

***Dared*-headed blend constructions in Middle and Early Modern English**

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The verb dare, considered a pre-modal verb in Old English, is attested in constructions showing modal and lexical features in Late Middle English and in Early Modern English, that is, in so-called blend, mixed, hybrid or ambiguous verbal constructions (Duffley 1994; Denison 1998; Beths 1999; Taeymans 2004, 2006; Schlüßler 2010). Although most so-called blending features are under discussion in the relevant literature, there is no consensus regarding the adscription of simple past dared selecting a bare-infinitive complement as either a modal or a lexical property. This study reviews the previous literature and investigates both the obsolescence of durst and the regularisation and status of dared in simple past contexts in Middle English and Early Modern English. The Penn-Helsinki Corpus of Middle English and the Penn-Helsinki Parsed Corpus of Early Modern English are used as the main sources. The data show that three factors may have favoured the replacement and obsolescence of durst by the form dared in simple past contexts and by the form dare in conditional contexts: (i) the regularisation process that main verb dare undergoes; (ii) the incipient semantically bleached status of durst in simple past contexts; (iii) the low degree of flexibility of durst plus a BI clause. My findings evince that the form dared for simple past shows the same evolution of the lexical form dares for third person singular, with a time lag between them. Both dares and dared illustrate layering and a preference for non-assertive contexts (Jacobsson 1974: 62; Quirk et al. 1985: 138-39; Hopper 1991: 22-24, Duffley 1994: 218). As it is the case with dares, dared plus a bare-infinitive complement is here analysed as a blend construction (cf. Beths 1999; Taeymans 2004).

Keywords: *Modal, lexical verb, blend constructions, layering, (non)assertive, regularisation*

1. Introduction

This study investigates the rise, evolution and status of *dared*, and the obsolescence of *durst* in simple past and conditional contexts in Middle English (hereafter, ME) and Early Modern English (EModE) and couches their evolution within a purely linguistic concept of blend constructions. The data are retrieved from two corpora: the Penn-Helsinki Corpus of Middle English (PPCME2) and the Penn-Helsinki Parsed Corpus of Early Modern English (PPCEME), as well as from the Oxford English Dictionary (OED) and the Middle English Dictionary (MED).

The verb *dare*, as well as most Present-Day English modal verbs (other than *will*), is considered a special verb because of its preterite-present morphology, the defective paradigm, the selection of bare infinitive (henceforth, BI) complementation, the lack of a third person singular *-p* ending and of participles. In addition, Denison (1998: 167-170) points out that *dare*, as well as *need*, can occur in what he terms ‘mixed’ usages. These are structures in which the verb shows both modal and lexical features, as in example (1). The selection of a bare infinitive complement clause in this example suggests that *dare* is a modal, whereas *do*-support justifies its status as a lexical verb.

- (1) *'I don't dare risk meeting her. But I should like to talk to her very much.'* (1992 Tartt, Secret history vi.425) (Denison 1998: 169)

In what follows, I will review the previous literature on the blend constructions (Section 2). In Section 3 I will deal with *dare* and *durst* in the history of English and will apply the features of the blend construction to their analysis. Section 4 summarises the main conclusions.

2. Blend constructions

The special behaviour of *dare* and *need* in the type of constructions illustrated in (1) has recently been highlighted in the literature (Duffley 1994; Denison 1998; Beths 1999; Taeymans 2004, 2006; Schlüter 2010). However, no consensus is observed among scholars as regards the definition of the mixed, hybrid or blend verbal construction and its distinctive features with respect to modal and lexical verbs.

Table 1 below summarises the main features of so-called blend constructions in Duffley (1994), Denison (1998), Beths (1999), Taeymans (2004) and Schlüter (2010). The first column lists all the characteristics given in the literature, and the other columns express recognition of the features by these scholars.

