9

Multiple Sources in Language Change: the Role of Free Adjuncts and Absolutes in the Formation of English ACC-*ing* Gerundives[1]

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9.1 Introduction

This chapter examines the rise of ACC-*ing* gerundives (ACC-*ing* for short), as in (1–2), in the light of recent proposals (see Van de Velde et al. 2013, and references therein) on the possible multiplicity of source constructions in language change, with change understood as often involving historically distinct 'lineages' merging into a new lineage.

(1) COPC 1689 Stevens, *Journal*, 1Q17 0004/029-P0: ***The man*** *being an Irishman and a Catholic* made his ill carriage towards us appear the more strange, but his religion and country he thought would bear him out.[2]
(2) COLMOBAENG 1861 Dickens, *Great Expectations*, 75: I not only prevented ***him*** *getting off the marshes*, but I dragged him here.

Like all other gerundives, ACC-*ing* gerundives have a characteristically nominal distribution, and hence can function as subject (1), object (2), predicative or prepositional complement. However, they differ from other subtypes of gerundives both in their chronology (their emergence in English being comparatively late) and their formal characteristics, in that they have a subject argument either in the 'common' case, if it is a full noun phrase (*the man* in (1)) or in the accusative case, if it is a personal pronoun (*him* in (2)); hence they contrast both with 'bare' gerundives (3), which lack an explicit subject, and with POSS-*ing* gerundives (4), whose subject argument is marked for the genitive:

(3) HC 1550–52 *Diary of Edward VI*, 355: The duches, Crane and his wife [...] were sent to the Towr *for devising thies treasons*; Jaymes Wingfeld also, *for casting out of billes sediciouse*.

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(4) HC 1599–1601 Hoby, *Diary,* 78: then I Came hom to dinner, neccltinge my Costomarie manner of praier *by reason of* ***my Lord Ewrie and my lades*** *being there*:

In this chapter, I will argue that ACC-*ing* gerundives, unlike other gerundives, do not emerge from former nominal gerunds through a gradual process of accretion of verbal characteristics, but have developed, rather, as an 'intersection' (see Trousdale 2013: 493) of a number of pre-existing constructions, among them absolute participles.

The discussion is structured as follows. Section 9.2 gives an overview of the corpus material used in this study. Sections 9.3 and 9.4 offer, respectively, an outline of the development of English gerundives since Old English times, and a brief discussion of some related structures. Section 9.5 focuses specifically on the gerundive subtype (the ACC-*ing* gerundive), which is the main concern of this chapter, discussing its origins and probable course of development in light of the evidence drawn from the corpora described in section 9.2. Section 9.6 considers this proposed course of development with reference to the analytical framework in Van de Velde et al. (2013).

9.2 The corpus

My earlier research (Fanego 1998: 100–4, 2004: 41–5) on ACC-*ing* gerundives relied primarily on a 392,110-word sample from the Early Modern English section of the Helsinki Corpus. For the present analysis this sample has been expanded to 945,413 words through the incorporation of material from other corpora and periods, as indicated in Table 9.1. In all cases, the variety examined is British English and the time span 1500–1750, since it is clear from my prior findings that this is the crucial period for the formation of the construction.

With respect to the composition of the corpora used, the inventory of genres represented does not remain constant across the three subperiods examined, but it is unlikely that this has greatly influenced the findings: the specific type of nominalization under analysis here is associated with expository and academic writings in their various forms, and with narrative texts, whether imaginative (fiction) or non-imaginative (diaries, letters, journals, travelogue). Statutory writings (statutes) and texts written to be spoken (comedies) are thus the only text categories not in principle welcoming of the ACC-*ing* construction, and that is why they have not been included in my corpora for subperiod III (1700–49). For widely accepted classifications of genres and forms of discourse, see especially Werlich (1976: 39–41) and Biber (1988).

9.3 Origins and early history of the English verbal gerund

The precursor to the English verbal gerund was an abstract noun of action formed through the addition of the suffixes *-ung* or *-ing* to a verb stem, as in *sceawung* 'observation' (< *sceawian* 'observe') and *wending* 'turning' (< *wendan*

Table 9.1 Range of corpora and subperiods examined

Subperiod I: 1500–1640	**Subperiod II: 1640–1700**	**Subperiod III: 1700–1749**
– A Representative Corpus of Historical English Registers (ARCHER, version 3.2): 29,697 words from 1600 to 1640; genre: early prose[1]	**– A Representative Corpus of Historical English Registers (ARCHER, version 3.2)**: 115,797 words from 1650 to 1699; 5 genres (diaries, fiction, journals, letters, sermons)	**– A Representative Corpus of Historical English Registers (ARCHER, version 3.2)**: 118,809 words from 1700 to 1749; 5 genres (diaries, fiction, journals, letters, sermons)
– Helsinki Corpus of English Texts (HC): 261,630 words from subperiods EModE1 (1500–1570) and EModE2 (1570–1640); 11 genres (comedies, diaries, fiction, handbooks, letters (private), philosophy, science, sermons, statutes, travelogue, trials)	**– Helsinki Corpus of English Texts (HC)**: 130,480 words from subperiod EModE3; 11 genres (comedies, diaries, fiction, handbooks, letters (private), philosophy, science, sermons, statutes, travelogue, trials) **– Century of Prose Corpus (COPC)**: 89,000 words from decades 1680 to 1700[2]	**– Corpus of Late Modern British and American English Prose (COLMOBAENG)**: 200,000 words from 1700 to 1726; genres: fiction and non-fiction[3]
Total: 291,327 words	**Total: 335,277 words**	**Total: 318,809 words**

Notes:
1. ARCHER is an ongoing project and continues to expand its diachronic coverage of genres. For the first half of the seventeenth century it still does not contain samples of diaries, fiction, journals, letters or sermons (the genres used in the two later subperiods of my study). ARCHER's early prose, however, proved very useful for my purposes, in that it includes both fiction and non-fiction texts and is thus largely comparable to the rest of the corpora examined.
2. COPC is organized in terms of decades and covers the span 1680–1780. It is intended to constitute 'an inventory of the daily language of the literate members of English society' in the eighteenth century (Milic 1995: 329) and comprises samples of the following ten genres: biography, periodicals, education, essays, fiction, history, letters and memoirs, polemics, science, travel.
3. Like COPC, COLMOBAENG is biased towards texts written by literate members of English and American society in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The 200,000-word sample used for the present study contains 124,000 words of fictional prose and 76,000 words of non-fiction representing the same genres that make up COPC. For further details, see Fanego (2012).

'turn'); see Kisbye (1971–72: 51–4) and Kastovsky (1985: 241–3) for details. These nouns behaved like any other noun in all relevant respects, and could therefore take nominal dependents of various kinds. The following Middle English examples illustrate their use with determiners (*the*, *his*) and with *of*-phrases serving as their notional objects:

(5) 1472–88 *Cely Letters*, 94/5 [Tajima 1985: 68]:
at <u>the</u> makyng <u>of thys lettyr</u>
'when writing this letter'

(6) *c.*1385 Chaucer, *Troilus and Criseyde*, V 1833 [Tajima 1985: 70]:
And thus began *his loving of Criseyde*
(7) ?a1300 *Kyng Alisaunder*, 558 [Tajima 1985: 62]
Wiþouten doyng of any harme
'without doing any harm'

In Early Middle English, the suffix *-ung* rapidly died out and *-ing* became the regular form (*OED* s.v. –ing,[1] Kisbye 1971–72: 54). Also over the course of Middle English, *-ing* nominals began to acquire verbal properties. According to Tajima's analysis (1985, 1996), which is based on a very large sample of Middle English writings covering the span 1100–1500, the verbalization of the gerund proceeded as follows. Around 1300 the first instances with direct objects appeared (8), and from the end of the Middle English period or in Early Modern English other verbal features were found, such as the ability to express distinctions of voice (1417 'without *being stolen*'; cf. Tajima 1985: 113–16) and tense/aspect (1580–81 'after *having failed*'; cf. Tajima 1985: 111–13, Fanego 1996: 127–32). Subject arguments in non-genitive form (9) occurred sporadically from Late Middle English onwards,[3] but remained very rare for a long time afterwards, as will be shown later in this chapter.

