly needed, on the whole it can be asserted that, as both Donner (1986) and Tajima (1985:137) have shown, the regular and systematic use of the gerund with fully verbal characteristics was not an established feature of Middle English syntax, even though the preliminary stages of its development from purely nominal to purely verbal can be detected as early as in the second half of the 12th century (see Tajima 1985:137). In addition, the analyses of Donner (1986), Koma (1987) and Houston (1989:181) all suggest that the verbalization of the gerund, notably its taking a direct object, took place earlier in the case of those gerunds which were themselves dependent on a preposition, as in

(7) a1450 *Death and Liffe* 136–138 [Tajima 1985:77]: in liking this liuinge [...] there was rydinge & revell that ronge in the bankes

As regards the use of the gerund as object of a subject-control verb, its process of verbalization when in that position, and its pattern of alternation with the infinitive, all these are aspects which are still but imperfectly known, hence our decision to examine them in this paper. On the whole, however, even a cursory glance at the lists of examples collected by Visser (§§1773–1783) suggests that the verbal gerund was slow to develop as object, so that by late Modern English it was not yet regarded as fully acceptable after a number of matrix predicates with which it has now become established usage.

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[2] Henceforth, I will be using 'gerund' as a convenient cover term for nominal gerunds like that in (6), verbal gerunds like that in PE "I like learning languages", and mixed gerunds like eModE "I will attempt the doing it".

3. *The data*

In order to explore the development through time of the infinitival and gerundive constructions with subject-control verbs, I started from Visser (1963–1973). For the infinitival pattern, the relevant sections in Visser include 1177 to 1194 (Part III/1); for the gerundive one, 1772 to 1783 (Part III/2). As a first step, I proceeded to isolate, out of all the data collected by Visser, those predicates recorded with both constructions prior to the second half of the 18th century; that is, I discarded predicates like *loathe, plan, prefer, project, regret* and quite a few others, since with these the use of *-ing* complements seems to date back to comparatively late in the Modern English period, and may thus have been modelled on the behaviour of other verbs of related meaning already exhibiting a regular pattern of alternation between the infinitival and gerundive constructions. This procedure significantly reduced the total number of verbs to be investigated, which turned out to be the following:

1) Emotive verbs: *abhor, dread, fear, grudge, hate, like, love, scorn, scruple*. Of these, *grudge* is labelled by Rudanko (1989:16) as "at best very marginal" today in the infinitival pattern, while he notes (p.41) that *scruple* occurs only with an infinitive, though even in this pattern it is "perhaps slightly marginal for some speakers" (p.17).

2) Verbs of intention: *intend*.

3) Verbs of attempting and venturing: *attempt, adventure, venture*. Of these, *adventure* is now obsolete; as regards the other two predicates, Palmer (1987: 192, 202) notes that *attempt* takes only an infinitive, while with *venture* both the gerund and the infinitive are possible.

4) Verbs of avoiding and forbearing: *avoid, escape, eschew, forbear, (cannot/could not) help, refrain, shun*. Of these, *avoid, escape, eschew, help* and *shun* are now obsolete in the infinitival pattern; *refrain* occurs only in the prepositional pattern *refrain from V-ing*, and *forbear* is "somewhat archaic" with an infinitive and "possibly on its way out" (Rudanko 1989:17).

5) Verbs of declining, failing to and refusing: *decline, deny* "refuse (to do)", *fail, miss, neglect, omit, refuse*. Of these, *decline* and *fail* are now always used in the infinitive pattern, *miss* allows only a gerund, and *refuse* is "somewhat marginal" in this latter construction (Rudanko 1989:41). Finally, *deny* "refuse (to do)" seems to have become obsolete by the late 18th century (cf. *OED* s.v. *Deny* v. 8); in its current sense of "contradict, declare to be untrue", *deny* was formerly followed by a *that*-clause, though it is now also available with an *-ing* form (e.g., "he denied knowing anything about it").

6) Verbs of suffering, bearing, etc.: *(cannot/could not) abide, bear, endure.*

7) Retrospective verbs: *remember.* As shown in Fanego (1996a), the development of *remember* and other retrospective verbs differs in important ways from that of all other verbs of subject control; though occasional references to their history will be made in the course of this paper, lack of space precludes me from repeating here in detail the conclusions I have expounded elsewhere. The interested reader is thus referred to the above mentioned study.[3]

As will become apparent later in this paper, it is convenient to further subdivide the above listed verb classes in terms of the distinction between 'implicative' vs. 'nonimplicative', as proposed by Karttunen (1971). Implicative verbs differ from nonimplicative ones in several respects; to take two, witness (8)-(9):

(8a) John managed to meet Mary.
(8b) John intended to meet Mary.

(9a) John didn't manage to meet Mary.
(9b) John didn't intend to meet Mary.

As Karttunen (1971:341) notes, it seems clear that anyone who asserts (8a), with implicative *manage,* thereby commits himself to the view that the proposition encoded in the complement clause (*John met Mary*) is true, whereas (8b) is noncommittal in this respect (that is, John may or may not have met Mary). In the same fashion, while (9a) implies the negation of *John met Mary*, (9b) does not. Finally, with a verb like *avoid* in (10)

(10) John avoided meeting Mary

the implication is, as in (9a), that *John didn't meet Mary*, hence the label 'negative implicative' applied by Karttunen to *avoid* and other related predicates.

Given the implicative vs. nonimplicative dichotomy, and ignoring the predicates in classes 6 and 7, it is possible to classify the other verbs above into: a) negative implicative: *avoid, escape, eschew, forbear, refrain, shun, decline, fail, miss, neglect, omit;* b) positive implicative: *cannot/could not help* (this has a positive implication in spite of the apparent negation, as Karttunen (1971:353n.13) notes); c) nonimplicative: the verbs in classes 1, 2, and 3. Finally, the status of *refuse* is somewhat indeterminate, as both Kart-

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[3] See also Fanego (1996a), where I discuss retrospective predicates in relation to the verb of effort *try*. With this latter, the use of both the *-ing* and the infinitival patterns (e.g., "I tried switching on the light"/"I tried to switch on the light") can be traced back only to the early 19th century, and hence falls outside the scope of the present study.

tunen (1971:354) and Rudanko (1989:36) acknowledge, a comment that, presumably, applies also to its now obsolete synonym *deny* "refuse (to do)".[4]

The next step consisted in checking the following sources for occurrences of the above listed 31 verbs followed by either an infinitive or a gerund: 1) the relevant sections in Visser (§§1177-1194, 1772-1783); 2) the *MED* and the *OED*; 3) the *Helsinki Corpus of English Texts* (Kytö & Rissanen 1991), Parts HM4 (1420–1500, 213.850 words), HE1 (1500–1570, 190.160 words), HE2 (1570–1640, 189.800 words) and HE3 (1640–1710, 171.040 words); 4) data for Marlowe's complete works, as found in Ando (1976); 5) the *Harvard Concordance* (Spevack 1973) to the complete works of William Shakespeare; 6) data for Dryden's prose, as found in Söderlind (1958); 7) Louis T. Milic's (1986) *Augustan Prose Sample 1675–1725* (= 79.000 words);[5] 8) *The Spectator*, nos.474-514 (= about 45.000/50.000 words); 9) pp.1-65 (= about 25.000 words) of Daniel Defoe's *Roxana* (1724); 10) Volume I of Joseph Spence's *Observations, Anecdotes, and Characters of Books and Men* (Osborne 1966); these cover a long period, comprising from about 1727, when Spence first started recording actual conversation (cf. Osborne, p.xviii), till a few years before his death in 1768; 11) the prose scenes in Henry Fielding's play *The Author's Farce* (1729–1730); and 12) a body of letters written to and by Lady Mary Wortley Montagu between March 1721 and December 1749 (pp.1-448 in Vol.II of Halsband (1966); about 125.000/130.000 words in all).

A few comments are in order concerning this list. In the first place, it is clear that my sources for the years 1400–1570 are far more limited than those for later stages, comprising as they do only the *MED,* the *OED*, Visser (1963-1973), and the relevant sections of the Helsinki Corpus. One justification for this imbalance is that it became apparent from the start of this investigation that variation between infinitives and gerunds after the verbs under discussion increases with time, and could only be adequately observed in texts dating back to the 17th century and later. In fact, there is a sharp rise in the frequency of gerunds in the first decades of the 18th century, so that the fact that I have not examined any texts beyond 1750/1760 is yet another limitation of the present study.

