THE FUNCTION OF THE PRESENT PARTICIPLE IN THE PREDICATIVE POSITION IN OLD ENGLISH

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1. It is very difficult to determine the function of the construction consisting of the copula *beon* and the present participle in the conjugational system of Old English. Authors of works dealing with the historical grammar of English seem to treat *beon*+present participle as one syntactic unit. This formation is referred to as: expanded tense (Jespersen 1965), periphrastic tense (Sweet 1957), definite tense (Åkerlund 1911), progressive (Scheffer 1975), expanded form (Berndt 1982, Nickel 1966, Visser 1973), periphrastic form (Mossé 1938, Strang 1979). Traugott (1972) refers to this construction as *beo-/wes-* PrP construction, which is an exception to the above. As will be indicated later, no function can be ascribed to the *beon*+present participle formation, for it was not in functional contrast to any other form of the cunjugational system of Old English[1]. Therefore, such terms as 'tense' or 'form' (both imply functional contrast, e.g. past tense form vs. non-past tense form or expanded form vs. simple form in present day English) seem unsuitable in reference to the *beon*+present participle formation. The term 'construction', on the other hand, implies co-occurrence of more than one entity forming a more complex syntactic unit. A construction is not in contrast to any other constructions occurring with it in syntagmatic relations, e.g. Noun Phrase is an endocentric construction and as such is not in contrast to the verbal part of Verb Phrase. As the *beon*+present participle formation consists of two forms and is not in

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[1] Mitchell (1985) notices that 'sometimes, in both the present and the past, it (i.e. *beon + -ende*, J.M.) seems to refer to a specific moment, sometimes to a continuing process ... Such examples suggest that the periphrasis had a significance of its own – one perhaps not so far removed from that of the modern equivalent. But other examples suggest the opposite. These include the not uncommon ones in which a periphrasis and simple verb appear in paralled clauses or sentences, in some of which at any rate a modern translator could not possibly use the periphrasis ...' (1985:274).

any functional contrast to any other form in the conjugational system of Old English[2], the term 'construction' seems more appropriate in reference to it than the terms 'tense' or 'form'[3].

Despite the fact that scholars dealing with Old English grammar refer to the *beon*+present participle formation as if it were a functional unit of the conjugational system of the Old English verb, they fail to define the function of this formation. Scheffer (1975), like other scholars, enumerates the meanings of this formation. According to him the *beon*+present participle formation was used to indicate imperfectivity, duration, limited duration, 'frame-time', inchoativity. However, he fails to indicate in what relation this formation was to the simple form. Berndt (1982), on the other hand, maintains that the simple form and the *beon*+present participle formation were used very often indiscriminately, which would imply that there was no functional contrast between the two formations[4]. It is suggested here that the *beon*+present participle formation could be used in all contexts in which the simple form was used. Thus the function of the *beon*+present participle formation could be defined as a facultative syntactic variant of the simple form functioning as the verbal part of the predicate. Thus it becomes clear that the *beon*+present participle formation cannot be associated with the present day English *be*+ participle form[5].

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[2] Analysing the contexts in which *beon* + *-ende* is found as presented in Scheffer (1975) one cannot fail to notice that this formation could replace the simple form in all its contexts. The present writer has found examples in which this formation is used even in contexts implying anteriority in anteriority, which in present day English is rendered by means of the past perfect verb phrase as in, e.g.

... *and þaet he gewilnode, þaet he swulte for þam broðrum, in þara deaðe he waer aer gefeonde.* (Bishop Waerforth of Worcesster, *The Dialogues of Gregory the Great*, Book III, XVIII, 217) ... and he desired to die for the brethren the death he had earlier rejoiced.

Tóhe above implies that the *beon* + *-ende* construction could be replaced with the simple form and vice versa without any change of meaning. Hence the conclusion that no functional contrast can be attributed to this construction.

[3] It is suggested in this paper that the form, be it simple or expanded, implies functional contrast to other forms, while the construction is not in contrast to anything and as such can be an element of a more complex construction.

[4] Berndt speaking about the uses of the simple form and the *beon* + present participle formation indicates that they were *very often* (emphasis mine, J. M.) used indiscriminately. Mitchell (1985) discussing the use of the two formations suggests that they were sometimes at any rate mere stylistic variants. He also indicates that the eleventh century reviser of Gregor's *Dialogues* greatly reduced the number of the *beon* + present participle formation. This implies that the use of this formation was influenced more by a personal preference rather than any functional meaning. The analysis of the *beon* + present participle formation in various Old English literary works carried out by the present writer indicates that this formation could be used in all contexts in which the simple form could be used. Therefore, it is suggested in this paper that the two formations were always used indiscriminately. Cf. also note 2.

[5] Cf. Sweet (1957). It is also worth noticing that *beon* + *-ende* is presented as aspect in the generative approach. Cf. Mc Laughlin (1970) and Traugott (1972).