(8) *c.*1300 (MS a1400) *English Metrical Homilies*, 112/2–4 [Tajima 1985: 76]:
Sain Jon was [...] bisi *In ordaining of priestes, and clerkes,* And *in casting* ***kirc werkes***
'Saint John was [...] busy ordaining priests and clerics, and in planning church works'
(9) *c.*1400 *Laud Troy Book*, 6317–18 [Tajima 1996: 574]:
he was war *of* ***hem*** *comyng* and of here malice
'he was informed of them coming and of their wickedness'

Two other aspects of the grammar and development of the gerund are relevant to the present research. One is that throughout its history the English gerund, whether nominal or verbal, appears to have been used preferably after prepositions. More work is still needed regarding the exact frequency of prepositional gerunds in Old English, but the association of the gerund with prepositional use since at least Middle English times seems clear in light of evidence adduced by Houston (1989), Expósito (1996) and De Smet (2008). Houston (1989: 176) examined 1464 *-ing* forms dating from the tenth to the seventeenth centuries and found that 'across time, there is a fairly constant trend for them to occur as the objects of prepositions'. Likewise, Expósito's research (1996: 173–80), which provides data only on nominal or partly nominal gerunds in Chancery English *c.*1400–50, found that 81.50 per cent of the 135 gerundial structures occurring in her 48,000-word corpus were found after a preposition, 12.60 per cent were objects and

a further 5.90 per cent subjects. These figures are in agreement with my own findings for the Early Modern period: in a sample of 317,621 words in the Early Modern English section of the Helsinki Corpus of English Texts, I recorded 1286 gerunds (= 79.50 per cent) functioning as prepositional complements, compared to 332 (= 20.50 per cent) in other clause functions (Fanego 1996: 122–3).

Secondly, as made clear by Donner (1986), Koma (1980), Houston (1989: 181) and De Smet (2008: 61–2), the gerund's acquisition of direct objects started with those gerunds that were dependent on a preposition, as in (8) above. In other syntactic positions the use of direct objects and other verbal features was very slow to develop, as I have shown in previous research (1996, 1998, 2004).

With all this in mind, let us now briefly consider the much debated question of the interconnections between gerunds and various classes of participial constructions.

9.4 Gerunds and related constructions

The possible role of present participles in the first appearance of verbal gerunds is hard to verify, but has been discussed in the literature at various times. In Old English the ending of the present participle (*-ende*) was distinct from the suffix *-ing/-ung* of the abstract deverbal noun. However, during the Middle English period the two forms coalesced as *-ing* (see Mustanoja 1960: 547–8, Lass 1992: 145–6), first in the south of England and subsequently in other areas. This coalescence, according to Curme (1931: 484), Mustanoja (1960: 570) and Kisbye (1971–72: 55), among others, may have promoted the transfer of verbal properties from the present participle to the verbal noun (see Jack 1988: 24–7 for a useful summary of this view).

However, as Jack aptly notes (1988: 25–7), the coalescence of the verbal noun with the present participle was not a feature of all dialects of Middle English. In the north of England the two endings remained distinct, with *-and(e)* being used for the participle and *-ing* for the verbal noun. As it happens, some of the earliest instances of verbal gerunds, such as (8) quoted above, are found in texts of Northern provenance, and from this Jack argues that 'the development of the [verbal] gerund could take place quite independently of any merger between the verbal noun and the present participle' (ibid.: 27).

Shortly after the publication of Jack's influential paper, Houston (1989) again discussed the extent of the relationship between participles and (verbal) gerunds. More specifically, she argued that the functional similarity between what she terms 'appositive' participles and nominal gerunds preceded by a preposition led to the analogical transference of verbal properties from the former to the latter. Appositive participles ('free adjuncts', in the terminology employed later in this chapter; see section 9.5.2) do not have an overt

subject NP and by default are interpreted as sharing the subject of the matrix clause:

(10) Old English, *ÆCHom*, ii.578.28 [Mitchell 1985: section 1434]:
and þæt folc [...] ham gewende, *ðancigende þam Ælmihtigan ealra his goda*
'and the people went home, thanking the Almighty for his goodness'

From a semantic point of view, the relation holding between appositive participles and their matrix clause is often an adverbial one, and in this, as noted by Houston (1989), they resemble prepositional gerunds, which are also very often employed to provide supportive commentary about the time, manner, cause, means or goal of foregrounded events, as in *On hearing a cry, she dashed into the garden* (see also (5) above). Houston therefore claimed that the similar discourse function of appositive participles and prepositional gerunds 'may have contributed to users' association of the two forms and to the consequent verbal qualities of the modern verbal gerund' (ibid.: 173).

The chief justification for Houston's position lies in the plausibility of such a development, and also in the fact that, as noted in section 9.3, prepositional gerunds were indeed the first to acquire direct objects. It must be acknowledged, however, that the fact that prepositional gerunds took the lead here might also be explained through a number of different factors which for reasons of space cannot be described here but which are discussed in detail in Fanego (2004: sections 2.2.4–5). At any rate, beyond the largely unsolvable issue of the role played by participles in the initial stages of the verbalization of the gerund, it becomes evident from Middle English onwards that the boundaries between certain uses of the gerund and the present participle were not always clear-cut, as briefly noted in Fanego (1996: 102–6) in relation to structures such as (11–13):

(11) HC 1608 Armin, *A Nest of Ninnies,* 14: Jack, my foole, *is* in my moate, up to the arme-pits, *eating of the pie*.
(12) 1605 Shakespeare, *King Lear*, II.i.39: Here *stood* he in the dark, his sharp sword out, *mumbling of wicked charms*, [Visser 1963–73: section 1121]
(13) HC 1553–59 Machyn, *Diary* 101: then *cam* the men rydyng, *carehyng of torchys* a lx bornyng, at bowt the corsse all the way;

(11) constitutes a variant of the progressive (BE + *-ing* participle) in which the object of the verb surfaces as an *of*-phrase, thus resembling the object of a nominal gerund. The construction has been on record since the late fourteenth century and becomes 'substandard about the beginning of the nineteenth' (Visser 1963–73: section 1869; see also Jespersen 1909–49: IV, section 12.3(4); Elsness 1994: 14–15); for some time, it coexisted with the

progressive proper (*he was eating the pie*). As regards (12–13), the use of participles with verbs of rest (*stand*) and movement (*come*) goes back to Old English times; witness sequences such as *starigende stodon* 'stood looking fixedly', *com fleogende* 'came flying'. However, a gerundial variant of such structures, with *of* preceding the object of the *-ing* form, 'first appears in the fourteenth century, remains rare until the end of the fifteenth century, but then becomes remarkably frequent in the sixteenth century and the first decades of the seventeenth century [...] nowadays it is only dialectal or substandard' (Visser 1963–73: section 1121).