Table 1: Features of blend constructions

Features	Beths	Duffley	Denison	Taeymans	Schlüter
<i>Do</i> -support + BI clause	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Inflected <i>dare</i> + direct negation + BI clause	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Modal co-occurrence + <i>dare</i> + BI clause	✓	✓		✓	
Non-finite forms: <i>-ing</i> , (<i>to</i>) infinitive, <i>-ed</i> + BI clause	✓			✓	✓
<i>Durst to</i>	✓				✓
Modal <i>dare</i> + <i>to</i> -infinitive					✓
Finite <i>dare</i> *-s third pers. sg. + BI-clause					✓
Third pers. sg. <i>-s</i> inflection + BI clause	✓	✓		✓	✓
Simple past form <i>-ed</i> inflection + BI clause	?		✓	✓	✓

These scholars agree on two features: (i) *do*-support, mainly for negation, and BI complementation, as in (1) above, (ii) presence of inflection, as *needs* in (2), with direct *not* negation and BI complementation.¹

- (2) *It is a shared understanding that requires no fast talk, no big cars or flashy clothes, that **needs not be argued** or explained. It is simply there.* (Strathy GAME 1. BK. 558) (Duffley 1994: 237)

Other features are co-occurrence with another modal verb, as in (3), and the use of non-finite forms, as in (4). In both examples, the BI clause is the type of complement of the verb.

- (3) *He turned away from the place of his - **shall we dare say** his Waterloo? - to go to the door.* (BUC G40 0300 2) (Duffley 1994: 238)
- (4) *... none **daring offend** such, lest they should be forced to take up the cudgel of enmity against a lady; ...* (G. Mackenzie: Aretina 1660;EEPF) (Schlüter 2010: 308)

The combination of the old auxiliary form *durst* (*dare*) and a *to*-infinitive complement, as in (5), is another feature of blend constructions, which is statistically marginal (see Schlüter 2010: 307).

- (5) *... and that **I durst to believe** there was nothing in this Cave that was more frightful than my self...* (D. Defoe: Robinson Crusoe 1719; ECF)

In her findings, Schlüter identifies two additional hybrid constructions that were not mentioned in the literature before (cf. Duffley 1994; Denison 1998; Beths 1999; Taeymans 2004). In one the auxiliary form *dare* is followed by a *to*-infinitive, as in (6a-b).² In example (6a), *dare* shows the uninflected form in a 3rd person singular context and selects the *to*-infinitive *to touch* as its complement. Example (6b) illustrates subject-modal inversion, i.e. *dare I*, plus direct *not* negation and the lexical *to*-infinitive complementation. The second hybrid structure is that in Schlüter's 'ambiguous uses', that is, cases in which the verb does not display any signal of being either an auxiliary or a lexical verb. These are the finite uses of *dare* other than the 3rd person singular, as in (7a), and the finite form *darest* in the 2nd person singular, as in (7b).

- (6) a. *Shivering at the thought, **she hardly dare to touch** a seed, but forced herself to do so, raised one and hastily shook it from her.* (S. Baring-Gould: *The Roar Of The Sea* 1892; NCF)
- b. *Yet **dare I not to touch** that key.* (S. Fielding: *David Simple* 1753; ECF)
- (7) a. *"These titled vagabonds think **they dare say** any things; but I know how to be revenged".* (M. Robinson: *Walsingham* 1797; NCF)

¹ In his study of *dare* and *need*, Duffley (1994) exemplifies the 'blend' use of direct negation with the verb *need*, here in (2) in the main text. The comparability method that Duffley (1994) uses in his work explains my decision to include this scholar as supportive of the feature 'direct negation' in Table 1.

² Schlüter (2010: 307) points out that these hybrid cases are only marginal since they oscillate between 0 and 5 per cent in her data.

- b. ...but **thou** Rosader the youngest in yeares, but the eldest in valout, art a man of strength and **darest doo** what honour allowes thee; ... (T.Lodge: Rosalynde 1590; EEPPF)

The blend constructions *dares* + *BI clause* for 3rd person singular and *dared* + *BI clause* for simple past will be discussed in more detail in Sections 3.1 and 3.2 below, respectively. The characterisation of the simple past form *dared* selecting BI complementation, which is categorised either as a blend (Denison 1998; Schlüter 2010) or as a modal verb in the relevant literature (Beths 1999; Taeymans 2004), is the main point of disagreement among the scholars. Two factors will be considered in Section 3 in order to clarify the status of *dared*, namely the evolution and use of the 3rd person singular form *dares*, and the context in which *dares* + *BI clause* and *dared* + *BI clause* occur. The results obtained indicate that *dared* + *BI clause* is a blend construction since it shows the same characteristics of the blend *dares* + *BI clause* as far as layering and assertivity is concerned. I claim that *dare* has blend status when it occurs in constructions which show a combination of auxiliary and lexical features. The auxiliary features are the uninflected form *dare* in 3rd person singular and simple past, the lack of non-finite forms, the use of direct *not* negation or clitic *n't*, the subject-verb inversion strategy and the selection of BI complementation. In turn, the lexical features correspond to the *-s* and *-(e)d* inflections for 3rd person singular and simple past, respectively, the presence of non-finite forms, the use of *do*-support for negation and inversion and the *to*-infinitive complementation.