A second clarification relates to the medium of expression (verse vs. prose) of the sources examined. These comprise only prose from 1640 on-

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[4] The status of *(ad)venture* (class 3) as either implicative or nonimplicative is also a bit unclear (cf. Rudanko 1989:48).

[5] Out of this total, 22.000 words correspond to the years 1710–1725, which are not covered by subsection HE3 of the Helsinki Corpus.

wards, but both prose and verse for earlier stages. However, since in verse the distribution of infinitives and gerunds is likely to be influenced by prosodic factors, I have duly indicated, wherever this seemed necessary, whether the examples being commented upon at any given moment occur in prose or in verse. For this purpose, the abbreviations (p) and (v) have been used throughout.

Lastly, in order to obtain a clearer picture of the development of the gerundive and infinitival patterns, the data obtained from the sources listed in the preceding paragraphs was divided up chronologically into four different stages, roughly corresponding, except for the first one, to those in the Helsinki Corpus; namely I) 1400–1570; II) 1570–1640; III) 1640–1710; IV) 1710 and beyond; each will now be examined in order. For the reasons already expounded, the retrospective verb *remember* (class 7) has been excluded from the following discussion.

3.1 *1400–1570*[6]

Five out of the thirty verbs in classes 1-6 above were not recorded in the relevant patterns, namely *avoid, decline, (cannot/could not) help, scorn,* and *scruple.* The remaining twenty-five occurred in varying proportions, as follows:

3.1.1 *Emotive verbs: abhor* (3 inf/2 gerund), *dread* (very common with inf/3 gerund), *fear* (5 inf), *grudge* (9 inf/2 gerund), *hate* (3 inf/3 gerund), *like* (with inf in all its occurrences), *love* (very common with inf/5 gerund).[7]

3.1.2 *Verbs of intention: intend* (very common, and only with inf: about 28 occurrences in HE1 alone).

3.1.3 *Verbs of attempting and venturing: attempt, adventure* and *venture* are common and occur only with infinitive.

3.1.4 *Verbs of avoiding and forbearing: escape* (2 inf/1 gerund), *eschew* (common with inf/2 gerund), *forbear* (13 inf/9 gerund), *refrain* (3 inf/3 gerund), *shun* (2 inf/1 gerund).

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[6] In this and in later sections, the figures for occurrences of each individual verb include the examples taken from the *MED*, the *OED* and Visser; they cannot, therefore, be considered as exact indications of frequency. This comment applies in particular to stage I (1400–1570); as regards the crucial stages II-IV, the great majority of the numbers adduced correspond to instances recorded in the texts examined.

[7] The label 'common' will be used henceforth for verbs occurring ten times or more.

3.1.5 *Verbs of declining, failing to and refusing: deny* (common with inf/1 gerund), *fail* (22 inf), *miss* (7 ex., with inf), *neglect* (2 inf), *omit* (2 inf/1 gerund), *refuse* (very common with inf/1 gerund).

3.1.6 *Verbs of suffering, bearing, etc.: abide* (3 inf/2 gerund), *bear* (1 inf/1 gerund), *endure* (common, only with inf).

Though the gerund, like any other noun, could freely occur, in principle, with any of the verbs under analysis, it is clear that at this stage these are found with infinitives far more numerously than with gerunds. Even a verb like *escape*, which is the first to have become restricted to gerundive complementation (see section 3.2 below), occurs twice with an infinitive between 1400 and 1570. Furthermore, as could be expected in view of the historical development outlined in Section 2, no verbal gerunds are found in my ME material, and only one is recorded prior to 1570:

> (11) 1561 T. Hoby tr. *Castiglione's Courtyer* I (1577) D iv [*OED* s.v. *Refrain* v. 5b]: They come so to purpose, that hee can not refraine telling them.

All the other gerunds found in object position exhibit clearly nominal characteristics, as in (12) below, or, at best, are of the type represented by (13):

> (12) 1443 Pecock *Reule Crysten Religion* (EETS) 56, 4 [Visser §1775]: he oughte forto forbere bothe inward and outward preising and preying and worschiping, dispreising and disworschiping.
> (13) c1425 *Rule St. Benet*, Northern Prose Version (EETS) 8, 19 [Visser §1773]: halde the in chastite [...] luue fasting.

In the latter case, the gerund lacks premodification and often also postmodification, thus being the sole constituent of its own NP. When so used, the gerund comes to denote, roughly, "the general practice, activity, art, etc. of (doing something)". As will be seen later in this paper, this will remain a central function of the gerund at later stages, which probably accounts for the fact that, as mentioned in Section 1 above, the difference between gerund and infinitive has often been seen in modern grammars as a contrast between reference to a particular occasion (expressed by the infinitive) versus a statement of general validity or a habit (expressed by the *-ing* form).

Also worthy of note in connection with the data for this period is the fact that, on the whole, verbs of avoiding and forbearing seem to be more hospitable to the gerundive construction than any other verb class, a tendency which is more clearly confirmed by the evidence from later stages. When the gerund is used with verbs of that description, the overall context is often negative or nonassertive and contains *can/could* or some other related auxil-

iary, as in (11) above and (14) below. As will be seen later in this paper, this is a syntactic environment which clearly promotes the use of the *-ing* form, even though instances with an infinitive can also be found at this stage, as in (15).

(14) 1528 St. Th. More, Wks. (1557) 237 B11 [Visser §1775]: there coulde fewe forbeare laughing.
(15) 1561 Daus tr. *Bullinger on Apoc.* Preface (1573) 5 [*OED* s.v. *Refrain* v. 8b]: Lawrence Ualla [...] could not refrayn to enveygh against the Popish clergie.

3.2 *1570–1640*

3.2.1 *Emotive verbs.* Those recorded only with an infinitive include *abhor* (5 ex.), *dread* (3 ex.), *grudge* (2 ex.), *hate* (4 ex.), and *like.* Figures for other verbs in the class are as follows: *fear* (very frequent with inf/2 gerund), *love* (very common with inf/4 gerund), *scorn* (7 inf/1 gerund, in prose), *scruple* (no occurrences).

3.2.2 *Verbs of intention. Intend* is a high-frequency verb in the infinitival pattern (e.g., 13 ex. in HE2, 17 ex. in Marlowe, etc.); there are no occurrences with a gerund.

3.2.3 *Verbs of attempting and venturing. Attempt, adventure* and *venture* are common, and regularly followed by an infinitive, except in these isolated instances:

(16) 1623 Ford *Loues Sacrifice* I.ii (1839) 78 (v) [Visser §1781]: I am loth to move my lord unto offence; Yet I'll adventure chiding.
(17) 1602 Clowes *Treatise for the Artificial Cure of Struma* p.27 [HE2]: there is no doubt, but he will be so prouident, that nothing shall offend. How be it, it is not necessary or sufferable ouer curiously to search and attempt the cutting them out by Incision:
(18) Shakespeare *Othello* 3.4.22 (p): Clown. To do this is within the compass of man's wit, and therefore I will attempt the doing it. [First Folio reading; the 1622 Q1 reads "the doing of it".]

3.2.4 *Verbs of avoiding and forbearing. Avoid,* which is first recorded in this period, occurs only once, with an infinitive (*OED* s.v. *Avoid* v. 11, 1599 Hakluyt *Voy.* II.i.23 "Because he by that meanes would auoid to marry with Alice"), while figures for other verbs in this class are as follows: *escape* (11 gerund: 8 ex. in prose/3 ex. in verse); *eschew* (no examples); *forbear* (14 infinitive: 13 ex. in verse/1 ex. in prose; 5 gerund: 2 ex. in verse/3 in prose); *(cannot/ could not) help* (no occurrences); *refrain* (3 infinitive: 2 ex. in verse/1 ex. in prose; 5 gerund, in prose); *shun* (3 infinitive: 2 ex. in prose/1 ex. in verse; 1 gerund, in prose).