Finally, the tendency for gerunds and participles to merge can also be observed in the case of the construction which is the concern of this chapter, namely, ACC-*ing* gerundives. In this case, as will be argued in section 9.5.2, the coalescence is with the subtype of absolute participle illustrated in (14); this precedes its superordinate clause and 'controls' its subject, to the extent that this is deleted under identity with the subject of the absolute (*Vaughan's Testimonie*):[4]

(14) HC 1554 *The Trial of Sir Nicholas Throckmorton*, PI, 69.C1: and so ***Vaughan's Testimonie*** *being credited*, ***ø*** may be the material Cause of my Condemnation, as the Jury may be induced by his Depositions to speak their Verdict,

9.5 Sources of the ACC-*ing* gerundive

As already noted (section 9.3), the use as subjects of the gerund of common case NPs (instead of PossPs) and objective case pronouns (instead of possessive determiners), was only in its inception in Early Modern English: in a 392,110-word sample from the Early Modern English section of the Helsinki Corpus I recorded only 11 instances of ACC-*ing*. In the same sample, by contrast, gerunds with an initial possessive totalled 261 (see Fanego 1998: 90–1). With respect to the way or ways in which the acquisition of that important verbal feature by the English gerund may have taken place, I have suggested elsewhere (Fanego 1998: 100–3, 2004: 41–5) that one likely source was that of gerundial constructions in which the subject of the gerund lacked an overt genitive inflection for one reason or other. Essentially, such uninflected NPs belonged to one of the following subtypes:

1. Nouns ending in the fricatives /s, z/ (e.g. *Moses*, *mistress, Highness*), with which the genitive form was often avoided in Early Modern English on phonotactic grounds, as Visser (1963–73: section 1101), Altenberg (1982: 45–8) and others have noted.

(15) ARCHER 1666 Allin, *The Journals of Sir Thomas Allin* (alli_j2b): I went aboard, where I received the news of ***his Highness*** *going to the Royal James to the westward*.

2. The majority of plural nouns. The use of the apostrophe as a case marker after the plural -(*e*)*s* morpheme did not develop in written English until the late eighteenth century (Altenberg 1982: 53), so that in gerundial structures such as (16–17) it was formerly impossible to ascertain whether the subject of the *-ing* form was intended as a possessive phrase in the 'genitive' plural or as a noun phrase in the common case:

   (16) HC 1689–90 Evelyn, *Diary*, 900: [...] people began to talke *of* ***the Bishops*** *being cast out of the House*:[5]
   (17) ARCHER 1677 Morrice, *The Entring Book of Roger Morrice* (morr_y2b): January the 14th (77). It's said the Highlanders are to Randesvouz at Sterling the 24th of this Instant, and soe to march into the west, where they say most dessenters live, There is a Proclamation prohibiting ***any subjects, Noblemen or others*** *coming out of that Kingdome (Tradesmen Excepted) upon any account whatsoever*,

3. The pronoun *her*, with which there is no formal distinction between the possessive and the accusative form, so that in (18), *her* could be interpreted either way.

   (18) HC 1619 Deloney, *Jack of Newbury*, 81: Moreouer, ***her*** *prattling to Mistresse Winchcombes folks of their mistresse*, made her on the other side to fall out with her,

4. Various sorts of complex NPs with which a genitive form would prove awkward or simply impossible (for further discussion, see Visser 1963–73: section 1101); this accounts for the absence of the clitic *-'s* in an example like (19):

   (19) HC 1665 Hooke, *Micrographia*, 13.5, 211: it [= a louse] is troubled at nothing so much as at a man that scratches his head [...] that makes it oftentime sculk into some meaner and lower place, and run behind a mans back, though it go very much against the hair; ***which ill conditions of it*** *having made it better known then trusted*, would exempt me from making any further description of it, did not my faithful [...] Microscope bring me other information of it.

It is evident that the existence of these various classes of uninflected NPs must have contributed greatly to strengthening the feeling that a common case might be used as the subject of the gerund, as already pointed out by Jespersen (1909–49: V section 9.4). Yet although they were no doubt partial sources of the ACC-*ing* construction, they cannot have been its only source, for they cannot explain some of its distinctive features during the early stages of its development, as will be discussed in what follows.

Table 9.2, which is based on a manual search of all the *-ing* forms occurring in the corpora examined, gives an overview of ACC-*ing* in terms of two variables, namely: (a) subperiod; (b) syntactic function in the superordinate structure. Table 9.3, in turn, provides information on the noun phrases and pronouns occurring as subject arguments of the *-ing* forms. Illustrative examples of the various syntactic functions distinguished in the tables are (20) = object function, (21–22) = prepositional complement, and (1) above = subject function.

(20) COLMOBAENG 1705 Manley, *The Secret History of Queen Zarah and the Zarazians*, 102: when Favourites Flourish, the State Languishes, for Persons of their Characters being Rivals to one another, generally go cunningly to work, and so interrupt[6] ***all other Business*** *going forward but their own*.

(21) HC 1554 *The Trial of Sir Nicholas Throckmorton*, P.I, 69.C1: touchyng *the* ***Earl of Deuon*** *parting hence, and my going with him*, and also concerning the matter of the Earle of Pembroke, I do aduow and say that Vaughan hath said untruely.

(22) ARCHER 1664 Lowe, *The Diary of Roger Lowe* (1664lowe_y2b): 8th. — This night I was in a troubled condition, for Sarah Hasleden spoke in a backe-biting way of me, and she would tell her brother of me, but all was in a causeles matter, *for* ***me*** *spendinge 2d*.

At its most obvious, Table 9.2 confirms what was already clear from my earlier research on the gerund, namely that the ACC-*ing* pattern becomes noticeable only from the second half of the seventeenth century. Secondly,

Table 9.2 ACC-*ing* gerundives, per subperiod and syntactic function

1500–1640 (291,327 words)	**1640–1700 (335,277 words)**	**1700–1749 (318,809 words)**
As subject: 1 ex. (date: 1615) + 1ambiguous ex. (date: 1619; the gerund's subject is the possessive *her*)	As subject: 10 ex. + 1 ambiguous ex. (the gerund's subject is plural)	As subject: 19 ex. + 1 ambiguous ex. (the gerund's subject is the possessive *her*)
As object: 1 ambiguous ex. (date: 1554; the gerund's subject is plural)	As object: 1 ambiguous ex. (the gerund's subject is plural)	As object: 2 ex.
As prepositional complement: 2 ex. (dates: 1554)	As prepositional complement: 11 ex. + 6 ambiguous ex. (the gerund's subject is plural)	As prepositional complement: 17 ex. + 1 ambiguous ex. (the gerund's subject is the possessive *her*)
TOTAL: 3 ex. + 2 ambiguous ex.	TOTAL: 21 ex. + 8 ambiguous ex.	TOTAL: 38 ex. + 2 ambiguous ex.

Table 9.3 NPs and pronouns functioning as subject arguments of ACC-*ing* gerundives