3. The evolution of *dares* and *dared* and the obsolescence of *durst*

As already pointed out in the introduction, the corpora used in this study are the Penn-Helsinki Parsed Corpus of Middle English (PPCME2) and the Penn-Helsinki Parsed Corpus of Early Modern English (PPCEME). The 1.1 million word PPCME2 is subdivided into four periods, i.e. M1 (1150-1250), M2 (1250-1350), M3 (1350-1420) and M4 (1420-1550). The dating of some of the texts of the PPCME2 are ambiguous between the date when they were originally written and the period of the earliest manuscript. I will follow Taeymans' (2006) corpus design and I will give precedence to the manuscript dates. The PPCEME consists of over 1.7 million words from three time periods, i.e. E1 (1500-1569), E2 (1570-1639) and E3 (1640-1710). Three subdirectories compose these three periods of time, i.e. Helsinki, Penn 1 and Penn 2.³ Each subperiod and corpus attestation will be searched with Corpus Studio and coded for the various parameters relevant to the research. As a normalisation unit, I have used the IP-MATs, that is, the matrix clause with a main inflected verb. These two corpora are supplemented with examples from the *Oxford English Dictionary* and the *Middle English Dictionary*. The conclusions drawn in this study provide not only a more homogeneous classification of the different forms of the verb *dare* and its blend constructions but also a better characterisation of the English verbal modal-lexical cline.

This section analyses both the status of 3rd person singular form *dares* (Section 3.1) and simple past *dared* (Section 3.2). Section 3.3 discusses the presence of layering and the type of context in which *dares* and *dared* occur.

³ More information on the PPCME2 and the PPCEME is available at <http://www.ling.upenn.edu/histcorpora/PPCME2-RELEASE-3> and <http://www.ling.upenn.edu/histcorpora/PPCEME-RELEASE-2>, respectively.

3.1 The status of dares: blend vs. modal

Most of the scholars mentioned in Table 1 above agree that the use of *dare* with a 3rd person singular -s inflection followed by BI complements is an instance of a blend construction, as in (8) - Denison (1998) does not provide any examples of this type with either *dare* or *need*.

- (8) *Much less dares she ask whether Rivers is to be included in it.* (T.Hardy: Jude the Obscure 1896; NCF) (Schlüter 2010: 299)

Taeymans (2004: 102) indicates that the mixed uses of *dare* show features typical of auxiliaries (e.g. BI complementation) and main verbs (e.g. 3rd person inflection or *do*-support). She maintains that in her corpus one of the most common blend constructions contains the form *dares* and a BI clause (cf. Table 2).

In PPCME2 and PPCEME, *dare* is only found in modal uses showing lack of -s inflection and BI clause complementation in 3rd person singular contexts in ME and in E1 of the EModE period, as in (9) (see also Table 2). Example (9) from E1 shows the inverted use of *dare* in an interrogative clause. It also exhibits the use of direct negation *nott* before the subordinate clause.

- (9) *Dare he nott show his face?* (UNDERHILL-E1-P2, 156. 271)

Table 2: *Dare* in 3rd person singular contexts (raw data)

	M1	M2	M3	M4	E1	E2	E3
MODAL	6	7	7	1	7	2	6
BLEND	0	0	0	0	0	9	2
LEXICAL	0	0	0	0	0	1	0

The first occurrences of lexical and blend constructions with *dare* in my database are attested in E2. The lexical use is only justified in one example, (10) below, where *dare* exhibits -s inflection and selects a *to*-infinitive as its complement. The blend construction *dares* + BI clause is the preferred structure in this period (in 9 out of 12 examples), as in (11), which shows direct negation. The modal uses with the uninflected form *dare* and a BI complement clause are found in 2 instances in this period, as in (12). The blend and the modal constructions are the only uses attested in E3. The development of the verb *dare* in 3rd person singular contexts in the later periods of EModE indicates its variable status. The verb *dare* shows layering, since the use of *dare* in the modal construction co-exist with the new uses of *dare* showing blend and lexical characteristics (see Hopper 1991: 22-24).