It can be assumed that two factors have contributed to the fact that scholars dealing with Old English associate the Old English *beon*+ *-ende* construction with the present day English *be*+ *-ing* form[6]. One factor is the structural similarity between *beon*+ *-ende* and *be*+ *-ing*. Both formations consist of the copula and the present participle. The difference between them lies in their functions. In present day English *be*+ *-ing* is in functional contrast to the simple form. Hardly ever can it be found in the contexts in which the simple form is found. Thus *be*+ *-ing* can be described as context sensitive. Additionally this form can be described as semantically sensitive, since not all verbal stems can make its lexical core. Verbs describing situations classified as the state, e.g. *have, belong*, etc., are incompatible with *be*+ *-ing*. All that has thus far been said about *be*+ *-ing* i.e. the context sensitivity and semantic sensitivity implies that this formation can be considered to be a functional unit of the conjugational system of present day English. This form functions as the indicator of aspect[7]. The Old English *beon*+ *-ende* construction was not characterized either as context sensitive or semantically sensitive. This implies that the function of indicating aspect cannot be attributed to this construction. If it is taken into consideration that this construction was not characterized by context sensitivity, it can be inferred that practically no function can be ascribed to this formation. Thus it cannot be deemed as a functional unit of the conjugational system of the Old English verb.

The other factor is the fact that *beon*+ *-ende* in Old English translations of Latin texts is associated with Latin periphrastic forms in Latin original texts. It is believed that *beon*+ *-ende* was chiefly used as a means of rendering Latin constructions (Jespersen 1961, Strang 1979, Sweet 1957). Thus, *beon*+ *-ende* is used to render Latin constructions consisting of *esse* and *participium praesentis activi* as in, e.g.

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[6] The *beon* + present participle construction will be symbolized as *beon* + *-ende*. Similarly *be* + *-ing* will stand for the *be* + present participle formation in present day English.

[7] Lyons (1989) claims that present day English is characterized by the grammaticalized aspectual opposition progressive vs. nonprogressive. Hence it becomes clear that *be* + *-ing* will be found in contexts implying progressiveness (context sensitivity). Aspect can be defined as the grammaticalized way of presenting a situation denoted by the verb. This way of presenting a given situation is based on opposition between features characteristic of this situation, e.g. completness vs. incompletness, instantaneity vs. non-instantaneity, duration vs. instantaneity. etc. (for other oppositions see Lyons 1989). In present day English the description of a situation denoted by a given verb is based on the situation being in progress or not. However, not all situations can be described to be in progress. States are such situations, since they are stative and homogenous (Smith 1983). The conclusion is that not all situations described by the verb can be described in the same way. Hence *be* + *-ing* is described as semantically sensitive. The two features of *be* + *-ing* mentioned above make it possible to attribute to this form the function of indicating the aspect.

(1) *sebbe mibby geunrodsad waes on word eade seofonde waes*
forbon haefde uel haebbend aehte menig.
qui contristatus in uerbe abiit maerens erat enim habens
possessiones multas. (*Lindisfarnes Gospels.* Mark X, 22)[8]
'when he sounded troubled, he left being sad, as he had
many possessions'.

esse and participium futuri activi as in, e.g.

(2) *be be soblice aefter mec to cymende and toword is.*
qui autem post me venturus est. (*St. Matthew*, 3, 11)[9]
'those that will come after me'.

or the perfect of verba deponentia as in, e.g.

(3) *Drihten waes ba sprecende to Moise, bus cwebende:...*
Locutusque est dominus ad Moise eadem diei dicens:...
(Ælfric, *Deuteronomium*, XXXII, 48)[10]
'That same day the Lord said to Moses'

It should be borne in mind that the above mentioned Latin periphrastic forms
were actually functional units of the conjugational system of the Latin verb.
They are in functional contrast to simple forms as well as to each other,
specially *esse* + participium futuri activi and the perfect of verba deponentia.
However, the above mentioned Latin periphrastic forms could also be rendered
by means of simple forms in Old English translations (Scheffer 1975). It was
also possible to render Latin simple forms by means of the *beon* + *-ende*
construction as in, e.g.

(4) *Waes ba wuniende Israel on fribe feowertig wintra be*
Godeones wissunge.
Quievit terra per quadraginta annos, quibus Gedeon praefuit.
(Ælfric, *Liber Judicum*, VIII, 28)[11]

'Then Israel lived in peace for forty years under Gideon's guidance.'
The above presented facts concerning the use of the *beon* + *-ende* constructions
as a means of rendering Latin periphrastic forms in Old English translations of
Latin texts lead to the conclusion that *beon* + *-ende* existed in Old English
independently of Latin periphrastic forms. It does not correspond to them in
function. It was used as a stylistic device of rendering two element forms in
Latin texts. This practice was not obligatory, for the Old English simple form

[8] This example along with the Latin original comes from Sweet (1959).
[9] This example along with the Latin original comes from Scheffer (1975).
[10] This example along with the Latin original comes from Grein (1972).
[11] This example along with the Latin original comes from Grein (1872).

could also be used to render a Latin periphrastic form. An additional proof
that *beon* + *-ende* existed in Old English independently of Latin periphrastic
forms is the fact that it was possible to render a Latin simple form by means of
beon + *-ende* in an Old English translation.

Therefore, taking into consideration all the facts concerning the *beon*
+ *-ende* construction presented above, the construction should be treated as an
autochthonus formation of Old English which cannot be associated with the
present day English *be* + *-ing* form. As far as Old English translations of Latin
texts are concerned, the *beon* + *-ende* construction was used, frequently but
not exclusively, as a means of rendering Latin periphrastic tenses.