3.2.5 Verbs of declining, failing to and *refusing. Deny* (9 ex.), *fail* (8 ex.), *miss* (2 ex.), *neglect* (2 ex.), *omit* (1 ex.) and *refuse* (8 ex. in Shakespeare, 5 in HE2, etc.) occur only in the infinitival pattern. There are no instances with *decline.*

3.2.6 Verbs of suffering, bearing, etc. Bear does not occur at this stage. *Abide* takes an infinitive in five cases (4 in prose/1 in verse), and a gerund in the three instances quoted below. *Endure* is regularly followed by an infinitive (10 ex. in prose/6 ex. in verse), except in example (20):

> (19) Shakespeare *2 Henry IV* 4.1.159 (v): That argues but the shame of your offense: /A rotten case abides no handling./
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> (20) Shakespeare *Henry V* 5.2.311 (p): for maids, well summer'd and warm kept, are like flies at Bartholomew-tide, blind, though they have their eyes, and then they will endure handling, which before would not abide looking on.
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> (21) 1622 S. Ward *Christ All in All* (1627) 13 (p) [Visser §1788]: This Eagles feathers will not abide blending with others.

As in stage I, the gerund continues to be an infrequent type of complementation with most of the verbs under analysis, at least by comparison with the infinitive. In addition, the purely verbal gerund is even more scarce, since there are only two instances fully satisfying that description, namely those quoted below as (22) and (23). In the former, the verbal nature of the gerund is clear from the presence of the predicative *drunk*; in the latter, by that of a direct object:

> (22) Shakespeare *The Tempest* 2.2.59 (p): Gonzalo. And were the king on't, what would I do? Sebastian. Scape being drunk, for want of wine.
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> (23) Shakespeare *Twelfth Night* 3.2.81 (p): you have not seen such a thing as 'tis. I can hardly forbear hurling things at him.

An important number (about 27 ex. in all) of all gerunds recorded are once more of the "I love fasting" type, in which the gerund is the head of a 'light' phrase with little or no modification and denotes a general activity, practice, or the like; indeed, with the verb *love* in particular, this seems to be the only type of gerund available, both at this stage and in stage I.

Also noteworthy is the high number of so-called 'passival'[8] gerunds; there are in all ten examples with *escape*, plus 1 with *fear,* 1 with *adventure* (cf. (16) above), 3 with *abide* (quoted as (19)-(21) above), and 1 with *endure* (cf. (20) above). In a passival gerund the subject of the matrix verb is felt to

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[8] The label is Visser's (§1872).

be identical not with the unexpressed subject, but rather with the unexpressed object, of the gerund, but there is in fact no overt marker of the passive, so that the gerund can be said to be passive only in sense, but not in form (e.g., *escape whipping*).

In its process of increasing verbalization from ME onwards, the gerund gradually became sensitive to voice distinctions, so that a genuinely passive gerund (i.e., *being handled*) has been on record since the 15th century (see Tajima 1985:113ff). However, that the passive gerund was very slow to develop is shown by the fact that, according to Tajima, only five ME examples have been found so far, while for the 16th and early 17th centuries he lists a total of just twenty one instances. In addition, in all of his examples the gerund is dependent on a preposition (e.g., *for feare of being shent*), an environment in which, as already noted in Section 2, the verbalization of the gerund took place earlier.

One passival gerund was also found in my ME data (with the matrix verb *hate* ("thei hatiden teching")), though it seems reasonable to assume that further examples would emerge had I used a more extensive corpus for that period. As regards those recorded in stage II (1570–1640), the overall behaviour of the matrix verbs involved seems to indicate that, other things being equal, a sequence like *fears robbing* was preferred to one with the corresponding passive infinitive (i.e., *fears to be robbed*). Thus, it seems noteworthy that *endure* should occur 16 times (10 in prose/6 in verse) with an infinitive, active in all cases, as against only once (in prose) with a passival gerund (*endure handling*). For *abide* the figures are 5 ex. + active infinitive (4 prose/1 verse) versus 3 ex. + passival gerund (2 prose/1 verse). As regards *fear*, the breakdown for this verb in Shakespeare's works is as follows:

 a) in prose: 5 ex. + active infinitive / 1 ex. + passival gerund (*fears robbing*; cf. *Two Gentlemen of Verona* 2.1.25).
 b) in verse: 21 ex. + active infinitive / 4 ex. + passive infinitive / 1 ex. + gerund (*fears sinking*; cf. *Rape of Lucrece* 280).

The other two predicates taking passival gerunds are *adventure* (1 ex.) and *escape* (10 ex., 7 in prose/3 in verse). The isolated instance after *adventure* (quoted above as (16)) occurs in a verse line, so that its selection may have resulted from prosodic factors; the examples with *escape,* in their turn, seem also less significant, since *escape* only occurs with a gerund (11 ex., 10 of them passival), which suggests that at this time it was already the only type of complement allowed by this verb.

The data also confirm that, on average, the gerund is more likely to occur with certain negative implicative verbs of avoiding and forbearing. This is of

course obvious enough for *escape*, which, as already noted, only takes the gerund, but holds also for *forbear* and *refrain*. In addition, it is with these three specific verbs that the purely verbal gerund is first found, since the isolated instance recorded in stage I (1400–1570) was dependent on *refrain* (see quotation (11) above), while the two verbal gerunds occurring in this period are governed by *escape* and *forbear* (see (22) and (23) above) respectively.

Finally, attention should also be drawn to another aspect of gerundial syntax which can be observed at this stage, though it becomes more noticeable in the light of the evidence available from 1640 onwards; namely, that a sequence of two nonfinite VPs tends to be diversified as either *to infinitive V-ing* or, alternatively, as *V-ing to infinitive*; witness, for instance, (24), and also (17) above:

> (24) a1627 Hayward *Annals* p.5 [HE2]: and thes alsoe were charged *to forbeare treating* of controversyes in Religion [...]

Stylistic patterning is also likely to be responsible for the selection of the gerund after *attempt* in the following example, where its use avoids the repetition of the infinitive *to do*, with which the sentence opens:

> (25) Shakespeare *Othello* 3.4.22 (p): Clown. To do this is within the compass of man's wit, and therefore I will attempt the doing it.

As will be seen later in this paper, the evidence from stages III (1640–1710) and IV (1710–1760) suggests that at least certain uses of the gerund were associated with informal levels of style. This promoting factor, however, cannot be adequately observed at this stage. Indeed, a number of the gerunds recorded occur in prose of a rather colloquial nature (see in particular quotations (20) and (23) above), but the overall number of examples of this kind cannot possibly be seen as statistically significant.

3.3 *1640–1710*

3.3.1 *Emotive verbs.* Emotive verbs not recorded at this stage are *dread* and *grudge*. Those found only in the infinitival pattern include *abhor* (1 ex.), *hate* (6 ex., 5 of them in Dryden's prose; cf. Söderlind 1958: 20, 23), and *scruple* (4 ex.). *Like* occurs four times with an infinitive, and once with a verbal gerund (see quotation (26) below); this latter, however, differs from prototypical instances of *-ing* complementation such as *I like learning languages* in that the gerund is given front position in the clause, and is thus not in direct contact with its predicate. As regards *love*, it selects an infinitive in the vast majority of cases (e.g., 21 ex. in Dryden's prose); the few gerunds recorded

(7 ex. in all) belong, as in earlier stages, to the nominal type denoting a general activity or habit, as in (27):

> (26) 1673 Dryden *Amboyna* 15: Seizing their factories I like well enough.
> (27) 1697 Vanbrugh *The Relapse* (Mermaids ed.) 2.i: He lov'd [...] eating and drinking, I carding and playing.

With *fear* the unmarked construction continues to be the infinitive; there are, for instance, 10 ex. of this use in Dryden's prose, and 4 in HE3. A gerund is recorded only in (28) below, which involves a passival construction; in this respect, therefore, the behaviour of this verb does not differ substantially from that observed for the years 1570–1640, where *fear* regularly selected the infinitive except in a couple of instances involving verse in one case and a passival gerund in the other:

> (28) 1690 Dryden *Amphytrion* 91: thou need'st never fear hanging.

The remaining verb in this class, *scorn*, takes an infinitive in six cases (all in Dryden's prose) and a nominal gerund of the "I love fasting" type in the following example:

> (29) 1675 Wycherley *Country Wife* (Mermaid) 3.2.81-82: Horner . [...] why should'st thou hate the silly poets? Thou hast too much wit to be one, and they, like whores, are only hated by each other. And thou dost scorn writing, I'm sure.
> Sparkish. Yes, I'd have you to know, I scorn writing.