- (10) *Then let them all encircle him about, And Fairy-like to pinch the vncleane Knight; And aske him why that houre of Fairy Reuell, In their so sacred pathes, he dares to tread In shape prophane.* (SHAKESP-E2-P2, 56.C1.739)

- (11) *She dwells so securely on the excellency of her honor, that the folly of my soule dares not present it selfe:* (SHAKESP-E2-H, 47.C1.)

- (12) *"This is true," said I, "tho no man dare confesse it."* (BOETHEL-E2- P2,99.511)

3.2 The status of *dared*: blend vs. modal

This subsection explains the different approaches to the characterisation of the past form *dared* summarised in Table 1 above. In particular, I will be dealing with controversial issues, such as the combination *-ed inflection* + *BI clause* in Table 1, symbolised by a question mark ‘?’ in the table. I will also describe the use of *durst* in conditional and simple past contexts and its obsolescence with the regularisation of *dare* in these two contexts.

Denison (1998: 169) discusses the ‘mixed’ usages of *need* and *dare*. As well as example (1) above, Denison provides example (13), from Visser (1963-73), as instances of the mixed usages. He notices that *dared* occurs in (13) in a context which is syntactically modal, that is, a non-assertive *if*-clause. In fact, he points out that “invariable *dare* would be more common here, despite the OED’s strictures (s.v. *dare* v¹ A. 1c)”.

- (13) *He began to walk balk, wondering if he dared trouble with his errand a man on the verge of the grave.* (1932 Richard Aldington, *All Men Are Enemies* (Barker, 1948) II.iii.153 [Visser])

Schlüter (2010: 299) groups *dared* in the ‘ambiguous uses’ category together with the examples of the finite uses of *dare* – other than the 3rd person singular –, the finite form *darest* in the 2nd person singular and the inflected form *dares*. With respect to ambiguous *dared* and *dares*, she mentions that their occurrence in inversion and direct negation, as in (8) above and (14) below, favour their auxiliary status as a result of the late introduction of obligatory *do*-support in these contexts. However, the fact that the inflected full form of *dare* is still found in Present-day English (PDE) in inversion and with direct negation has tipped the balance in favour of the blend constructions in her study.

- (14) *He sighed deeply but dared not disobey.* (N. Bawden: *Tortoise by Candlelight* 1989; BNC)

Beths (1999) and Taeymans (2004) opt for a different approach. Beths (1999: 1095) mentions that weak past tense *dared* is the last lexical form which is attested in her data and exemplifies its use in (15) to (18):

- (15) *She darde to brooke Neptunus haughty pride* (c 1590 Greene Fr Bacon iv.18; OED)
- (16) *Lovely Eleonor, Who darde for Edwards sake cut through the seas* (c1590 Greene Fr. Bacon iv. 10; OED)
- (17) *They dared not doe as others did.* (1650 Fuller Pisgrah I.145; OED)
- (18) *They dared not to stay him.* (1650 Fuller Pisgrah I.145; OED)

Beths (1999: 1095) observes that the choice of the type of infinitive in the above examples varies at the time of the introduction of the simple past tense *dared*. He adds that the dual behaviour of *dare* as a modal and a lexical verb is still attested in Modern English in the so-called ‘blend constructions’. In his opinion, these constructions have been a possibility since the introduction of the main verb component, as illustrated in (17). Beths notes that “[t]he use

of *dared* as an auxiliary, however, can only be ascertained by the context in which it is used as such, that is, a nonassertive context, and by the fact that (in this context) it ALWAYS takes a bare infinitive” (1999: 1101). This contradicts his categorisation of the non-assertive example (17) above as blend.

Taeymans (2004: 100-102) classifies *dared* differently, depending on whether it is used as a simple past or a past participle form. She maintains that *dare* in auxiliary use, i.e. non-assertive contexts, has a modal past form ‘*dared*’, unlike the other modal verbs, as in (17) above. By contrast, *dare* shows blend characteristics with the past participle non-finite form *dared* and is followed by a BI clause, as in (19). The status of the form *dared* for simple past in assertive contexts is not discussed in her analysis.

(19) *She was everything he had dared hope for, and more* (Written BNC, EWH 458) (Taeymans 2004: 102)

Beths (1999) and Taeymans’ (2004) classification of the simple past construction *dared* + *BI clause* significantly differs from that of *dares* + *BI clause*. In the latter, these scholars do not consider the variable of assertiveness and simply take the *dares* + *BI clause* construction as blend (see §3.1).