1500–1640 (291,327 words)	**1640–1700 (335,277 words)**	**1700–1749 (318,809 words)**
With ACC-*ing* as subject: Pronouns: *her* NPs: *grass* With ACC-*ing* as object: NPs: *the Spaniards* With ACC-*ing* as prepositional complement: NPs (2): *the attorney*; *the Earl of Devon*	With ACC-*ing* as subject: Pronouns (2): *it, there* NPs (9): *these small pellets; which ill conditions of it; so much Company; Ostorius; the man; his sickness; prince Arthur, or his chief patron Sir Philip Sidney, whom he intended to make happy by the marriage of his Gloriana; Themira; God* With ACC-*ing* as object: NPs (1): *any subjects, noblemen or others*; With ACC-*ing* as prepositional complement: Pronouns (2): *anybody*; *me* NPs (15): *the seamen*; *the French fleet*; *your ship*; *such a boundless space*; *any solid matter*; *the Prince of Orange*; *his Highness*; *Mr Baxter*; *the water*; *the bishops*; *the evil spirits*; *four soldiers*; *the Moscovites*; *C. Elliott and his ships*; *Socrates, Anaxagoras, and others*	With ACC-*ing* as subject: Pronouns (5): *it, her, she, which* 'whose' (2 ex.) NPs (15): *the number; the weather; the frost; the force of the heart and pectoral muscles; my father... and all his family; Zarah; his brother; these morals; the wind; the laws of Ginksy; the dram; Oliver; the pork; this trifle; the ladies* With ACC-*ing* as object: NPs (2): *the Queen*; *all other business* With ACC-*ing* as prepositional complement: Pronouns (2): *her*; *it* NPs (16): *the play*; *some powers at Court*; *Mulgarvius*; *the noise*; *the electors*; *the river of that name*; *a plot*; *the Irish*; *the English army*; *the Bavarians and French*; *the Spaniard ship*; *his brother*; *Mr. Brown's wife's sister*; *the Princess of Wales*; *a custom*; *the Spaniards*

the data also confirm the important contribution to the rise and expansion of the ACC-*ing* pattern of plurals and other kinds of phrases which are ambiguous between a reading as common case phrases or as genitive phrases (see (16)–(18) above).[7] The most noteworthy aspect, however, is the high proportion of ACC-*ing* gerundives functioning as clausal subjects, which is exceptional if one bears in mind that, as noted in section 9.3, there is a constant trend over time for all subtypes of gerunds to occur chiefly as prepositional complements (e.g. *by John's looking at me*), to the extent that in Fanego (1996: 116, 122), in a sample of 317,621 words from the Early Modern English section of the Helsinki Corpus, I found only 8.7 per cent (= 141 tokens) of gerunds used as subjects, out of a total of 1618. The skewed distribution of ACC-*ing* gerundives, at least in the early stages of

their development, is also confirmed by data from Dryden's usage: Söderlind (1958: sections 514, 516), in his detailed analysis of Dryden's extensive collection of prose writings, found only 12 instances of ACC-*ing* gerundives, seven of which function as sentence subjects, as against only five used as prepositional complements.[8]

In light of this finding, the question emerges as to what exactly were the sources behind the rise of ACC-*ing*. We know that for all other subtypes of verbal gerunds, the sources were the corresponding nominal subtypes, which underwent a prolonged process of accretion of verbal features whose effects can best be seen by comparing the pairs of gerunds in (23)–(25):

(23a) HC 1550–52 *Diary of Edward VI*, 367: The lord admiral toke his leave to goe into Fraunce, *for christening* ***of the French kinges soone***. [bare nominal gerund: *of*-phrase as notional object]
(23b) HC 1624 *Oxinden Letters*, 14: I thanke you for your Care and paines *abowt enquireing and provideing* ***Sheepe*** *for mee*, [bare verbal gerund: NP object]

(24a) HC 1554 *The Trial of Sir Nicholas Throckmorton*, P.I, 66.C1: Moreouer, to accompte ***the*** *taking* ***of the Tower*** is uery dangerous by the Law. [definite nominal gerund: determiner combined with *of*-phrase as notional object]
(24b) HC 1629 *Barrington Family Letters*, 92: [...] that all the distempers of our bodys, which must need be many while we live here, may be a means *of* ***the*** *cureing* ***the great distempers of our soles***, [definite hybrid gerund: determiner combined with NP object][9]

(25a) HC 1567 Harman, *A Caveat or Warening for Commen Cursetors*, 70: As ***your*** *pacient bearinge* ***of troubles***, your honest behauiour among vs your neyghbours [...] doth moue vs to lament your case, [nominal POSS-*ing* gerund: possessive determiner combined with *of*-phrase as notional object]
(25b) HC 1666–67 Pepys, *Diary*, VIII.319: and then heard from Sir R. Ford the good account which the boys had given *of* ***their*** *understanding* ***the nature and consequence of an oath***, [hybrid POSS-*ing* gerund: possessive determiner combined with NP object]

In the case of the ACC-*ing* pattern, the greatest affinity is evidently with the POSS-*ing* subtype, since both share the feature of having an explicit subject argument (respectively, the common case NP and the possessive determiner). That POSS-*ing* indeed contributed to the formation of ACC-*ing* has already been mentioned; however, POSS-*ing* gerundives, like all other gerundives, were uncommon as subjects – there are only 18 instances used with this function in my data from subperiod I (1500–1640). But, more

importantly, they differed markedly from the ACC-*ing* type in terms of their internal syntax. In other words, the majority of my examples of POSS-*ing* as sentence subjects in that first subperiod are purely nominal structures lacking an explicit patient argument or any other kind of post-head dependent (an adverbial, a prepositional phrase, etc.), and hence not providing a good model for the development of a typically clausal structure such as ACC-*ing*; witness the following examples, and see also (25a) above:

(26) HC 1534 More, *Letters*, 545: For Christen charitie and naturall loue and *your verie doughterly dealing* (*funiculo triplici, (vt ait scriptura) difficile rumpitur*) both binde me and straine me therto.
(27) HC 1608 Armin, *A Nest of Ninnies*, 10: he [the knight] loued the foole aboue all, and that the household knew, else Jack had paid for it, for *the common peoples dauncing* was spoiled

There are only a couple of examples (28)–(29) exhibiting a greater degree of internal complexity and thus resembling the more versatile and extended gerund structures that become common from subperiod II (1640–1700), coinciding with the widespread verbalization of *-ing* nominals. For, as I have shown in earlier research (Fanego 1996: 119–21), as gerunds moved away from noun phrases over the course of the Early Modern English period, a noticeable increase took place in the frequency of post-head dependents inside gerund phrases, which thus came to mirror VP structure much more closely. This trend, however, is chiefly observable from subperiod II onwards.[10] All things considered, then, it seems worthwhile to explore whether a source other than POSS-*ing* gerundives can be found to help us account satisfactorily for this hitherto unexplained aspect of the grammar of the ACC-*ing* pattern, namely, its high incidence as clausal subject.

(28) HC 1554 *The Trial of Sir Nicholas Throckmorton*, PI, 75.C2: *Your adhering to the Queenes Enimies within the Realme* is euidently proued:
(29) ARCHER 1617 Speght, *A Mouzell for Melastomus* (speg_p1b): [...] to make her husband partaker of that happinesse, which she thought by their eating they should both haue enioyed. *This her giuing Adam of that sawce*, wherewith Sathan had serued her, [...] was that, which made her sinne to exceede his:

9.5.1 Free adjuncts and absolute participles in Early and Late Modern English

Following the terminology in Kortmann (1991: 1–2), I will refer to the *-ing* clauses in (30)–(32) as, respectively, free adjuncts (30) and absolutes (31)–(32). Both are tenseless structures that function as adjuncts with respect to the

matrix clause or 'anchor', being set apart from this by an intonational break which in present-day English is 'more often than not [...] indicated by commas in writing' (Kortmann 1991: 1). Comma punctuation, however, is often absent in earlier instances of both constructions, as Early Modern English punctuation differed from that of present-day English in many respects (Salmon 1999, Río-Rey 2002: 309–10, 321).

(30) HC 1608 Armin, *A Nest of Ninnies*, 48: This lusty jester, *ø forgetting himself*, in fury draws his dagger, and begins to protest.
(31) HC 1603 *The Trial of Sir Walter Raleigh*, I, 210.C1: *The Lord Cobham being requir'd to subscribe to an Examination*, there was shewed a Note under Sir Walter Raleigh's hand; the which when he had perus'd, he paus'd, and after brake forth into these Speeches:
(32) HC *c*.1535–43 Leland, *Itinerary,* Sample 2, PI, 140: Insomuch that *leade beyng made ther at hand* many houses yn the toune have pipes of leade to convey water from place to place.