3.3.2 *Verbs of intention.* Infinitives after *intend* are extremely frequent (e.g., 40 ex. in Dryden's prose, 29 ex. in HE3, etc.), as in earlier periods. Yet now for the first time this verb is also recorded in the gerundive construction, in the private correspondence of Nicholas Haddock. The overall tone of the passage is decidedly colloquial, both in its choice of words and in its use of syntactic features usually associated with the spoken language; notice, for instance, the lack of an explicit subject for *intend*.

> (30) 1706 *Haddock Correspondence* p.50 [HE3]: After we have got the castle, I hear the fleet will go for the Islands of Minorca and Majorca, and, after that, I hope home. If the S[ain]t George should not do, intend asking S[i]r J[oh]n Leake leave for my self. I am glad to hear the ship at Sheernes will be launcht so soon as March. I hope I'm pretty secure of her.

3.3.3 *Verbs of attempting and venturing.* *Attempt* occurs only in the infinitive pattern (e.g., 16 ex. in Dryden's prose). *Adventure* and *venture* are frequent with an infinitive in all the sources examined (e.g., the total for both verbs in Dryden's prose is 22 ex.). *-Ing* forms, on the contrary, are recorded only in

two cases, both involving passival gerunds (cf., for instance, (31) below); in this connection, it should be pointed out that the isolated gerund found with *(ad)venture* in stage II (1570–1640) was also a passival one.

(31) 1690 Dryden *Don Sebastian* 415: How thy good nature works upon me; well I can do no less than venture damning for thee, and I may put fair for it, if the Rabble be order'd to rise to Night.

3.3.4 *Verbs of avoiding and forbearing:* avoid (1 inf/8 gerund), *escape* (1 gerund), *eschew* (no occurrences), *forbear* (14 inf/14 gerund), *cannot/could not help* (5 gerund), *refrain* (1 inf/2 gerund), *shun* (no occurrences).

An important development taking place at this stage is the use of *help* "avoid, refrain from" followed by a gerundive complement. Though this verb is recorded since the late 16th century in the context *cannot/could not help NP* (e.g., Shakespeare *Coriolanus* 4.7.6 "I cannot help it now"; cf. *OED* s.v. *Help* v. 11), its earliest occurrences with an *-ing* form date back to about a century later, as in (32):

(32) 1672 Wycherley *Love in a Wood* (Mermaid) V.iv [Visser §1782]: We cannot help visiting the place often where we have lost anything we value.

What is significant is that with this verb the choice of an infinitive instead of an *-ing* form never seems to have been possible, except perhaps, as Visser notes (§1782), when the infinitive "is placed in front position for the sake of emphasis, e.g., 1865 Mrs. Gaskell *Mr. Harrison's Confessions* XII 'Think of her I could not help'". In my data, the gerund is certainly the only complement available with *help*, which in this respect may well have followed the model of *escape*, another implicative verb of related meaning that had come to be used only with a gerund since at least stage II (1570–1640). On the other hand, it will be recalled that I drew attention earlier in this paper (see section 3.1) to the fact that the presence of the modals *cannot/could not* seemed to promote the use of the gerund, at least with certain predicates; this may have further assisted the exclusive collocation of *help* with a gerund, but the reverse may also be true, that is, the availability now of *cannot/could not help V-ing* could itself have reinforced the tendency for other predicates to take a gerund when used under similar circumstances. In any case, the association between *cannot/could not V* and a following *-ing* form can now be clearly established also for other members of the same semantic class, notably *forbear*. The evidence for this is as follows:

a) with infinitive: 14 ex., 9 of them in Dryden's prose. The verb group contains *cannot/could not* in only four cases; otherwise *forbear* is either in

the present or past tense, or in participial form. Witness in this respect example (33):

> (33) 1702 Drake *An Essay Concerning the Necessity of Equal Taxes* [Milic 0949-FR]: Tho the persons that lent money to the government on these funds, were not perhaps the men that brought it immediately under necessity, yet when they saw it so, they forbore to assist it with their purses, till it was oblig'd to offer [...]

b) with gerund: 14 ex., 9 in Dryden's prose; in 11 cases, the verb group is *cannot/could not forbear* (8 ex. in Dryden). For instance:

> (34) 1663 Dryden *The Wild Gallant* 51: Failer. Why, I drank that to thee, Will, that thou shouldst forbear thy money.
> Bibber. And I drink this to you, sir; henceforward I'll forbear working for you.
> (35) 1695 Dryden *A Parallel between Painting and Poetry* 331: Virgil, as he better knew his colours, so he knew better how and where to place them. In as much haste as I am, I cannot forbear giving one example. It is said of him [...]
> (36) 1703 *Haddock Correspondence* p.45 [HE3]: but, hopeing you might have gote away before an answer could arrive you, I forbore answering it to you to Helvoet Sluce.

Contrary to what happens in stage IV (1710–1750/60), the constraint on the selection of a gerund after *cannot/could not forbear* is not yet an absolute one; for, at this stage, the choice of complement with *forbear* seems to be dependent also on the relationship of the text to the spoken language. Dryden's usage may be considered representative in this respect: in his essays and non-dramatic works, which, as Söderlind (1958) has shown, are stylistically more formal than his plays, both the infinitive and the gerund are found; in the plays, however, he employs only the latter, irrespective of whether the matrix verb group contains the auxiliaries *can/could* or not (see quotation (34) above). In this connection, notice also the contrast between the more formal style of example (33), with an infinitive, and that of the private letter in (36), this with an *-ing* form.

The other verbs in this class are *escape* (1 ex., with gerund), *avoid* (1 inf/8 gerund) and *refrain* (1 inf/2 gerund). The first became restricted to taking gerundive complementation as early as stage II (1570–1640); as for *avoid* and *refrain*, (37) and (38) below are the last occurrences of these verbs in the infinitival pattern, either at this stage or in stage IV (1710 onwards); moreover, it is clear that in (38) the infinitive has been selected primarily so as to

avoid the use of two consecutive *-ing* forms. This stylistic constraint, already referred to in section 3.2, has now become a near knock-out factor.[9]

> (37) 1684 Dryden *Essay on Dram. Poesy* 302: it will rest for you to prove that they wrought more perfect images of human life than we, -which seeing in your discourse you have avoided to make good, it shall now be my task to show you some part of their defects, and some few excellences of the moderns.
>
> (38) 1670 Milton *History of Britain* p.274 [HE3]: Huntingdon follow'd by Mat. West. relates, that the Peers on every side wearied out with continuall warfare, and not refraining to affirm op'nly, that they two who expected to reign singly, had most reason to fight singly, the Kings were content; ...

3.3.5 *Verbs of declining, failing to and refusing: decline* (2 gerund), *deny* (1 gerund/2 inf), *fail* (2 gerund/21 inf), *miss* (2 gerund/1 inf), *neglect* (2 gerund/3 inf), *omit* (2 gerund/3 inf), *refuse* (1 gerund/very common with inf).

In view of the data adduced in the preceding section, it could be assumed that, once the gerund had established itself as a frequent type of complement with verbs like *forbear, escape, avoid* and so forth, its diffusion to other predicates was likely to take place sooner or later and would first of all reach the verbs in class 5, which are related to them from a semantic point of view in, for instance, the fact of also being negative implicative rather than nonimplicative.

This suggested line of development might explain the contrast between the evidence for class 5 at this stage and in stage II (1570–1640): whereas in stage II the infinitive was the only type of complement recorded, gerunds are now found with all seven verbs listed above, though in varying proportions. Thus, the high-frequency verb *refuse* (11 ex. in Dryden's prose, 18 ex. in HE3, etc.) clearly resists the gerund, its sole occurrence with it taking place in Vanbrugh's comedy *The Provok'd Wife*; this could perhaps be seen as yet another indication of the association between gerundive complementation and informal style mentioned earlier in this paper:

> (39) 1697 Vanbrugh *The Provok'd Wife* (Mermaid) 3.2.69 [Visser §1775]: He by his prerogative takes money where it is not his due; I by my privilege refuse paying it where I owe it.

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[9] As noted in section 3.2 above, this type of stylistic diversification applies to two consecutive nonfinite VPs, producing sequences such as *refusing to make/to refuse making*, rather than *to refuse to make/refusing making*. Something that remains to be determined is whether this tendency can in any way be related to the so-called 'double-*ing*' constraint which accounts for the ungrammaticality of PE structures like **Paul was being singing*.