The PPCME2 and the PPCME corpora have been used here in order to determine the role that assertiveness and other morphosyntactic characteristics play in the categorisation of the new past form *dared*. Tables 3a and 3b below show the occurrences of *durst* in both past contexts and conditional clauses, as well as the examples of conditional *dare* from M4 onwards.⁴ These tables also include the two occurrences of the inflected form *dared* with noun phrase (henceforth, NP) complementation in E2. In my data all the occurrences expressing past tense and occurring in conditional clauses from M1 to M3 correspond to the old form *durst*. In M4, *dare*, as well as *durst*, are attested in conditional clauses. I agree with Beths (1999: 1101) that the form *dare* met the loss of *durst* in conditional clauses, as in (20) from E1. As a consequence, either the old form *durst* or conditional *dare* can be found in these non-assertive contexts in M4 and EModE.

(20) *And yf thou dare truste the wether, lette it lye so all nyghte:* (FITZH-E1-P2, 34.226)

Table 3a: *Durst*, conditional *dare* and simple past *dared* in ME and EModE (raw data)

	M1	M2	M3	M4	E1	E2	E3
<i>Durst</i> in past contexts	11	2	17	49	36	21	15
Conditional <i>durst</i>	0	0	2	6	3	4	1
Conditional <i>dare</i>	0	0	0	3	6	6	1
Lexical <i>dared</i>	0	0	0	0	0	2	0

⁴ I will label as *durst* all the possible spellings for the simple past and the conditional uses in ME and EModE. Likewise, I will use the term ‘conditional *dare*’ for the forms *dare* and *dares*t in conditional clauses in EModE.

Table 3b: *Durst*, conditional *dare* and simple past *dared* in ME and EModE (normalised frequencies per 10,000 clauses – IP-MATs –)

	M1	M2	M3	M4	E1	E2	E3
<i>Durst</i> in past contexts	9	3.28	8.16	24.24	17.6	7.96	7.13
Conditional <i>durst</i>	0	0	0.96	2.97	1.47	1.51	0.47
Conditional <i>dare</i>	0	0	0	1.48	2.93	2.27	0.47
Lexical <i>dared</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0.76	0

In the four periods in ME, the old form *durst* mainly behaves as modal since it selects a BI clause as its complement, as in (21), and can also license the ellipsis of the post-verbal complement (see Warner 1993: 103; Beths 1999: 1079). *Durst* also selects a *that*-clause as its complement in two occurrences, one in M1 and the other in M3, illustrated in (22) below. *That*-clause complementation was an option available to *durst* in Old English and at the beginning of the ME period (see MED s.v. *durren* 1a. (b)). In M4, *dare* is first found in conditional clauses in my data, but *durst* occurs in 6 out of the 9 instances (see Tables 3a and 3b).

- (21) *Therefore the drede of the Lord was maad on alle rewmys of londis that weren bi the cumpas of Juda, and **dursten not werreye** agens Josophat.* (CMPURVEY, I, 23.1082)
- (22) *And herby his lady mente on curteys maner as **sche durste þat Iesu schulde helpe þis feeste of wyn by his miracle.*** (CMWYCSE, 360.2378)

Durst is found selecting present perfect constructions in the subordinate clause in 3 examples in E1. ‘Modal past’ is the term used by Denison (1998: 176-79) with the *modal + have + past participle* construction. In example (23), *durst* precedes auxiliary *have* and the past participle form *put*. Another example of this type is attested in E2, in (24), in which *durst* selects the BI present perfect construction *haue sought* as its complement. Examples (23) and (24) suggest that *durst* no longer conveys past and needs the support of the perfect infinitive in the subordinate clause. No examples of *durst* in modal past constructions were found in E3, though.

- (23) *R. Royster. What is he **that durst haue** put me in that heate?* (UDALL-E1-P1, L97.135)
- (24) *For, I tell you, **not any in the court durst but haue sought him**, which this man did,* (ARMIN-E2-H, 43.282)

The fact that *durst* is losing its past reference favours the increasing use of *dare* in conditional contexts in EModE and the introduction of the simple past form *dared* in non-conditional contexts in E2 in my database. Example (25) is the first attestation of the simple past form in my data. *-Ed* inflection and the possibility of NP complementation justify the lexical status of *dare* in (25). The other example with *dared* in my data is given in (26), also from E2, where *dared* is the past participle of a passive construction. The possibility of *dare* to be passivised paves the way for its lexical analysis.