2. The *beon* + *-ende* construction was a two element formation. If the verbal
part of the predicate is rendered by means of this construction, then such
grammatical categories as: mood, tense, person and the lexical core denoting
the semantic contents of the verbal part of the predicate are rendered by two
elements[12]. The copula *beon* functioned as the indicator of mood, tense, person,
or in other words, rendered all the grammatical categories that were expressed
by suffixes in the case of the simple verbal form. The stem of the present
participle, on the other hand, formed the lexical core of the verbal part of the
predicate. Therefore, it could be argued that the present participle functioned
as the conveyor of the lexical core of the verbal part of the predicate when the
verbal part of the predicate was rendered by the *beon* + *-ende* construction. If
it is, however, assumed that *beon* + *-ende* is not a form but a construction
consisting of two forms, then what remains vague is the function of the present
participle as a component form of the *beon* + *-ende* construction.

Mitchell maintains that

> 'The obvious question 'What are the functions of this periphrasis (i.e. *beon* + *-ende*, J. M.) in
> OE?' cannot be answered with any certainty by modern grammarians, who cannot assume
> that any combination of *beon/wesan* + present participle is purely verbal because it can be so
> taken – the participle may be adjectival, appositive, or an agent noun.' (1985: 273-274).

In this paper it is argued that the present participle in the *beon* + present
participle construction functions as the adjective in the predicative position.
The present participle will be analysed on three levels, i.e. the syntatic level, the
morphological level, and the semantic level. The goal of this analysis is to

[12] The simple verbal part of the predicate consists solely of the simple verbal form, which can
be analysed into the stem and the suffix functioning as the ending. The stem functions as the
conveyor of the meaning, since it contains the semantic content of the form. The stem can be
modified internally (ablaut) or externally (affixation). The modification of the stem indicates,
among others, the tense distinction (modified vs. unmodified/formal opposition indicates the
distinction between anteriority vs. non-anteriority). To the stem, either modified or unmodifid,
personal endings are attached. Thus, what is rendered by the forms of the copula in the case of the
beon + *-ende* construction is rendered by suffixes in the case of the simple verb form.

indicate that the present participle and the adjective share many features as far as the there levels are concerned. This analysis is also to indicate that *beon + -ende* is not a periphrastic form belonging to the conjugational system of Old English but a juxtaposition of two syntactic units, i.e. the copula and the adjective.

3. In this section we will deal with the distribution of the adjective in the sentence. The characteristic features of the distribution of the adjective will be compared with those of the present participles in present day English and in Old English. For this purpose the structural approach has been adopted, since it makes it possible to determine similarities concerning the syntactic distribution of the present participle and the adjective.

Francis (1958) defines the adjective as a form characterized by its exclusive ability to fit into both the environments left blanks in a structure such as

(5) the ... man is very ...[13]

From the above three syntactic feature of the adjective can be distinguished:

(i)   ability to fill the attributive position
(ii) ability to fill the predicative position
(iii) ability to be premodified by qualifiers

If it is assumed that participles are a kind of adjective formed from verbs[14], then the present participle must also be characterized by the above listed syntactic features.

However, it is held that the difference between the adjective and the present participle is not clear-cut. The adjectival character of the present participle is seen if it is in the attributive position or it does not take any objects[15] as in, e.g. *his alarming views were a complete surprise to the audience*, or *his views were alarming*. The verbal character of the present participle is manifest if it is in the predicative position and takes an object as in, e.g. *his views were alarming the audience*. Visser (1973)[17] also subscribes to this view maintaining that 'Of course, it is obvious that when it [the present participle, J. M.] is complemented by an object its combination with *to be* is an Expanded Form' (1973: 1931). Thus, scholars dealing with the Old English grammar mentioned in 1. must hold this view and that is why they believe the present participle occurring after the copula *beon* to have verbal meaning. Yet, the occurrence of the object after the present participle cannot be treated as a decisive proof that it has the verbal meaning. There are adjectives that can take an object as in, e.g. *he is not worth*

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[13] In Francis (1958) the formula sentence reads as follows: The ... man seems very ... *Seems* is replaced by *is*, for it is the predicative position after the copula that is analysed.

[14] Cf. Jespersen (1979).

[15] Cf. Huddleston (1984).