Fail, the next most common item, also continues to prefer an infinitive (21 ex.), as in earlier stages, but a gerund is found in the following two instances:

> (40) 1686 Halifax *A Letter to a Dissenter* [Milic 0142-FH]: this example [...] ought to be followed, were there no other reason than that it is a virtue; but when besides that, it is become necessary to your preservation, it is impossible to fail the having its effect upon you.
>
> (41) 1704 Swift *Tale of a Tub* (London, 1760) 97 [Visser §1775]: None of these prescribers do ever fail providing themselves with disciples.

Occurrences of the other five verbs in the class are too few to allow any safe generalization, but, taken all together, they testify to the slow progress made by the gerund. Apart from this, specific factors that could be pointed out as being responsible for the selection of some of the forms below are, first, the stylistic constraint on the use of two consecutive *to*-infinitives or *-ing* forms (see examples (40) or (42)); second, the presence of *cannot/could not* in the verb group, which would favour an *-ing* form (see, among other similar examples that could be adduced here, (43)). In addition, the formal identity of the gerund and the progressive might explain the choice of a gerund in iterative contexts like those in (44)-(45), or in (46)-(47), where the dependent verbs (*keep, spend*) are both highly marked for duration; with respect to (44) and (45) in particular, the evidence from stage IV (1710–1760) (see section 3.4.5) indeed confirms that that grammatical environment, in which the matrix verb is in the present perfect and denotes a recurrent event, was certainly gerund-promoting. Finally, and intersecting with these various factors, one should take into account the relative formality or informality of the text in question, which may of course have also influenced the choice of construction in some of the examples that follow:

> (42) 1686 Dryden *Controversy with Stillingfleet* 223: not omitting to give God thanks for his supernatural assistance, she used also the ordinary means [,,,]
>
> (43) 1697 Dryden *The Aeneis* Postcript 189: how much more to those from whom I have received the favours which they have offered to one of a different persuasion! Amongst whom I cannot omit naming the Earls of Derby and of Peterborough.
>
> (44) 1664 Charles II, in *Julia Cartwright's Madame* (1894) 159 [Visser §1775]: Pardon me for haveing mist writing to you so many posts.
>
> (45) 1662 *Oxinden Letters* no.178, p.272 [HE3]: I did write to thee by the Fryday post, and since by the Tuesday post, and have not

omitted writing to thee by the Fryday and Tuesday Post since I
came to London.

(46) 1699 Langford *Plain and Full Instructions to Raise All Sorts of
Fruit-Trees* p.122 [HE3]: Many neglect keeping the Heads of
Stocks clay'd after the first time when they are graffed, but it's
very necessary to do it till the Stock be near covered [...]

(47) 1710 Steele *Tatler* no.203 [Visser §1775]: I take Care to visit all
publick Solemnities, and go into Assemblies as often as my Stud-
ies will permit. This being therefore the first Day of the Drawing
of the Lottery, I did not neglect spending a considerable Time in
the Crowd:

3.3.6 *Verbs of suffering, bearing, etc: abide* (2 inf), *bear* (1 inf), *endure* (8
inf/1 gerund). Even though all three verbs are found in negative contexts with
the auxiliaries *can/could*, as in (48), a gerund is used only in (49) below,
which involves a passival construction (on this, cf. sect. 3.2). In this respect,
therefore, the behaviour of the items in this class does not differ from that ob-
served in stage II (1570–1640), where passival gerunds were also the only
ones recorded:

(48) 1669 Dryden *Wild Gallant* 74: I cannot abide to be in the coun-
try, like a wild beast in the wilderness.

(49) 1687 W. Winstanley *Lives of the Most Famous English Poets*
[Milic 0204-FW]: These his [i.e., Ben Jonson's] plays [...] will
endure reading, and that with due commendation, so long as ei-
ther ingenuity or learning are fashionable in our nation.

3.4 *1710 and beyond*

Before examining in detail the data for the several classes of predicates, it
seems convenient to draw attention to the fact that the gerundive construction
is that preferred by Lady Mary Wortley Montagu and her correspondents af-
ter most of the verbs under analysis. Once we discount instances where the
choice of one or the other form results from knock-out constraints (e.g., "to
neglect doing it", "fearing to be stopp'd", etc.),[10] the figures for occurrences
of the gerund and the infinitive in the batch of letters examined for this paper
are as follows:

Attempt: 2 inf; *bear*: 1 gerund; *decline*: 1 gerund (produced by Lord
Hervey); *dread*: 1 gerund; *fail*: 8 gerund/4 inf; *forbear*: 12 gerund;
intend: 41 infinitive/7 gerund (these are all the instances of *intend* +
gerund recorded in the period); *love*: 1 gerund; *omit*: 1 gerund;

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[10] Also excluded from the count are occurrences of the gerund after *avoid* (12 ex.), since
with this verb there was no longer any choice of complement at this stage.

refuse: 5 gerund (4 produced by Lady Mary and 1 by Wortley) / 1
infinitive; *venture*: 3 inf (1 produced by Lady Gower).

As will become apparent in the sections that follow, these findings are
largely in agreement with the evidence from other 18th century sources, all of
which testify to the fact that at this stage the gerund was becoming gradually
more common with practically all verbs except those in class 3 (attempting
and venturing). This granted, it should also be pointed out that, on the whole,
Lady Mary's usage as regards the infinitive/gerund paradigm seems to be
more progressive than that of her contemporaries (see in particular my com-
ments on *intend* and *forbear* in sections 3.4.2 and 3.4.4 below), and this once
more confirms the connection between the use of the gerund and the close-
ness of the text to an oral mode of expression.

3.4.1 *Emotive verbs: abhor* (1 gerund), *dread* (1 gerund), *fear* (2 inf/3
gerund), *grudge* (1 gerund), *hate* (1 gerund), *like* (2 inf/1 gerund), *love* (8
inf/9 gerund), *scorn* (2 inf), *scruple* (1 inf/2 gerund).

Love, which continues to be the most frequent verb in this class, exhibits
the same syntactic behaviour as in earlier stages; namely, it allows only the
type of nominal gerund denoting a general activitity, habit, or the like with
which it had been common since ME times; witness the following example:

    (50) 1749 Lady Mary W. M. to Lady Bute, p.431: I am afraid you are
        tir'd with this insignificant Letter. We old Women love tatling.

This same type of gerund is found once with *hate*, a verb that continues to be
very infrequent with a nonfinite complement:

    (51) 1712 Steele *Spectator* no.474: Whenever I should be surprized
        with a Visit, as I hate Drinking, I would be brisk in swilling
        Bumpers [...]

Considering that verbal gerunds are recorded at this stage with most other
emotive verbs, their apparent unavailability with *love* is surprising. One pos-
sible explanation might be found in the greater conservatism and resistance to
change that is often characteristic of high-frequency items, as compared with
low-frequency ones.[11] In this respect, *love* exhibits similarities with *refuse*
and *fail*; as I pointed out in section 3.3.5 above, in stage III (1640–1710)
these two verbs were the only ones in class 5 that seemed to resist the gerund,

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[11] On this topic, see, for instance, Tottie (1991:458-459), Ogura (1993). See also Bolinger
(1968:125), who suggests that in PE "the common verbs of perception [...] have the option of
retaining the infinitive without *to* (e.g., 'I heard him speak')", but the less common verbs
"call for the factual *-ing* (e.g., 'I spied them approaching')".

at a time when less common items like *decline*, *miss* or *neglect* were becoming more hospitable to that type of complement.

On the whole, the evidence for emotive verbs at this stage is limited, and this makes it difficult to discern the factors responsible for the selection of one or the other pattern. It is clear, however, that *-ing* forms were gradually becoming more common with them as an alternative to the infinitive, as was indeed the case with most other verb classes.

3.4.2 *Verbs of intention.* As in earlier stages, infinitives continue to occur with high frequency after *intend*; thus, there are 4 examples in Milic, 13 examples in Defoe's *Roxana*, 5 examples in Fielding's *The Author's Farce*, 4 examples in Spence, 41 examples in the correspondence of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, etc. Yet the progress made by the gerund is clear from the fact that, despite her preference for the infinitive pattern after this verb, Lady Mary herself is responsible for the seven occurrences of *intend + gerund* recorded at this stage. A few examples of *intend* in both constructions follow here:

> (52) 1739 Lady Mary W. M. to Wortley, p.149: I have been oblig'd to excuse my going to Court on having no Court dress, and saying I intended to leave the Town in a few days.
>
> (53) 1739 Lady Mary W.M. to Lady Pomfret, p.150: He told me that he had not had that advantage, but he was informed that you intended leaving Sienna, and would certainly pass the carnival at Venice;
>
> (54) 1749 Lady Mary W.M. to Lady Bute, p.436: I intend staying here the remainder of this Month. 'Tis impossible to be in a more agreeable place [...]
>
> (55) 1749 Lady Mary W.M. to Wortley, p.440: I am still at Louvere, thô the high Season for drinking the Waters is over, but my Health is so much mended by them that I intend to stay some time longer.