- (25) *But here is the sport - **the footeman**, seeing it was the king's pleasure to see the wager tried, **dared him**, which made Jemy mad, that he would run with him from Edinborough to Barwicke which was forty miles in one day; a thing as impossible as to pull down a church in one houre, and to build it againe in another:* (ARMIN-E2-P1, 22.233)
- (26) *The E. replied wth a kynde of frowne **to be dared**, that they all knewe he had not named one man, that daye for an other,* (ESSEX-E2-H, 16.176)

As well as the incipient semantically bleached status of *durst* in simple past contexts, a regularisation process may have favoured the replacement and subsequent obsolescence of *durst* with the simple past tense *dared*. The adoption of new lexical features from M4 onwards may have enabled the rise of *dared* for analogical levelling to other lexical verbs and, in particular, to the sometimes synonymous verbs *need* and *thurven* (Bemposta-Rivas 2015). In my corpora, the first lexical feature is illustrated by the NP complement *gud will* in (27) from M4; then, the non-finite forms typical of lexical verbs are attested from E1 onwards (diachronically: the *to*-infinitive form in E1, *-ing* in (28), and the *-ed* past participle form in E2 and the bare infinitive in E3), and the introduction of the *to*-infinitive complement clause is found in E2, in (28).

- (27) ***We dare and hase gud will** to be absent fra þe body, and be present to Godd, þat es, we for clennes in concyence, and sekire trouthe of saluacyone, dare desyre gastely absence fra oure body by bodily dede, and be present to oure Lorde.* (CMROLLTR, 36.752)
- (28) *In the meane space our waterman **not daring to abide** the terrible tryall of examination, because the Duke of Saxon was in Armes against the King of Beame, he ran away,* (JOTAYLOR-E2-P2, 3,98.C2.1)

Co-occurrence with another modal verb preceding *dare* is also corroborated by my data in E3, where the main verb selects a *to*-infinitive complement, as in (29).⁵ The so-called *do*-support strategy for negation is also attested in my data in E3, as illustrated in (30). These developments may have triggered the preference for the *-es* inflection for 3rd person singular and the past simple form *dared*.

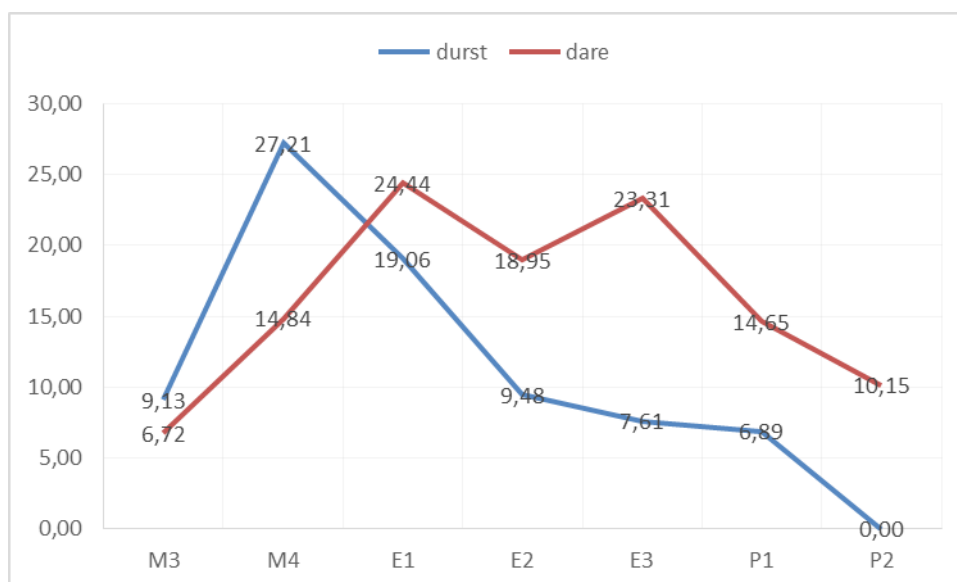
- (29) *And which troubles him, he hears that the gentlemen do give out that in two or three years a Tarpawlin **shall not dare to look** after being better then a Boatswain - which he is troubled at, and with good reason.* (PEPYS-E3-H, 7, 409.26)
- (30) *I charge thee, therefore as thou wilt answer it to the great God, the Judge of all the Earth, that **thou do not dare to waver** one tittle from the Truth, upon any account or pretence whatsoever:* (LISLE-E3-P1, 4, 108.142)