his salt or *he is like his feather*[16]. If the sentence *his views were alarming the audience* is compared with *he is like his father*, it can be provisionally assumed that the structure of both the sentences is the same. The structure of both the sentences can be presented as NP_1 copula X NP_2, where NP_1 functions as the subject and NP_2 as the object of X. The position filled by X can be filled either by the adjective or the present participle. This would imply that the two forms are to be treated as the same part of speech or, to be more accurate, that they function as the same part of speech. Although the arrangement of the elements in the two sentences is identical, in present day English the sentences cannot be said to be characterized by the same structure, due to the fact that – *were alarming* – is not structurally equal to – *is like* –. The former is characterized as the expanded form due to the facts mentioned in 1., i.e. context sensitivity and semantic sensitivity. The latter, on the other hand, is copula and an adjective in the function of subject complement. Yet, what conditions that the present participle has verbal or adjectival meaning is not the occurrence of the object after the participle but the context. While the form *boring* is an adjective and can be found in such a sentence as: *he is boring every Saturday evening*, the form *walking* in this sentence would be inappropriate, e.g. **he is walking every Saturday evening*. This sentence is incorrect because *is walking* cannot be treated as a juxtoposition of copula and an adjective as in the case of *is boring*. The form *is walking* must be treated as a unit of the conjugational system of present day English which does not fit this context (context sensitivity). In this context the form *walks* is correct. The form *is walking* is found in contexts implying the actual realization of the situation described by the verbal stem *walk-* at the moment of making this utterance. This type of contexts is expressed, among others, by such adverbs of time as: *now, at present, at the very moment*, etc. Therefore, the forms *is walking* and *walks* are to be treated as two functional units of the conjugational system, They are in contrast to one another due to the fact that they are found in two different types of contexts which imply two different ways of presenting the same situation (actual realization of the situation vs. iterative, habitual realization of the situation)[17].

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[16] The syntactic specifications of *worth* and *like* in *The concise Oxford dictionary* are those of the adjective.

[17] It is suggested here that the forms *v* and *be + -ing* present a given situation denoted by the verbal stem on two levels as far as the moment of making the utterance is concerned. The idea of presenting a given situation described by a given verbal stem on the two levels was conceived when the present writer analysed two graphs presented in Joos (1968). Graph A presents Temporary Aspect (it corresponds to the concrete level). Graph B presents Generic Aspect (it corresponds to the abstract level). Graph A presents a situation valid for a short period of time. Graph B presents a given situation as always valid. The present writer has modified the idea a little. What in Joos is Temporary Aspect in this paper is the presentation of a situation on the concrete level. It means that the situation described by the verbal stem makes a concrete element of the consitution in which this utterance is made. For instance, the sentence *someone is knocking* could be uttered in

Since *is walking* and *walks* play the same syntactic role and, at the same time, they are units of the conjugational system, it can be concluded that *walking* in *is walking* has the verbal meaning[18]. It is not the case case with *boring* in *is boring*. Its meaning is always adjectival regardless of the context.

As was mentioned in 1., the *beon + -ende* construction was not characterized by context sensitivity and thus was in no functional contrast to the simple form. Taking into consideration the above and the fact that the occurrence of the object after the present participle cannot be treated as a decisive proof of its verbal character, the present participle in the *beon + -ende* construction will be considered to be the deverbative adjective.

In the *beon + -ende* construction the present participle follows the copula. It has been characterized as the deverbative adjective and, therefore, it can be said to fill the predicative position (feature ii). In this position and in the appositive position the present participle takes the ending *-e* (Herold 1968). Thus, the construction in question can be described as a construction consisting of the copula and the present participle in the predicative position. The copula itself differs from other verbs in many respects. First of all, what makes it different from other verbs is the fact that it has no meaning of its own unless it appears with the predicate[19]. It is distinguished syntactically from

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a consituation in which someone's knocking at the door makes a concrete element of this consituation. Generic Aspect corresponds here to the presentation of a given situation on the abstract level. This means that the situation rendered by the verbal stem need not be a concrete element of the consituation in which the statement about this situation is made, nonetheless the statement is still valid. Thus, for instance, the sentence *Tom speaks French* could be uttered in a consituation in which Tom is actually speaking Spanish. In this way the presentation of a given situation on the abstract level comprises such traditional notions as: habitual, iterative activities, eternal truths, etc. It should be added at this point that the presentation of a given situation on concrete level or on the abstract one is valid as far as the moment of making the uttrrance is concerned. It is suggested here that the presentation of a given situation in anteriority (i.e. before now) is different from the presentation of this situation at the moment of making the utterance. However, the presentation of a situation in anteriority will not be dicussed here, as it is beyond the scope of this paper.

[18] As a matter of fact, in present day English present participles that could be interpreted to have the adjectival meaning are scarce. To this group belong such forms as: *boring, interesting, outstanding*. Consider the following:

This book is always interesting.
This book is interesting now.

It is worth noticing that those present participles can be used with verbs functioning like the copula, i.e. *become, look, sound, seem,* e.g.

This book seems interesting.

The participle *walking* would be inappropriate in this context as in, e.g.

*This man seems walking.

This sentence would be correct if the progressive form of the infinitive were introduced as in, e.g.

This man seems to be walking.

[19] For details concerning the relation cf the copula to the predicate see Jespersen (1977).

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other true verbs through possessing no selectional restrictions in itself, but through occurring in constructions in which the selections reach from the subject to the complement. From the semantic point of view, its contribution to the sense of a sentence is determined by the items it links. The copula can link a noun phrase with another noun phrase, a noun phrase with an adverbial phrase consisting of a noun phrase preceded by a preposition, and, finally, a noun phrase with an adjective. The constructions of two elements linked by the copula produce various logical relations[20]. If the copula links a noun phrase with an adjective, the resulting logical relation can be termed as property assignment. Thus the construction consisting of a noun phrase and the present participle linked by the copula *beon* expresses nothing else but property assignment.