In contemporary usage, there are essentially two defining differences between these two participial types. First, the presence of an overt subject NP in absolutes (*the Lord Cobham* and *leade* in the case of (31)–(32) respectively; henceforth: Sub_A) versus its absence in free adjuncts. Secondly, the fact that in canonical instances the covert subject of free adjuncts is 'controlled' by the subject of the matrix clause (*this lusty jester* in (30); henceforth: Sub_M), whereas in absolutes their explicit subject and the subject of the matrix clause are not coreferential. Thus, as Kortmann (1991: 103) notes, the default usage today is that 'given referential subject identity, free adjuncts are to be employed, whereas absolutes are appropriate whenever non-coreference holds between the subject of the [participial] construction and the matrix subject'.

There is evidence, however, that this neat distinction between free adjuncts and absolutes in terms of referential subject identity or lack of it did not apply in earlier stages of the language, so that the two constructions did not specialize in the fulfilment of complementary tasks until well into the Late Modern English period. Jespersen (1909–49: V section 6.2.2), Söderlind (1958: section 502), Visser (1963–73: section 1085) and, more recently, Río-Rey (2002: 318–21) adduce many examples of absolutes showing full coreference between the subject of the absolute and the matrix subject; (33) is an example from Río-Rey (2002: 319):[11]

(33) HC 1526 *A Hundred Mery Talys*, Sample 3, 39–40: ***The wyfe of the house*** *perceyuyng that he toke all suche fragmentys & vytayle with hym that was last & put it in hys male*/ **she** brought vp that podege that was last in the pot

Absolutes of this kind are also very frequent in my material, where four subtypes exhibiting full coreference can be distinguished; all of them are obsolete in present-day English:[12]

1. Sub_A is a full NP; Sub_M is a coreferential personal pronoun. (33) above is an example; (34) is another:

   (34) ARCHER 1661 Flatman, *Don Juan Lamberto* (1661flat_f2b): Now it fell out that ***Sir Baxtero*** *having heard how that Sir Ludlow was departed out of Brittain*, **he** made great lamentation and moaning;

2. Sub_A and Sub_M are two coreferential pronouns identical in form:[13]

   (35) ARCHER 1673 Kirkman, *The Counterfeit Lady Unveiled* (1673kirk_f2b): [...] and ***they*** *designing to live in all freedom as man and wife*, **they** therefore left that lodging and went to another at a convenient distance.

   (36) ARCHER 1704 Dean, *The Journall of the Campaigne for the Yeare of Our Lord God - 1704* (1704dean_j3b): But no sooner did our Forlorne Hope appear but the enemy did throw in their volleys of canon balls and small shott among them and made a brave defence and a bold resistance against us as brave loyall hearted gentlemen souldiers ought to for there prince and country, and ***they*** *being strongly intrenched* **they** killed and mortyfyed abundance of our men both officers and souldiers.

3. Subject identity between Sub_A and Sub_M could go as far as Sub_M deletion, thus leading to a situation in which, as Kortmann notes (1991: 101), the subject of the absolute controls the matrix subject, rather than the other way round. In such cases, the line between absolutes and free adjuncts becomes blurred to an even greater extent than in the two previous subtypes:

   (37) HC 1554 *The Trial of Sir Nicholas Throckmorton*, P.I, 69.C1: [...] and so ***Vaughan's Testimonie*** *being credited*, **ø** may be the material Cause of my Condemnation, as the Jury may be induced by his Depositions to speak their Verdict, and so finally therevpon the Judge to giue Sentence.

   (38) ARCHER 1628 *The True History of the Tragicke Loves of HIPOLITO and ISABELLA* (1628anon_p1b): ***The good and commendable proiect of this marriage*** *being agreed on by these Parents*, and whereon they built the principall happinesse of their house and family, **ø** brought them much more ruine then it had promised them contentment; being the ordinary pleasure of fortune to build vpon the foundation of our designes, euents most contrary to our hopes.

(39) ARCHER 1628 *The True History of the Tragicke Loves of HIPOLITO and ISABELLA* (1628anon_p1b): A weake perswasion will carry a diuided and doubtfull minde, to that part whither it selfe inclines; so ***these letters*** *finding her leaning more to loue then dutie*, **ø** forced her through all the doubts that could oppose themselues, and after some discourse with her selfe, of such differing accidents in those occurrences as her able vnderstanding set before her; reason at length gaue place to loue, and respect to passion;

4. A subclass of the preceding subtype, also mentioned by Jespersen (1909–49: III section 10.1.4), Söderlind (1958: section 502), Visser (1963–73: section 1086) and Río-Rey (2002: 319), involves relative clauses, thus giving rise to a construction which, as Söderlind notes, 'is particularly bold':[14]

(40) HC 1526 *A Hundred Mery Talys*, Sample 2, 135: the frere and his felaw began Placebo and Dirige and so forth sayd the seruyse full deuowtly *which* ***the wyues*** *so heryng* / **ø** coude not refrayne them selfe from lawghynge and wente in to a lytyll parler to lawgh more at theyr plesure.

(41) HC 1619 Deloney, *Jack of Newbury*, 86–7: Whereupon hee willed him for two yeres space to take his diet and his Ladies at his house: *which* ***the Knight*** *accepting* **ø** rode straight with his wife to *Newbery.*

(42) ARCHER 1692 Congreve, *Incognita: or, Love and Duty Reconcil'd* (1692cong_f2b): [...] and Hippolito having made a Visit to his Governour, dispatch'd a Messenger with the Letter and Directions to Leonora. At the Signal agreed upon the Casement was opened and a String let down, *to which* ***the Bearer*** *having fastned the Letter*, **ø** saw it drawn up, and returned. It were a vain attempt to describe Leonora's Surprize, when she read the Superscription.

In Río-Rey's study (2002: 318–21), which is based on seven genres[15] and a 252,110-word sample from the Early Modern English section of the Helsinki Corpus, absolutes with full coreference represent about 30 per cent (101 tokens) of the 336 absolutes recorded in her material. The frequencies for subtypes 1 (24 tokens), 3 (65 tokens) and 4 (12 tokens) above[16] are carefully charted on the chronological dimension, and she shows that full coreference becomes particularly common during the second (1570–1640) of the three subperiods of Early Modern English distinguished in the Helsinki Corpus. This seems to be largely in keeping with the evidence from my own material: though I have not quantified all the absolutes precisely, as this would be an enormous task, examples showing full coreference are common in the seventeenth century and continue to be used into the eighteenth.

The relevance to the present research of Río-Rey's findings lies in the fact that, as will be argued in the next section, the subtypes with Sub_M deletion

seem to have provided a model for the use of ACC-*ing* as sentence subject, a syntactic function whose great frequency with this type of gerundive needs to be adequately explained.

9.5.2 The role of absolutes in the historical development of ACC-*ing*

Following Naro (1981), work on morphosyntactic change has often pointed out that innovations are first used in contexts 'where surface differentiation between the old and new systems is zero (or nearly so)' (ibid.: 63). This view of linguistic change as 'sneaky', and as advancing 'most easily where it is least obtrusive, apparently thriving on structural ambiguities and [...] superficial resemblances to existing patterns' (De Smet 2012: 607), has been applied very explicitly to a number of changes described in the literature, including, for instance, the extension of the accusative with infinitive construction to verbs of knowing, thinking and declaring (e.g. *They know him to be wrong*) over the course of Middle English, under the influence of Latin analogues (Warner 1982: 134–57), the extension of bare verbal gerunds (e.g. ***Slitting the bark** is an excellent additional help*) to subject position in Late Modern English (Fanego 2007: 217–18), and the reanalysis of *all but* from a multi-word sequence meaning 'everything except' to a complex downtoner modifying adjectives with the meaning 'almost' (De Smet 2012: 611–13).