As Visser (§1779) notes, in the case of *intend* the difference between the infinitive and the gerund is accounted for in certain modern grammars by saying that the former is used when the reference is to a single action in the future. However, this distinction cannot be discerned in Lady Mary's usage, nor indeed any other; it is true that all her examples of *intend + gerund* are relatively late, the first dating back to 1739, but after this she continues to employ infinitives (34 ex. in all), without there being any apparent difference as regards the dependent verb involved, the type of subject, or the status of the clause as dependent or nondependent. The only context where the gerund does not seem to occur is in cases involving an intended action that was not

fulfilled (3 ex., cf. quotation (56)) or one that is ruled out because the clause is negative (4 ex; cf. (57)). However, examples of such nature are so few that they can hardly be considered statistically significant.

(56) 1741 Lady Mary W.M. to Lady Pomfret, p.230: I really believed Lord Strafford intended to go straight to Florence, instead of which he has been at Leghorn, Pisa, and Lucca [...]

(57) 1749 Lady Mary W.M. to Lady Bute, p.422: However, I do not intend to give my selfe the trouble and expence of the Journey [...]

3.4.3 *Verbs of attempting and venturing: attempt* (7 inf/4 gerund), *adventure* (1 inf), *venture* (7 inf). In stages I–III, the verbs in this class were found to resist the gerund, except in a few isolated cases in which the gerund was either passival (see sections 3.2.3 and 3.3.3) or was prompted by stylistic constraints such as the desire to avoid two consecutive infinitival forms (see section 3.2.3 above). In large measure, the same comments apply at this stage; that is, the infinitive can still be considered the only usual complement if one takes into account that three of the gerunds after *attempt* result from the knock-out constraint on the use of two consecutive infinitives (see, for instance, 1738 Spence no.461; 1724 Defoe *Roxana* p.93). The fourth instance of *attempt + gerund* is produced by Sweetissa, the waiting woman in Fielding's *The Grub-Street Opera* (1731), whose idiolect is distinctly colloquial. If, as I have repeatedly suggested, *-ing* forms were more likely to occur in the less literate styles, then Sweetissa's use of that construction might perhaps be seen as a stylistic indicator; certainly (58) is in sharp contrast to (59) below, which is the only other example of *attempt* found in the same play. In this latter case, the speaker is Scriblerus and the overall tone of the passage is clearly more formal:

(58) 1731 Fielding *Grub-Street Opera* 1.5.16 (Regents): Sweetissa. Pshaw¡ I should not think him worth being jealous of. He runs after every woman he sees, and yet, I believe, scarce knows what a woman is [...] Oh Margery, when I was in London with Madam, I have seen several such sparks as these; some of them would attempt making love too. Nay, I have had such lovers¡ But I could never find one of them that would stand it out.

(59) *Ibid.* Introduction, 33: Scriblerus. I believe I am the first that hath attempted to introduce this sort of wit upon the stage, but it has flourished among our political members a long while. Nay, in short, it is the only wit that flourishes among them.

3.4.4 *Verbs of avoiding and forbearing: avoid* (15 gerund), *escape* (3 gerund), *eschew* (no occurrences), *forbear* (21 gerund/2 inf), *cannot/could*

not help (common, always with gerund), *refrain* (3 gerund), *shun* (no occurrences).

The association of the gerund with the verbs in this class is now so firmly established as to call for little comment. The main development concerns *forbear*, which in stage III (1640–1710) allowed either an infinitive (14 ex.) or a gerund (14 ex.) and, though it often collocated with *cannot/could not* (15 ex.), could still freely occur without those auxiliaries (13 ex.; see section 3.3.4); however, probably under the influence of its near synonym *cannot/could not help*, *forbear* has now become almost wholly restricted to a more or less idiomatic use in the environment *cannot/could not forbear V-ing*: 20 of its occurrences are of this type. Outside that context, infinitives occur in (60) and (61) below, while a gerund is selected by Lady Mary Wortley Montagu (see (62)). This is not surprising considering the high percentage of gerunds in her correspondence, and, more generally, the association between *forbear V-ing* and the less formal styles that was pointed out in section 3.3.4 above. On the whole, then, the behaviour of *forbear* in this period presages PE usage, where *forbear + infinitive* is felt to be "somewhat archaic and possibly on its way out" (see Rudanko 1989:17).

> (60) 1712 Steele *Spectator* no.324: A third Sort are the Tumplers, whose Office it is to set Women upon their Heads, and commit certain Indecencies [...] on the Limbs which they expose. But these I forbear to mention, because they can't but be very shocking to the Reader [...]
> (61) 1751 Johnson *Rambler* no.159 [*OED Forbear* v. 6]: Few have repented of having forborne to speak.
> (62) 1744 Lady Mary W.M. to Wortley, p.345: I have receiv'd a Letter from my Son, but no direction how to answer it. I forbear sending you any news, neither can I depend on any thing of that sort that is said there.

3.4.5 *Verbs of declining, failing to and refusing: decline* (2 inf/2 gerund), *deny* (1 inf/1 gerund), *fail* (4 inf/11 gerund), *miss* (2 gerund), *neglect* (2 inf/3 gerund), *omit* (2 inf/2 gerund), *refuse* (9 inf/10 gerund).

As in stage III (1640–1710), the picture for this group of verbs is certainly less clear than for the items discussed in the previous section. Even so, the progress made by the gerund seems noticeable, in particular when one considers the figures for *fail* and *refuse*, the two most common verbs in the class. Whereas in stage III there was just one isolated instance of *refuse + gerund*, this construction is now that preferred by Lady Mary Wortley Montagu (4 ex. out of 5) in the batch of letters examined for this paper, and is, on the whole, more frequent than the infinitive, a finding which seems somewhat

surprising in view of the fact that *refuse* is rarely used with a gerund in PE. A similar comment applies to *fail*, which in stage III selected 21 infinitives and only 2 gerunds, as against 4 infinitives and 11 gerunds at this stage.

In the light of the evidence available it proves difficult to discern the exact factors responsible for the selection of one or the other construction after the two verbs above mentioned; thus, in (63)-(64), with *refuse*, the overall context is remarkably similar, and the dichotomy formal vs. informal style seems to be of no help either, considering that Harris's *Hermes* could hardly be considered illustrative of an oral mode of expression. Or take, for instance, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu's isolated example of *refuse* + infinitive, quoted below as (65). This is exceptional in that it contravenes the constraint on the use of two infinitives referred to earlier in this paper (cf. section 3.2 and n.9), but in this particular case the choice of *to refuse to listen* was probably meant to provide a parallel to the following *to have liberty to say,* thus reinforcing the similarities in structure between the various coordinate clauses. As regards *fail*, the analysis of Lady Mary's usage suggests that her choice of the gerund is systematic in one specific environment, namely, when *fail* occurs in the present perfect to denote a habit or recurrent event taking place over a period of time leading up to the present (5 ex.; see (66)); as already noted, the selection of the gerund in this context can already be observed in stage III (1640–1710) with *miss* and *omit*, two close synonyms of *fail* (cf. quotations (44) and (45), and also (67) below). Elsewhere, Lady Mary's use of the *-ing* form and the infinitive after *fail* seems to be prompted chiefly by stylistic and rhythmic factors too subtle to be formalised, rather than by the existence of any major syntactic or semantic difference.

(63) 1742 Spence no.873: Dr. Cheyne's bookseller absolutely refused to print his book on health unless he would change the title.

(64) 1751 Harris *Hermes* 264 [Visser §1775]: the great Objects of Natural Union are Substance and Attribute. Now tho' Substances naturally co-incide with their Attributes, yet they absolutely refuse doing so, one with another.

(65) 1744 Lady Mary W.M. to Wortley, p.322: I was visited by two of the most considerable of the Huguenots, who came to beg of me with Tears to speak in their Favour to the Duke of Richlieu, saying none of the Catholics would do it and the Protestants durst not, and that God had sent me for their Protection, the Duke of Richlieu was too well bred *to refuse to listen* to a Lady, and I was of a Rank and Nation *to have liberty to say* what I pleas'd.