It is assumed here that the adjective in the predicative position has the same meaning as in the attributive position. Thus the meaning of the adjective *red* in the sentence *the flower is red* is the same as in the noun phrase *the red flower*. The present participle functions as an adjective denoting a property strictly connected with a given activity indicated by the stem of the present participle and performed by the subject. Thus the above test can be applied to the following sentence: *the girl is dancing*. According to this test the meaning of *dancing* should be the same in *the dancing girl*. Yet, in present day English *the dancing girl* can be understood in two ways: a) as the girl who dances because it is her profession or hobby, or b) as the girl who is engaged in dancing at the moment of making this statement. Example a. is nothing more than placing the semantic content rendered by the stem of the present participle on the abstract level in non-Anteriority, while example b. is placing the semantic content on the concrete level in non-Anteriority. Therefore, in present day English the shift of the present participle from the attributive to the predicative position narrows its sense. The meaning of the sentence *the girl is dancing* is limited to the concrete level only. Thus the conclusion is that in present day English the meaning of the present participle in the attributive position is not the same as in the predicative position. Since the present participle in the predicative position indicates that the semantic contents denoted by the stem of the present participle is placed on the concrete level, it can be assumed that the present participle in this position is semantically sensitive (cf. 1). The present participle in this position excludes the possibility of using certain verbal stems. As verbal stems denoting states express phenomena whose quality can be defined as timeless, which makes it impossible for them to be placed on the concrete level, they are excluded from the group of verbal stems which can make the stem of the present participle in the predicative position. Thus in present day English

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[20] Further discussion concerning the logical relations produced by the elements linked by the copula can be found in Bach (1967).

such clauses as *the man is hearing and *the woman is knowing are unacceptable, while such noun phrases as: the hearing man and the knowing woman are perfectly acceptable. Thus apart from context sensitivity, the semantic sensitivity of the stem of the present participle in the predicative position makes the be + -ing construction a functional unit of the present day English conjugational system. Therefore, it can be inferred that the narrowing of the meaning of the present participle resulting from the shift of the participle from the attributive to the predicative position is a norm in present day English. Without it the be + -ing construction would not be identified as a functional unit of the conjugational system of present day English.

The narrowing of the meaning of the present participle resulting from the shift of the participle from the attributive to the predicative position seems not to be any norm in Old English. As will be indicated later on, the present participle in the predicative position was not semantically sensitive, i.e. all verbal stems could make its stem. When the present participle is found in the predicative position, the context indicates that the situation denoted by the stem of the participle can be placed not only on the concrete level as in, e.g.

(6) þa andswarodon hie ond cwaedon: Hwilc þearf is þe husles? ne þinre forðfōre swa nēh is, nū þus rōtlīce and þus gladlīce tō ūs sprecende eart. (Bede, Historia Ecclesiastica Gentis Anglorum. IV, XXIV).[21]
'Then they answered and said: Why do you need the Eucharist? Not your death is so near, now that you are speaking to us cheerfully'.

but also on the abstract level, which can be indicated by adverbs of frequency, as in, e.g.

(7) Forðam hit is nan tweo þaet þa godan beoð simle waldende and þa yflan habbað naenne anwald. (Ælfred, Boethius, XXXVI, 107)[22]
'That is why it is doubtless that the good always rule and the evil have no power.'

The present participle in (6) could be interpreted to have the verbal meaning, since beon + -ende construction in this context (nu 'now') corresponds to the present day English be + -ing formation. However, it is not the case with the present participle in (7). In this example the clause þa gōdan beoð simle waldende should be literally rendered as 'the good are always ruling', which is unacceptable in present day English. It can, therefore, be assumed that waldende in (7) functions as the adjective in the predicative position and, accordingly, has the adjectival meaning. Taking into consideration the lack of context sensitivity characteristics of the beon + -ende construction, the same can be said about the present participle in (6).

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[21] This example comes from Sweet (1959).
[22] Sedgeeeld (1899).

The analysis presented above indicates that the present participle in Old English is similar to the adjective as far as two features are concerned, i.e.
(i) the ability to fill the attributive position
(ii) the ability to fill the predicative position
It was possible to determine it by indicating that the shift of the present participle from the attributive to the predicative position does not bring about the narrowing of its meaning.

The Old English adjective could be preceded and thus modified by such qualifiers as: swiþe 'very, greatly', swa 'so', micle 'much, greatly', and its comparative form ma 'more' (feature iii). The present participle in the predicative position could also be premodified by the above mentioned qualifiers. Consider the following examples:

swa 'so'

(8) Ac nu manna gitsung is swa byrnende swa þaet fyr on þaere helle. (Ælfred, Boethius, XV)
'But now men's covetousness burns as much as the fire in hell'.

swiþe 'very, greatly'

(9) And Tyberius þa waes swiþe geblyssigende and het Volosianum hym hraþe to cuman. (The Legend of Saint Veronika)[23]
'And Tyberius was very glad and ordered Volosian to come to him very quickly'.

ma 'more'

(10) ac heo for hiere cristendome nu giet is gescild, þaet aegþer ge hio self ge hiere anweald is ma hreosende for ealdome þonne of aeniges cyninges niede. (Ælfred, Orosius, II)[24]
'Because of its Christianity it is now still protected, because both of itself and its authority it is more falling because of age than any king's force'.