If we now turn to the ACC-*ing* construction and compare its examples as preverbal subject with the participial constructions in (37)–(42), which are also positioned sentence initially before their superordinate clauses, the surface resemblances between the two types become evident. In fact, the awkward, faulty syntax in five or six of my examples is halfway between a gerundial structure and a participial one. Note for instance that (43) starts with a pronoun (*she*) in the nominative case, as it corresponds to an absolute; but as one reads on, it becomes clear that the *-ing* clause has to be interpreted gerundially: '[the fact of] her being now a woman, and her father's age and some infirmities ... induced him to entertain her with discourse on marriage', and so on.[17] Thus also in (44), which is another hybrid, in this case between the subtype of absolute with continuative *which* discussed in section 9.5.1 and a gerundive: '[the fact of] Oliver knowing [which] and sending a messenger about it put the French into a great consternation', and so on. In (45), also appearing to originate in that subtype of absolute, the relative *which* has possessive value: '... the place she was to go, whose being so small a distance from Paris made him the more consoled at leaving her, because he could with ease make her a visit every day'.[18]

(43) COLMOBAENG 1725 Haywood, *The Fatal Secret: or, Constancy in Distress*, 209: she went a great way in the Mathematicks; understood several Languages perfectly well; and had she presever'd [*sic*] in Application, might have been as eminent for her Learning, as the celebrated Madam Dacier: But ***she** being now a Woman, and her*

Father's Age, and some Infirmities incident to it, making him believe he had not long to live, and consequently desirous of seeing his beloved Child dispos'd of before his Death, induced him to entertain her often with Discourse of Marriage.[19]

(44) ARCHER 1717 Tomlinson, *The Diary of John Tomlinson* (1717toml_y3b): 1717. Aug. 8th. Oliver Cromwell kept a correspondence with the French king's secretary, thô they had promised to deliver Mardyke to the English, yet they had formed secret counsels not to do it—*which, Oliver knowing and sending a messenger about it*—putt the French into a great consternation, it made them think he had consulted the devil, for there were but two or three persons conscious to it.

(45) COLMOBAENG 1725 Haywood, *The Fatal Secret: or, Constancy in Distress*, 230: The indulgent Parent heard the Proposal with Satisfaction, and every Thing was ordered to be got ready for her Removal with all Expedition. She was carried in a Litter for Ease, and the assiduous Chevalier attended her on Horseback to the Place she was to go, ***which*** *being so small a Distance from Paris*, made him the more consoled at leaving her, because he could with Ease make her a Visit every Day.

In a second group of examples in my data, the NPs coding the subject arguments of the *-ing* forms (*grasse*, *so much Company*, *The weather* in the examples below) are semantically compatible with the matrix predicates (*occasion*, *makes ... scarce and dear*, *obliged*). An interpretation of these *-ing* clauses as participial (rather than gerundial) is therefore not impossible, but seems highly unlikely in view of the overall context, which makes it clear that the focus is on the entire propositions functioning as subjects of the higher verbs; in other words, in (46) it is not grass that 'will occasion the greatest increase of milk', but rather the fact itself of grass being in 'its perfect goodness' in springtime. Hence also in (47), where it is the fact of there being so many people living in the town that is said to be held responsible for the scarcity of food or provisions, and so on.

(46) HC 1615 Markham, *Countrey Contentments*, 107: The best time for a Cow to calue in for the Dairie, is in the later ende of March, and all Aprill; for then ***grasse*** *beginning to spring to its perfect goodnesse* will occasion the greatest increase of milke that may be:

(47) HC 1698 Fiennes, *Journeys*, 152: There are a great deale of Gentry which lives in town tho' there are no good houses but what are old rambling ones [SIX MORE LINES OF TEXT FOLLOW]; its a very dear place ***so much Company*** *living in the town* makes provision scarce and dear, however its a good excuse to raise the recknoning on strangers.

(48) COLMOBAENG 1719 Bell, *St. Petersburgh to Pekin* 4Q10(1719)0008/019-P0: We travelled to the city of Mosco in small parties, the more easily to procure post horses. ***The weather*** *being very hot* obliged us to make short stages, confining us mostly to the mornings and evenings.

As frequently noted in the literature (see, among many others, Langacker 1977, Fanego 2004, Traugott and Trousdale 2013: 22–6, 35–6), such ambiguities in interpretation are characteristic of morphosyntactic changes involving the reanalysis of a construction or class of constructions in a given language, so that a new form–meaning pairing is established, often without language users actually being aware of the change having occurred (Keller 1994). The results of this are visible at the surface only when constructions begin to be attested that 'could not have been fully sanctioned by [the] pre-existing constructional type' (Traugott and Trousdale 2013: 22), as happens in the following instances recorded in my data, along with several others. In (49) the pronoun *there* is a dummy, and thus cannot be an argument of the higher predicate *made it appear*; in (50)–(51) a reading of *God* and *The man* as the subjects of, respectively, *was a daily miracle* and *made ... appear* is semantically incoherent; and in (52) *the ladies* is in the plural, while *exposes* is singular.

(49) HC 1698 Fiennes, *Journeys*, 151: a mile off by a little village I descended a hill which made the prospect of the town still in view and much to advantage; its but two parishes; the Market Cross has a dyal and lanthorn on the top, and ***there*** *being another house pretty close to it high built with such a tower and lanthorn also, with the two churches towers and some other buildings pretty good* made it appear nobly at a distance;

(50) ARCHER 1680 Long, *A Sermon against Murmuring* (1680long_h2b): They acknowledged that God as well as his father designed him for the Crown, and setled it on his head against all opposition, for Adonijah usurped the kingdom, Abiathar, Joab and Shimei abetted the Usurpation and were all defeated: ***God*** *appearing for Solomon not once or twice for the preservation of him from such enemies*, was a daily miracle:

(51) COPC 1689 Stevens, *Journal*, 1Q17(1689)0004/029-P0: Here first of all we found difficulty in getting quarters, and, having got a billet of the sovereign on an inn, were refused not only beds, but fire and meat and drink for our money, [...] ***The man*** *being an Irishman and a Catholic* made his ill carriage towards us appear the more strange,

(52) ARCHER 1716 *Lady Mary Wortley Montagu to Pope* (1716mmon_x3b): The theatre is so large that 'tis hard to carry the eye to the end of it, and the habits in the utmost magnificence to the number of one

> hundred and eight. No house could hold such large decorations; but ***the ladies*** *all sitting in the open air*, exposes them to great inconveniences; for there is but one canopy for the imperial family;

Besides their surface affinities, important semantic affinities also exist between the ACC-*ing* construction as preverbal subject and the absolutes that served as its model. Referring first to the absolutes, these, as already mentioned, are tenseless structures that function as adjuncts with respect to the matrix clause; as adjuncts, they are able to code a variety of adverbial relations: time, place, cause, conditionality, concessivity, instrumentality and so on. With great frequency, both today (Kortmann 1991: 135–6, 230) and in earlier stages of the language (Visser 1963–73: sections 1063, 1080), they specify the causal motivation of the event or situation in the matrix clause; see in this regard examples (31)–(37), (39)–(41) cited earlier, plus note 14, among many others that could be adduced from my data.[20] In this respect, therefore, absolutes share the same discourse function as one important subset of the gerundives, namely, those introduced by causal *for*, as in (53)–(54) below. These, as shown by De Smet in a detailed study of the semantic relations expressed by prepositional gerundives over the period 1250–1640, are already recorded in Middle English, but, crucially, they increase sharply in frequency from 1500 onwards (De Smet 2008: 73, 80–1, and Appendix A1), that is, coinciding with the period when both ACC-*ing* gerundives and absolutes with full coreference between Sub_A and Sub_M were also becoming common.