(66) *Ibid.*, p.440: I receiv'd yours of July 8 this morning, Sept. 4 N.S. I beleive I have seldom fail'd mentioning the date of all the Letters that have come to my Hands ... [cf. for other examples Halsband (1966: 402, 406, 409, 432)].

On the whole, the impression one obtains from the behaviour of the verbs in
this class is largely one of unsystematic usage, though there are cases where
the choice of either an infinitive or a gerund can be accounted for on the basis
of factors which are by now familiar, such as the presence of *cannot/could
not* in the verb group (6 ex.), the desire to avoid two consecutive infinitives
or *-ing* forms (7 ex.), or the type of iterative context seen in example (66)
above and again in (67) below. In addition, the identity in form between
gerund and progressive might also help explain the choice of the *-ing* pattern
in (68), where the action being referred to is habitual. Finally, in (69)-(70) the
complement has no modification, and a gerund would thus tend to be consid-
ered a better stylistic choice.

> (67) 1711 Steele *Spectator* no.14: I have been for twenty years Un-
> der-Sexton of this Parish of St. Paul's, Covent-Garden, and have
> not missed tolling in to Prayers six times in all those Years;
>
> (68) 1711 Steele *Spectator* no.194: The present Paper shall consist of
> two Letters, which observe upon Faults that are easily cured both
> in Love and Friendship. In the latter, as far as it meerly regards
> Conversation, the Person who neglects visiting an agreeable
> Friend is punished in the very Transgression; for a good Compan-
> ion is not found in every Room we go into. [Steele is alluding to
> those who regularly fail to visit their closest friends.]
>
> (69) 1721 Lady Mary W.M. to Lady Mar, p.11: Having this occasion
> I would not omit writeing, thô I have receiv'd no Answer to my 2
> last.
>
> (70) 1758 Spence no.852: Epigrams were proposed to be writ by each
> after dinner once when Dr. Young was invited thither. He would
> have declined writing, because he had no diamond. Lord Chester-
> field lent him his, and he wrote immediately:

3.4.6 *Verbs of suffering and bearing: abide* (no occurrences), *bear* (5 inf/4
gerund), *endure* (no occurrences).

As shown in sections 3.2.6 and 3.3.6; in stages II and III the predicates in
this class allowed only passival gerunds, and even when they occurred in the
gerund-promoting environment *cannot/could not V* - they continued to select
infinitives (see section 3.3.6 above; 4 ex. of this kind noted between 1710–
1760). In some measure, their preference for the infinitive can also be ob-
served at this stage, if we take into account that two out of the four instances
of *bear V-ing* are due to the knock-out constraint on the use of two consecu-
tive *to*-infinitives (cf. 1711 Steele *Spectator* no.155; 1743 Spence *Anecdotes*
no. 331). The other two cases involve verbal gerunds:

> (71) 1711 Steele *Spectator* no.20: a Fellow that is capable of shewing
> an impudent Front before a whole congregation, and can bear be-

ing a publick Spectacle, is not so easily rebuked as to amend by admonitions.

(72) 1723 Lady Mary W. M. to Lady Mar, p.29: I have allready thank'd you for my Nightgown, but tis so pritty it will bear being twice thank'd for.

4. *Conclusions*

In this paper I have examined the development and spread of the gerund after verbs of subject control during the period 1400–1760. The main findings can be summarised as follows:

4.1 As shown in section 3.1, the gerunds recorded with subject-control verbs in late Middle English and in the early 16th century are still only pure nouns, and, as such, they can occur, like any other ordinary noun, with most of the predicates under analysis. This granted, it is nevertheless clear that in stage I (1400–1570) verbs of subject control occur in the infinitive construction in the vast majority of cases.

4.2 Verbal gerunds developed very slowly in object position, to the extent that only one was recorded in stage I (1400–1570) and just two more in stage II (1570–1640). It is only from the second half of the 17th century onwards that the verbal gerund is found in significant numbers as the complement of a subject-control verb and can thus be considered an established feature of English usage. But the spread of the verbal gerund was gradual even after that date, and nominal or mixed gerunds co-existed with verbal ones for a long time. With certain verbs, the nominal gerund continued to be preferred even as late as the 18th century; witness in this respect my comments on *love* (section 3.4.1), and also on the passival type illustrated by *he fears robbing* (see in particular sections 3.2, 3.3.1, 3.3.3, and 3.3.6). For a long time, this latter remained practically the only gerund recorded with verbs like *fear* or *venture*, as also with verbs of suffering and bearing.[12] Poutsma himself (1904:620) draws attention to this fact by quoting a couple of passival instances after *bear* (e.g., Conan Doyle *Frag. of the Korosko* II, 65 "It won't bear thinking about"), and then going on to suggest that with this verb "apparently the gerund-construction is used, when the subject of the head-sentence is in the object relation [...] to the following verbal."

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[12] Presumably, the existence of the passival gerund is tied up with the fact that passival progressives (e.g., *the house is (on) building*) were available in the language at about the same time. In view of this, it would repay further study to check whether the retreat of the passival gerund takes place, like the retreat of the passival progressive, around the beginning of the 20th century (cf. Denison 1993:391).

4.3 The overall frequency of gerunds after subject-control verbs increases with time. The ultimate reason behind this trend is not clear, unless it could be related to a parallel rise in the use of -*ing* forms in other areas of the grammar of English. In connection with this, one should not lose sight of the fact that during the centuries in question there is also an enormous rise in the popularity of the progressive *be* + -*ing* form, which may somehow have assisted in the generalization of -*ing* forms elsewhere (on this topic, cf. also section 4.5.3 below).

4.4 In Section 1 of this paper an account was given of the views of modern grammars on the functional difference existing between the gerundive and infinitival patterns in PE. As regards usage during the centuries examined in this paper, most of the distinctions mentioned in that section are difficult to ascertain in the light of the available data. Thus, the evidence on emotive verbs is too limited to demonstrate the existence of two semantic subtypes within the class, one characterised by the feature [desire] and thereby selecting the infinitive, and another one encoding the feature [enjoyment] and favouring an -*ing* form (cf. Bladon 1968); it is possible, however, that a more extensive corpus covering both eighteenth and nineteenth century material would confirm that the analysis proposed by Bladon and others applies also to earlier stages of English.

With respect to the dichotomy 'reference to a particular occasion' (expressed by the infinitive) vs. 'a statement of general validity or habit' (expressed by the -*ing* form), this is generally not discernible with true verbal gerunds. There are, however, two nominal types which might well be described as being general and indefinite in meaning. One is the nominal gerund seen in constructions like *I love reading, I scorn writing,* and so forth, where the reference is, as repeatedly noted, to a general activity, practice, or habit. The other is the passival gerund (e.g., *one that fears robbing, they will endure reading); in this case, the generality in meaning derives from the non expression of the agent of the action, much as in agentless passives like, for instance, *that plan has not been proposed.* The possibility exists, therefore, that the semantic characteristics of these two nominal types may eventually have diffused to at least certain verbal gerunds as these became more and more common in the language.

Finally, as regards the potentiality/performance distiction invoked by authors like Quirk et al. (1985:1193) or Bolinger (1968), by the middle of the 18th century this can be observed in clauses involving retrospective and non-retrospective *remember*, such as *I remember paying it* vs. *I will remember to pay it* (on this topic, see Fanego 1996a, b). Since retrospective clauses encode

events that have actually taken place in the past, they can be readily associated with performance of the action, especially by contrast with the infinitive construction, which, because of its future-time reference, necessarily implies potentiality or non performance. This being so, one may hypothesize that, in the course of time, the distinction available with *remember* spread not only to other retrospective verbs (*forget, regret*), as it in fact did (cf. Fanego 1996), but also to other classes of predicates, including, for instance, emotives (e.g., *I like living in the country/I would like to live in the country*). It must be acknowledged, however, that in order to confirm this suggested line of development an exhaustive investigation of post–1760 material would clearly be required.