The analysis of the distribution of the Old English present participle in the sentence reveals that this distribution is characterized by the three features listed at the beginning of this section. The three features also characterize the distribution of the adjective in the sentence. Due to this analysis it could be assumed that in Old English the present participle and the adjective should be treated as one part of speech. This assumption can further be supported by the fact that the present participle and the adjective could occur in the predicative position in the same sentence as in, e.g.

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[23] Assman (1889).
[24] Sweet (1959).

(11) *forþon þe hi beoþ in godum weorce gesett, in þam hi beoþ myccle and weallende.* (Bishop Wærforth of Worcester, *The Dialogues of Gregory the Great* Book III, XXXIV. 246)[25]
'Because they will be set in good work in which they will be numerous and swarm'.

When in this position, both the present participle and the adjective can be premodified by the same qualifier as in, e.g.

(12) *Se wlite þaes lichoman is swiþe flionde and swiþe tedre and swiþe anlic eorþe blostmum.* (Ælfred, *Boethius*, XXXII)
'The brightness of the body is highly transitory and very delicate and very much like the earthly flowers'.

Thus the present participle in Old English can be deemed as the adjective by virtue of its ability to fit into both the environments left blanks in (5). If it is the same as in *manna beornende gitsung*, then as far as Old English is concerned, the structure presented in (5) can be presented as:

(13) *manna ... gitsung is swa ...*

The blanks in the above structure can be filled either by the above mentioned present participle *beornende* or any adjective figuratively expressing intensity, e.g. *hat* 'hot' or *strang* 'strong' This indicates that the present participle *beornende* is to be treated as forms functioning in the same way as the adjectives *hat* and *strang*. This structure also indicates that the present participle shares with the adjective features (i), (ii), and (iii). The feature (i) has not been analysed in detail, as the character of the present participle in the attributive position is obvious[26].

4. The adjectival character of the present participle in the predicative position is also seen in the ways in which it is modified by means of affixation. The present participle in the position in question could take the suffix indicating the comparative degree as in, e.g.

(14) *eall þaet sat ... of minum earme, þaer he ... beornendra waes ...* (Ælfred, Bede)[27]
'all that sat ... from my arm, where he ... was more burning'.

The present participle in this position could also take the negative prefix *un-*. The prefixation of the present participle by the negative prefix *un-* is the means of indicating the lexical negation. The sentence negation was expressed by means of the negative particle *ne* placed before the copula *beon*. This, however,

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[25] Hecht (1990).
[26] Visser (1973) remarks that deverbatives in *ende* (the present participle, J. M.) function as attributive adjuncts and are equivalents to adjectives.
[27] The example comes from Visser (1973).

should not be treated as a proof of the verbal character of the *beon + — ende* construction, since, in the case of adjectives, a sentence can be negated by means of sentence negation or lexical negation as in, e.g. *be is not wise* and *he is unwise*. It should be mentioned at this time that this way of expressing lexical negation, i.e. by means of the prefix *un-* is typical of adjectives, e.g. *riht* 'right', *unriht* 'wrong' (cf. *lifigende* 'alive' *unlifigende* 'dead'). The use of the present participle prefixed by *un-* in the predicative position can be illustrated by the following examples:

(15) *Rachel waes untymende, ac heo nam Balan hine þeowene and sealde Jacobe to gerestan.* (Ælfric, *Genesis*. XXX. 1)[28]
'Rachel was barren but she took Balan her servant girl and gave her to Jacob.'

(16) *... and nolde God aelmihtig, þaet þa þe his godan weorc gesawon, waeron ungelyfigende oþþe ortteowe be þam wene þara aelmaessena þaes arwyrþs deacones.* (Bishop Wærforth of Worcester, *The Dialogues of Gregory the Great*, Book IV, XLIII, 331)
'... and God Almighty did not want those that had seen his good works not to believe or to trust by hope of the alms of the reverend deacon'.

5. The adjectival character of present participle is also seen in its meaning. Adjectives denote qualities and properties attributed to nouns functioning as subject or the object. According to Stockwell (1977) verbs and adjectives are similar in their functions. They are both used for predication. Therefore, a few words should be said about the relation of the semantic content of nouns to the semantic content of adjectives in the predicative position. In the sentences: *this man is intelligent* and *those people are poor*, the relation of the semantic content of the noun phrases *this man* and *those people* to the semantic content of the adjectives *intelligent* and *poor* cannot be defined as that of either agent or patient. The relation of the semantic contents of noun phrases to the semantic contents of adjectives seems to be similar to the relation of the semantic contents of noun phrases functioning as the subject to the semantic content of the verbs denoting situations characterized as states. In the latter case the relation of the semantic contents of the noun phrase functioning as the subject to the semantic content of the verbal stem denoting a state cannot be defined either as agent or patient[29]. Stockwell maintains that ' The difference between

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[28] The example comes from Grein (1973).
[29] It is believed here that the referent of a noun phrase about whom a state is predicated cannot perform the situation characterized as state or undergo it. It should be noticed that state is the result of occurrence of another situation characterized as an event, e.g.