(53) HC 1550–52 *Diary of Edward VI*, 355: The duches, Crane and his wife [...] were sent to the Towr *for devising thies treasons*; Jaymes Wingfeld also, *for casting out of billes sediciouse*.

(54) HC 1629 *Barrington Family Letters*, 78: He took noe unkindnes that I colde perceave *for your not seing him*, he did not speak a word of it tell I asked him.

It appears to me that a probable interpretation is that such a shared discourse function of *for*-gerundives and absolutes may have facilitated the expansion of ACC-*ing* as preverbal subject. Like those two constructional types, ACC-*ing* subjects are factive and, in the vast majority of cases, express the causal motivation for the situation or event in the superordinate clause; observe examples (18), (19), (43)–(49) and (51)–(52) cited earlier. It is precisely this semantic content that is responsible for the very high incidence of causative predicates in the sentences with ACC-*ing* subjects recorded in my data; that is, predicates such as *induce*, *make*, *oblige*, *occasion* and the like. Aside from causatives (25 tokens), commentatives[21] (8 tokens; see (50) for one of them) are the only other type of predicate taking ACC-*ing* subjects in my material. The presence of commentatives, however, was predictable,

Table 9.4 Matrix predicates with ACC-*ing* clauses functioning as preverbal subjects

Causatives (25): *cast (an impediment); deprive (sb. from sth.); draw (sb. to do sth.); exempt (sb. from V-ing); expose (sb. to sth.); give (sb. reason to do sth.); give (sth. a calm and continued impulse); give (apprehensions of sb.'s danger); give (content); induce (sb. to do sth.); introduce (a thought), i.e.* 'bring about, occasion (a thought)'*; make (sb./sth. do sth; 10 ex.); oblige (sb. to do sth.); occasion (sth.); put (sb. into consternation); stay (sb.'s flight), i.e.* 'check, hinder (sb.'s flight)'
Commentatives (8): *be a daily miracle; be the effect of duty; be a sufficient demonstration; be a continual snare; be a great article; be looked on as ...; be the better; prove the best means of ...*

as cross-linguistically subject clauses are often arguments to commentatives (see Noonan 1985: 116–18, Fanego 1990: II, 132, 1992: 81–2).[22]

9.6 Summing up: ACC-ing gerundives as multiple source constructions

The idea that '[t]hings in language are rarely simple, so that for any given linguistic phenomenon, a multiplicity of explanations need to be considered' (Joseph 2013: 675) has long been current in historical linguistics. Recently, however, work by Van de Velde et al. (2013) has tried to formalize this notion and provide a framework for the analysis of the widespread phenomenon of linguistic changes resulting not just from one, but from different source constructions simultaneously.

Based on Croft's conception (2000: 32–7) of constructions as forming diachronic lineages that are replicated in usage, with change viewed as typically occurring within a lineage through altered replication, Van de Velde et al. explore the interaction between lineages or between different branches of a lineage as leading to language innovation. The involvement of more than one lineage, or 'source construction', for a given change is examined with respect to developments at the levels of phonology, semantics and morphosyntax, such as the English *way*-construction, for example (Israel 1996, Traugott and Trousdale 2013: 76–91). This has the form of a sequence of a verb, a noun phrase consisting of a possessive pronoun and *way*, and an adverbial. It is used 'to mark movement along a path accompanied or caused by the action denoted by the verb' (Van de Velde et al. 2013: 484). Remarkably, it accommodates both transitive and intransitive verbs, as in (55a) and (55b) respectively, quoted from Van de Velde et al.:

(55a) and we were actually kicking our way through rubbish on the stairs (BNC, FY8 633)

(55b) a lady who giggled her way through *Nightmare on Elm Street* (BNC, HGN 134)

The explanation proposed for this is that the present-day English *way*-construction stems, historically, from the combination of two distinct older constructions: one was the use of *way* as the object of a transitive verb denoting creation or acquisition of a path, as in (56); the other was the use of intransitive motion verbs with *way* functioning as an adverbial, as in (57):

(56) The ship [...] may make her way 2. or 3. pointes from her caping [i.e. 'course']. (1595, *OED*)
(57) Sir Beawmaynes [...] sawe where the blak knyght rode his way wyth the dwarff, and so he rode oute of his syght. (a1470, *OED*)

If we now turn to the specific construction discussed in this chapter and consider it once again in light of the evidence adduced in the preceding sections, we can hypothesize that, in producing it, a speaker or hearer in earlier English would have drawn on their knowledge or experience of a number of related constructions existing at the time. First, here would have been a very frequent subtype of gerundive most commonly functioning as prepositional complement and coding a variety of adverbial relations with respect to its matrix clause;[23] its subject argument, if overt, was marked for the genitive case; semantically, it could have either an actional (58–59) or a factive (53–54) reading:

(58) HC 1534 M. Roper, *Letters*, 510: It is to me no litle comfort [...] to delite my self amonge in this bitter tyme of your absens, by such meanes as I maye, *by as often writinge to you, as shall be expedient* and *by readinge againe and againe your most fruteful and delectable letter*,
(59) HC 1599–1605 Hoby, *Diary*, Sample 2, 77: after, I walked a broad, and, *at **my** Comming home*, I tooke a Lector, and wrett a whill

Second, a variant of the preceding subtype which, largely as a result of the simplification and instability of the English inflectional system, lacked overt genitive marking (see also examples (15)–(18) earlier on):

(60) HC 1554 *The Trial of Sir Nicholas Throckmorton*, PI, 70.C1: the said Sir *Peter Caroe* sayd, the matter importing the *French* King as it did, he thought the *French* King would work to hinder ***the Spanyards** coming hither*, with whome the said *Sir Peter* dyd thinke good to practise for Armour, Municions and Money.
(61) COPC 1690 Locke, *Concerning Human Understanding*, 014/074–P05: It is a quite different consideration to examine whether the mind has the idea *of **such a boundless space** actually existing*, since our ideas are not always proofs of the existence of things;

Third, the type of absolute participle with full coreference between Sub_A and Sub_M discussed in section 9.5.1, which provided an analogical model

for the expansion of the ACC-*ing* gerundive to the subject slot, one of its major functions in the early stages of its development. In this new use, ACC-*ing* incorporated the factive semantics of its participial source, and also a range of pronominal forms as subject arguments (see Table 9.3) that can likewise be traced back to that source; namely, the relative *which* (2 tokens), personal pronouns in the nominative case (1 token; see (43)), and expletives such as *it* (2 tokens) or *there* (1 token; see (49)), both of which occurred frequently with absolute participles (e.g. '*it* being Sunday, we had service on deck', '*there* being no survivors, the cause of the accident will never be known'; see Visser 1963–73: sections 1087–8, also Söderlind 1958: section 489).

In sum, the emergence and behaviour of the constructional type under discussion in this study illustrates that we can often come closer to a true understanding of innovations and developments in language by considering the possibility of not just one, but multiple causes and sources of change acting together.