4.5 As regards the process of implementation of the move from infinitival to gerundive complementation with subject-control verbs, this was channelled through certain gerund-promoting properties, as follows:

4.5.1 *The type of verb*. The spread of the gerund proceeds by diffusion across the lexicon. The first verbs to show a clear increase in their selection of the gerundive pattern are negative implicative verbs of avoiding and forbearing (Class 4). As noted in the relevant sections, in stages I (1400–1570) and II (1570–1640), these predicates are already more hospitable to the gerund than any other verb type; by stage III (1640–1710) their occurrence in the gerundive construction is widespread, while by stage IV (1710–1760) it has become systematic. Not surprisingly, since from the start gerunds are more common with verbs of avoiding and forbearing than with any others, it is with them that the first verbal gerunds are also recorded (see section 3.2).

Two plausible, and related, explanations present themselves to account for the early association of predicates like *escape, avoid, refrain* or *forbear* with the gerundive construction. The first is that they may have been influenced by the behaviour of three-place verbs like *defend, keep, let* "prevent", and so forth. These are related semantically to verbs of avoiding and forbearing in the fact of also being negative implicative and are found from ME onwards in a structure of the type *V sb. from/of V-ing* (e.g., "defend somebody from going"; see Visser §2108). The second is connected with Rudanko's suggestion (1989: 149), already mentioned in these pages (cf. Section 1 above), that the original function of the infinitive marker *to* as an element expressing purpose and direction towards might have led to a certain specialization of the infinitive pattern with verbs of positive volition and intention, and, more generally, with purposive clauses. Then when the option of using a gerund became a real part of the grammar, the *-ing* construction, "lacking *to* and the historical associations of *to*" (Rudanko 1989:150), may have been felt

as more adequately conveying the opposite notions, that is, negative volition and intention, hence its widespread use with negative implicative verbs like those listed above.

The next group of subject-control verbs to which the gerund seems to have been extended is that of predicates of declining, failing to and refusing (Class 5), probably because these share with verbs of avoiding and forbearing the semantic property of being negative implicative. With this class, the use of the gerund becomes noticeable in stage III, though, typically, the most common items in the group, namely *refuse* and *fail*, do not take part in the move until stage IV. As already noted (cf. sections 3.3.5 and 3.4.1), this can perhaps be seen as a manifestation of the greater conservatism and resistance to change that is at times exhibited by high-frequency items.

Emotive verbs come third on the list of predicates showing a rise in the frequency of the gerundive construction. However, the behaviour of *love*, the central member of the class, is again noticeable in that, like *refuse* and *fail* in class 5, it resists the verbal gerund and, as late as the 18th century, it appears to be available only with an infinitive, or else with a type of nominal gerund denoting a general habit or characteristic (e.g., *I love reading*).

With the verbs in classes 2 (verbs of intention) and 6 (verbs of suffering and bearing), the diffusion of the gerundive construction takes place even later; its beginnings can be traced back only to the 18th century, and seem to be conditioned by some of the factors outlined below. Finally, the verbs in class 3 (verbs of attempting and venturing) continue to collocate almost exclusively with an infinitive even as late as the end of stage IV. Presumably, this resistance to the gerund is related to the association between the infinitive marker *to* and clauses of positive volition that was pointed out earlier in this section.

4.5.2 *The relative formality/informality of the text.* The influence of the dichotomy 'formal' vs. 'informal' style on the selection of either an infinitive or a gerund cannot be demostrated for each individual verb, but seems reasonably clear on the whole. Along these pages, I have drawn attention in various places to occurrences of the gerund that can be accounted for in this way; in addition, as already noted (see section 3.4), the high frequency of the gerundive construction in the correspondence of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu is doubtlessly another manifestation of the association of the gerund with informal levels of style.

4.5.3 *The synsemantic environment.* Negative or nonassertive contexts containing the modals *can/could* or some other related auxiliary promote the selection of the gerund. This trend can be detected from a very early date, but

becomes more noticeable in the course of the 17th century. It is not an abso-
lute constraint, however, for it is related also to verb- and text-type. Thus, it
is more easily observed with the negative implicative verbs of classes 4
(avoiding and forbearing) and 5 (declining, failing to and refusing), and even
with these it can fail to apply depending cn the style of the text involved (see
in particular section 3.3.4), at least in the course of the 17th century. By stage
IV, however, the verbs in those two classes regularly select a gerund when-
ever they occur in that particular context.

A sequence of two nonfinite VPs is almost always diversified as either *to
infinitive V-ing* or, alternatively, *V-ing to-infinitive* (e.g., "to refuse making",
but "refusing to do").

Occasionally, the association in form of the gerund and the progressive
may influence the choice of the gerund in iterative and durative contexts; see
in this connection examples (44)-(47) and (66)-(68) above. This trend is par-
ticularly noticeable with the verbs of class 5 *fail, miss* and *omit*; whenever
these occur in the present perfect to denote a recurrent event, an *-ing* form
follows, both in stages III (1640–1710) and IV (1710–1760).

Finally, I suspect that the selection of the gerundive construction may
also have been influenced by various other grammatical factors, namely *a)*
the presence of auxiliaries other than those mentioned in the previous para-
graphs (i.e., *cannot/could not* and perfective *have*); *b)* the presence of overt
negatives (e.g., "he did not fear getting me promoted", "never fear making a
bad debt", etc.); *c)* whether the object of the dependent verb is fronted or not
(if so, an infinitive seems to have been preferred); and *d)* whether the depen-
dent verb is *be* (*be* may have promoted the use of the gerund, as in 1711
Steele *Spectator* no.20 "can bear *being* a publick Spectacle"). All these are
aspects requiring further investigation, since in the light of my data I have
not been able to ascertain the exact extent of their influence, if any.

4.6 As already noted, the use of the gerund increases with time, to the extent
that by about 1750 it has become available, though in varying proportions,
with most types of verbs and has even diffused to predicates which have now
reverted, either preferentially or exclusively, to the infinitive pattern, as is the
case with *fail, refuse* or *scruple*. In large measure, the distribution of infini-
tives and gerunds can be related to the conditioning factors summarised
above; yet it must be acknowledged that, in certain cases, one gets the im-
pression that the two constructions were probably felt to be very much alike,
so that the ultimate choice of either one or the other was prompted by consid-
erations of rhythm, style, or perhaps even individual preference. To conclude,
then, it seems to me that the grammatically regulated use of the gerund and

the infinitive, if this indeed can be proved to exist in Present-day English, must be a later development.

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SUMMARY

The article offers an analysis of the development of the gerund, as an alternative to the infinitive, with verbs of subject control, such as *attempt, bear, decline, forbear*, etc. In the course of the early Modern English period, and particularly during the first half of the 18th century, there is a steady increase in the use of the gerund with most of the verbs in question, and it is suggested that the ultimate reason behind this trend might be related to a parallel rise in the use of *-ing* forms in other areas of the grammar of English, and, more specifically, to the generalization of the progressive. The process of implementation of the move from infinitival to gerundive complementation is also examined: important factors promoting the diffusion of the gerund are the type of verb, the closeness of the text to an oral mode of expression and the syntactic and semantic environment.

RÉSUMÉ

Cet article analyse le développement du gérondif en anglais, en concurrence avec l'infinitif, après des verbes tels que *attempt, bear, decline, forbear, intend* ou *like*. Au cours de la période examinée (1400–1760), et en particulier pendant la première moitié du XVIIIe siècle, on assiste à une augmentation progressive dans l'emploi du gérondif avec ce type de verbe exprimant une sorte de contrôle. L'auteur propose qu'un tel accroissement aurait pu, en dernière analyse, se produire avec la généralisation des formes verbales en *-ing* dans d'autres domaines de la grammaire de l'anglais. Les facteurs qui favorisent la progression du gérondif sont surtout: le type de verbe, le style du texte et l'environnement syntaxique et/ou sémantique.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Der Aufsatz untersucht die Entwicklung des Gerundiums im Englischen als Ersatzform zum Infinitiv nach Verben wie *attempt, bear, decline, forbear, intend* oder *like*. Im Laufe der untersuchten Zeitspanne (1400–1760), besonders während der ersten Hälfte des 18. Jahrhunderts, findet eine ständige Zunahme des Gerundium-Gebrauchs bei besagten Verbklassen statt, und es liegt nahe, daß diese Zunahme letzten Endes mit der allgemeinen Verbreitung anderer Verbformen auf *-ing* in anderen Bereichen der Grammatik des Englischen in Verbindung steht. Die Faktoren, die das Vordringen des Gerundiums begünstigen, sind hauptsächlich die Verbart, der Textstil (formal versus umgangssprachlich) und das syntaktische und semantische Umfeld.