He knows a lot because he has read many books

or

He owns a house because his father bequethed it to him.

adjectives and verbs, semantically, is that verbs generally predicate *events* whereas adjectives generally predicate *states*.' (1977: 36). This would indicate that the relation of the semantic contents of the noun phrase functioning as the subject to the verb is always either agent or patient and the relation of the semantic content of the noun phrase to the adjective is always neutral, which is not true. Situations described by the verb are divided into states, i.e. situations unlimited in time or neutral to the flow of time (Kałuża 1983), the relation of the semantic content of the noun phrase functioning as the subject to this situation is neutral, and events, i.e. situations limited in time, the relation of the semantic content of the noun phrase functioning as the subject is either that of agent or patient. This indicates that adjectives semantically resemble verbs denoting states due to the fact that they also denote states and the relation of the semantic content of the noun phrase functioning as the subject to the semantic content of both the verbs denoting states and adjectives is neutral. All that has so far been said indicates that while the present participle in:

(17) *Drihten eowra faedera god me aetywde, Abrahames god, us cweðende: Cumende ic eom to eow...* (Ælfric, *Exodus*, III, 16)
   'Lord of your fathers has appeared to me, Abraham's and Isaac's God and said thus: I am coming to you...

could still be interpreted to have the verbal meaning because the relation of *ic* to the semantic content of *cum-* is that of agent, it could not be interpreted to have the verbal meaning if the verbal stem denoted state[30]. The present participle with the stem denoting a state resembles in meaning adjectives denoting qualities and properties of nouns. The above indicates that the present participle in the predicative position with the stem denoting a state should be virtually treated as a true adjective.

While analysing Old English literary works the present writer found a number of examples of the *beon* + *-ende* construction whose lexical core is a stem denoting a state. Here are but a few verbs presented in the infinitive form with the stem denoting a state that have been found as the stem of the present participle in the construction in question. The verbs will be presented along with quotations of sentences in which they were found. The tense distinction will be ignored in the sentences that follow.

agan 'to own'

Therefore, the relation of the referent of the noun phrase about which a state is predicated to this state will be here referred to as neutral (i.e. neither agent nor patient). See also Chafe (1971).

[30] In present day English verbal stems denoting state are excluded from the group of verbal stems that make the lexical core of the *be* + *-ing* formation (semantic sensitivity). In this way the relation of the semantic content of the noun phrase functioning as the subject to the situation denoted by the lexical core of this formation is that of either agent or patient. Thus the present participle in this formation has the verbal meaning.

(18) *And hig waeron þa Titus and Vespasianus heom eall þaet Judeisce land agende and georne þaet smeagende hwaeþer...* (*The Legend of Saint Veronica*)
   'And they then, Titus and Vespasianus, had all the Jewish land for themselves and considered eagerly whether...

habban 'to have'

(19) *Heo waes sumne dael haebbende of þam reafe þaes haelendes and hyt swiþe deoryrdlice heold and eac hyt for Crystes andwlytan haefde.* (ibid.)
   'She had also some part of the Saviour's robe and held it in great respect and had it for Christ's countenance.'

hatian 'to hate'

(20) *þa baer sum ceorl in his earmum his forþferdan suna lichaman, he was byrnende and hatiende for þam heafe þaere asteopnesse.* (Bishop Wærforth of Worcester, *The Dialogues of Gregory the Great*, Book II, XXXII, 165)
   'Then a man was carrying the body of his dead son, he burned and hated because of the lament of the bereavement'.

hieran 'to hear, to obey'

(21) *hwaet oþres magon we ongytan, buton þaet þaer waes onscyned heortena heardnes and heora unhyrsumnes, þa þaet unandgytfulle gesceaft þaes waeters waes hyrende þam halgan were in maegne?* (ibid Book III, X, 194)
   'What else can we understand but that there the hardness of men's hearts and their disobedience was detested when the unthoughtful creature of the water obeyed the holy man in his power?'

lufian 'to love'

(22) *witodlice se maessepreost of þaere tide, þe he þone had underfeng waes lufiende his waescestrean swa swa his agne swuster.* (ibid. Book IV, XII, 276)
   'The priest loved his prioress like his own sister from the time he received his rank.'

sorgian 'to be sorry'

(23) *and in ne gaþ þinre rehtwisnisse sien hie adilgade of boec lifgendra and miþ þaem rehtwisum ne bioþ awriten þearfa and sargiende ic eam and*

haelu ondwlitan þines god onfeng mec... (Psalm 68. *Vespasian Psalter*)[31]
'They do not enter your justice, let them be destroyed by the living book and with the just they will not be marked. I am a pauper and I am sorry and the holy face of your God has received me...'

wilnian 'to desire'

(24) *An þara gecynde is þaet heo biþ wilnigende, oþer þaet hio biþ irsiende, þridde þaet hio biþ gesceadwis. Ælfred, Boethius, XXXIII)*
'one of the nature is that it desires, the second is angry, and the third is intelligent.'