Notes

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2. Henceforth gerund clauses will be in italics; subjects will be in bold.
3. Tajima (1996: 572–5) lists 28 Middle English examples of common case NPs or objective pronouns used as subjects of a gerund, as in (9), but as he himself acknowledges, many are doubtful and allow a different interpretation, so that only 12 of his examples (his nos. 10, 11, 12, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27 and 28) might be accepted as possible instances of the ACC-*ing* construction. Out of these, eight function as prepositional complements and four as objects (three in the set expression *to pardon me so presuming*). In addition, Tajima adduces (i) as an example of ACC-*ing* functioning as the subject of its sentence:

   (i) *c*.1378 *Piers the Plowman* (B-text), VIII 31-2 [Tajima 1996: 573]:
   The wynde and the water and ***the bote*** *waggynge* Maketh the man many a tyme to falle
   'the wind and the water and the boat rocking often make a man fall'

   As will be seen later on (section 9.5), this example is particularly relevant to the present research. It is doubtful, however, that it can be accepted as a genuine instance of the construction: the noun *boat* is recorded already in Old English as the first element of nominal compounds such as *batswegen* 'boatswain' and *batweard* 'boat guard' (*DOE* s.v. *bat* n.), and was frequently used 'in compounds and combinations' throughout Middle English (*MED* s.v. *bot* n.[1] 3), some of them, such as *batespyking* 'spikes or nails for a boat', formed on *-ing* nouns (< *spiking*). *Bote waggynge* might therefore be interpreted as a compound noun, rather than a

clause. Note too that the variant reading of this passage in the A-text of *Piers the Plowman* supports an analysis of the form *wagging* as purely nominal:

(ii) c1400(a1376) *PPl.A(1)* (Trin-C R.3.14) 9.26–8: Let bringe a man in a bot amydde a brood watir; Þe wynd & þe watir & *þe waggyng of þe boot* Makeþ þe man many tymes to falle & to stande, For stande he neuere so stif he stumbliþ in *þe waggyng*. [*MED* s.v. *wagging(e)* ger. (a)]

4. The use of the empty set (ø) in these and subsequent examples is to indicate that the covert subject of the superordinate clause is identical to the subject of the participle that precedes it.
5. The overall context shows that in this example *Bishops* is plural, not singular.
6. *OED* s.v. *interrupt* v. 4 'To hinder, stop, prevent, thwart'.
7. In Table 9.3 note also a few nouns ending in the fricatives /s, z/, such as *grass* (subperiod I) and *Ostorius, sickness*, *space* and *highness* (subperiod II); with these types of nouns, as mentioned earlier, zero genitive marking was frequent in Early Modern English.
8. In sections 515–6 and 518, where he gives the data for the gerunds used as objects and prepositional complements, Söderlind lists six further instances where the nominal is either in the plural (e.g. *of his homely Romans jesting at one another*) or is a classical proper noun ending in /s, z/ (e.g. *for Cleomenes not accepting the favours of Cassandra*). Since, as Söderlind points out (section 518), 'the apostrophe alone is never used as a sign of genitive' in Dryden, these six cases are ambiguous between a reading as PossPs with a 'zero' genitive (i.e. *of his homely Romans'*) or as common case NPs, and hence have been excluded from the count.
9. As I have shown in earlier research (Fanego 2006), definite hybrid gerunds were very common during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. From the end of the eighteenth century, however, normative pressures led to their disuse.
10. The tendency for more complex syntax to associate with the increasing verbalization of gerunds is also noted by De Smet (2008: 90–5) with reference to the period 1350–1640.
11. An anonymous reviewer points out that sequences such as (33–36) might be interpreted as instances of resumptive pronouns that were felt necessary by the complexity of the construction and the distance between the subordinate clause subject and the matrix clause, which led to the subject being 'evoked' again by a pronoun. In principle, there is nothing against this view, but this does alter the fact that a pattern of Sub_A 'controlling' Sub_M, rather than the other way round, occurs with great frequency over the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. In addition, not all instances of the pattern can be explained away on the basis of 'distance', as the two coreferential subjects could in fact occur in close proximity, as is the case in (36). Also, the most frequent cases of resumptive pronouns in the history of English involve a complement clause functioning as sentence subject which is resumed by *it*, as in Shakespeare's *The Winter's Tale* IV.iv.6: *To chide at your extremes* ***it*** *not becomes me*. For discussion see further Visser (1963–73: sections 73, 901), Fanego (1992: 77–8).
12. As Kortmann (1991: 99–101) notes, full coreference is marginally possible today in examples such as (iii), where the repetition of part of a noun phrase results in coreference between the subject of the absolute and the matrix subject:

(iii) In *one sense* all behavior 'has a genetic basis', *that sense* being that it also has an environmental basis.

13. For another example, see note 14 below.
14. Compare (40)–(42) with its variant with two coreferential pronouns: HC 1612 Coverte, *A Trve and Almost Incredible Report of an Englishman*, Sample 1, 16: The 21. day in the morning, wee espied three saile being small boats, sleightly wrought together, called *Paugaias* which we made after and tooke, *which **they** on shore espying*, **they** sent out an Aduisor being also a *Paugaia*, which perceiued that wee had taken the other and returned to the shore.
15. Comedies, fiction, letters (private), science, sermons, statutes and travelogue.
16. Subtype 2 is not mentioned, so we can assume that no examples of this occurred in her data.
17. See further Jespersen (1909–49: V section 9.8.3) for a couple of similar examples.
18. On the possessive use of *which*, see *MED which* 2a, b and *OED which* 14.b. Compare also example (19) above (*which ill conditions of it* = 'whose ill conditions').
19. A closely related example, which I excluded from the count of ACC-*ing* as subjects, is (iv), where the *-ing* clause seems more participial than gerundial; note, though, that it is resumed later in the sentence by the pronoun *it*:

    (iv) HC 1619 Deloney, *Jack of Newbury*, 85: At length he watcht her so narrowly, that finding her going forth in an euening, hee followed her, *shee hauing one man before, and another behinde: carrying a verie stately gate in the street, **it** draue him into greater liking of her*, beeing the more vrged to vtter his minde.

20. The expression of a causal relation seems to have been especially common in the case of the absolutes with full coreference between Sub_A and Sub_M; note here Söderlind's important observation (1958: section 502) that Dryden's absolutes of this type all have 'temporal or causal connotations', time and cause of course being semantic relations that easily shade into each other.
21. That is, predicates providing 'a comment on the complement proposition that takes the form of an emotional reaction or evaluation [...] or a judgement' (Noonan 1985: 116–18).
22. The predominance of commentatives with subject clauses is a consequence of the preference for coding subjective reactions, evaluations and comments in the form of nominal or adjectival predicates – which usually operate, at the syntactic level, within copular sentences such as (50) above.
23. Note, of course, that not all prepositional gerunds function as adverbial adjuncts to the matrix clause, as one of their roles is merely satisfying the subcategorization requirements of their higher predicates (such as *cause* and *fear* in the sentences below):

    (v) HC 1502–03 *Plumpton Correspondence (William Plumpton)*, 234: Son Robart Plompton, I hertely recommend me to you [...]. The ***cause** of my writing to you now*; that I wold you should helpe this bearrer, yong Letham, in such buisenes as he hath in the Court of Augmentation,
    (vi) HC 1619 Deloney, *Jack of Newbury*, 74: his Wife [...] for ***feare** of hurting the set of her neckenger*, was glad to goe about and wash buckes at the Thames side,

Primary sources

ARCHER = A Representative Corpus of Historical English Registers (1990–1993/2002/2007/2010/2013). Originally compiled under the supervision of Douglas Biber and Edward Finegan at Northern Arizona University and the University of Southern California; modified and expanded by subsequent members of a consortium of universities. Current member universities are Northern Arizona, Southern California, Freiburg, Heidelberg, Helsinki, Uppsala, Michigan, Manchester, Lancaster, Bamberg, Zurich, Trier, Santiago de Compostela and Leicester.

COLMOBAENG = Corpus of Late Modern British and American English Prose. For details, see Fanego (2012).

COPC = Century of Prose Corpus 1680–1780. For details, see Milic (1995).

DOE = Healey, Antonette diPaolo (ed.) (2008) *The Dictionary of Old English: A–G on CD-ROM. Fascicle G and Fascicles A to F (with Revisions)* (Toronto: University of Toronto, Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies).

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