Due to the fact that in all the above examples the semantic content of the present participle in the predicative position is specified as states, the relation of the semantic content of the subject to the situations denoted by the stems of the participles is neutral. Therefore, the participles in the above examples should be interpreted as adjectives denoting inherent features of the subjects. It is worth noticing that the present participles in (18), (19), (21), and (22) have their own objects. They are, therefore, similar to the adjectives *worth* and *like* from the examples in 3.
6. The analysis presented in 3. reveals that in Old English the present participle and the adjective share the same distributional features, The two forms can fill the attributive as well as the predicative position. The two forms can also be premodified by the same qualifiers. It was even possible for the two forms to occur in the predicative position in the same sentence. The examples presented in 4. indicate that the present participle could take the prefix *un-* (lexical negation) and the ending *-ra* (comparative degree). The two suffixes are also taken by the Old English adjective. The semantic analysis presented in 5. shows that the relation of the semantic contents of the subject to the semantic contents of the adjective is the same as the relation of the semantic contents of the subject to the semantic contents of the verbal stem of the present participle denoting state. In both cases this relation is neutral. The verbal meaning could be attributed to the present participle whose stem denotes an event. In such cases the relation of the semantic content of the subject to the semantic content of the stem is that of either agent or patient. This would imply that Old English had one *beon* + *-ende* construction with two meanings. In one case it would be the *beon* + *-ende* construction with the present participle with the adjectival meaning due to its stem denoting state. In the other case this construction would be characterized by the present participle with the verbal meaning due to the stem of

the participle denoting an event. However, it is suggested here that syntax is not characterized by a phenomenon similar to polysemy in semantics[32]. Therefore the conclusion is that the present participle in the *beon* + *-ende* construction has the adjectival meaning.

The adjectival character of the present participle in the predicative position is particularly conspicuous when it is compared with its present day English counterpart in this position. Comparing the Old English present participle with the present day English present participle in the predicative position, it can be noticed that the two forms are entirely different in function and in nature. As was indicated in 3., in present day English the shift of the present participle from the attributive to the predicative position is linked with the narrowing of its sense. The analysis presented in 3. reveals that in the attributive position the meaning of the present participle can be either adjectival or verbal (i.e. either the abstract level or the concrete level). The shift of the present participle from the attributive to the predicative position narrows its meaning to the verbal meaning (the concrete meaning). It is not the case in Old English. The shift of the present participle from the attributive to the predicative position did not cause the narrowing of its meaning. Thus in present day English the shift of *hating* from *the hating man* to **the man is hating* is unacceptable. In Old English the shift of *hatiende* 'hating' from *se hatiende man* to *se man is hatiende* is acceptable (cf. (20)). In present day English the present participle cannot be modified in the way characteristic of adjectives, i.e. by means of qualifiers. Thus it is not possible to say* *Tom is so running, *Betty is very sitting,* or **they are more liking it.* The present participle in the predicative position cannot be accompanied by other adjectives. Thus, nowadays it is impossible to say **the people were intelligent and running.* The examples presented in 4. show that it was possible for the Old English present participle in the predicative position to take suffixes characteristic of the adjective. The present day English present participle in both the attributive and predicative positions cannot be prefixed by the prefix *un-*. Thus it is nowadays impossible to express the lexical negation by means of the prefixed present participle as in, e.g. **they were unliving* (cf. (15) and (16)). The adjectival character of the Old English present participle in the predicative position is further proved by the relation of the semantic content of the subject to the semantic content of the stem of this present participle. Apart

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[31] This example comes from Zupitza (1910)

[32] It could be argued that in Old English one construction consisting of the copula and the past participle had two meanings, i.e. it denoted perfect and the passive voice. However, the construction consisting of the copula and the past participle functioning as perfect should not be formally associated with the construction consisting of the copula and the past participle functioning as the passive voice because of a/ semantic sensitivity. i.e. mutative verbs occurring as the lexical core of the construction functioning as perfect, transitive verbs occurring as the lexical core of the construction functioning as the lexical core of the construction functioning as the passive voice, b/ the function of the two constructions in the conjugational system of Old English.

from being that of agent or patient, the relation can also be neutral, which is also characteristic of the adjective. It is not the case with the present participle in the predicative position in present day English. The relation of the semantic content of the subject to the semantic contents of the stem of the present participle is that of either agent or patient. It is never neutral. This indicates that the present participle in the predicative position in present day English is semantically sensitive, since stems denoting states are excluded from the group of stems of the present participles that can occur in the predicative position. The analysis presented in 5. reveals that its Old English counterpart in the position in question was not semantically sensitive.

The comparison of the present participle in the predicative position in present day English with its Old English counterpart in this position leads to the conclusion that in present day English the present participle in the position in question has exclusively the verbal meaning and along with the copula *be* makes an expanded form to which a definite paradigamtic meaning can be ascribed due to its contrast to the simple form. No such paradigmatic meaning can be ascribed to the *beon* + *-ende* construction because it is in no contrast to any form and its use seems not to be motivated by any grammatically justified reasons. Yet, this construction consisting of the copula *beon* and the present participle functioning as an adjective does occur in Old English texts and, therefore, this fact leads to the conclusion that the use of those juxtaposed two forms must have been somehow motivated. Thus, if the paradigmatic, syntagmatic as well as semantic considerations have been rejected in this paper as the motivating factors of the use of this construction, it is suggested that the *beon* + *-ende* construction should be treated as a stylistic variant of the simple verbal form functioning as the verbal part of the predicate. This non-commital suggestion would explain why Old English writers were apt to use the *beon* + *-ende* construction in all the contexts in which the simple verbal form is found.

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