Graph 1 shows the evolution of *dare* and *durst* from M3 to P2, that is, the period before the introduction of new lexical features and the period after the last occurrence of *durst* in my

⁵ Beths (1999) and Visser (1963 [73], §1366) corroborate that *modal + dare* is already attested in M4. In fact, one instance of lexical *dare* with NP complementation and a modal verb preceding this construction is attested at this period in my corpora:

(i) [...] *for thys three yere I dare undirtake **they shall nat dere you*** (CMMALORY, 29.914).

data, respectively.⁶ Under the label ‘*dare*’, I have included both finite and non-finite examples: the group of finite forms includes present forms, also containing the inflected form *dares* and the invariant form *dare* for 3rd person singular contexts, the conditional form *dare* and the simple past form *dared*; the non-finite class includes the infinitives (*to dare*), the *-ing* form *daring* and the past participle *dared*. In the case of *durst*, this form is used here to refer to the conditional and past simple uses.



Graph 1: *Durst* and *dare* from M3 to P2 (normalised frequencies per 10,000 IP-MATs)

The normalised frequencies of *dare* and *durst* are very similar in M3 (χ^2 : $P=0.6171$ for both forms with respect to the overall distribution). From this period onwards both forms compete in use. This rivalry is attested until the beginning of E1, when *dare* adopts non-finite forms and selects NP complements. The frequency of *durst* is on the wane from E1 onwards, with only 8 occurrences in P1.

In their discussion of the diachronic aspects of complementation, Cuyckens & De Smet (2007: 188) point out that “complement construction refers to any combination of a verb and a complement that is entrenched in the mind of the language user as a symbolic unit”. In addition, as Bybee (2003: 619) points out, “high frequent constructions can also retain conservative morphosyntactic characteristics even in the face of new productive morphosyntactic patterns”. Based on Bybee (2003: 617), Aarts et al. (2012: 9) explain that the old patten of negation with direct *not* becomes particularly resistant to change with high-frequency verbs. In this vein, the high frequency of the *durst* + *BI clause* construction in past and conditional contexts during the M4 period (55 (n.f. 27.21) out of 85 (n.f. 42.05)) also explains the late introduction of the simple past form *dared*. As a side effect, the modal *durst* + *BI* construction shows a high degree of entrenchment and becomes a very weak candidate against another similar construction with additional functions. Conditional *dare* and simple past form *dared* are similar to *durst* in meaning. However, *dare* and *dared* can be used in more contexts than *durst*. The form *dare* can occur in simple present and in conditional contexts. As for *dared*, it can occur as either a simple past form or as a past participle in

⁶ For the subperiods M3 and M4, I have classified the various forms attested in my database according to the OED (s.v. *dare* v¹) spelling variants. For Late Modern English, subperiods P1 (1700-1769) and P2 (1770-1839), I have used the Penn Parsed Corpus of Modern British English.

passive and perfect constructions. Hence, entrenchment is one but not the sole factor in the competition between *durst* and *dare* (see Cuyckens & De Smet 2007: 198). As a consequence of the regularisation process, the old form *durst* decreases in frequency and starts to be replaced with conditional *dare* and the simple past *dared*.

3.3 *Dares and dared: Assertivity and layering*

In this section I claim that the forms *dares* and *dared* show a similar evolution in the EModE period as far as assertiveness and layering are concerned. As for assertiveness, Duffley (1994: 218) claims that the context in which *dare* – and also *need* – is found is a crucial factor for understanding its modal uses. In his discussion of *need*, Jacobsson (1974: 62) relates the modal use of this verb to the semantic factor ‘non-assertiveness’:

The existence of the necessity or obligation is not asserted but denied, question, conceded (in concessive clauses), or represented as a mere conception rather than a positive fact (‘subjunctive’), [...] If it is possible at all to find a semantic common denominator for sentences containing auxiliary need, the best candidate would probably be ‘non-assertiveness’.

In this vein, Quirk et al. (1985: 138-39) also point out that in PDE “the modal construction is restricted to non-assertive contexts, i.e. mainly negative and interrogative sentences”. These ‘non-assertive contexts’ are not confined to these two contexts but also to those including semi-negatives such as *hardly* and *only*, in (6a) above, conditional clauses, in (13) above, comparative clauses, in (8) above, putative *should*-clauses and restrictive relative clauses with conditional meaning.

Based on Quirk et al.’s (1985: 138-39) non-assertive contexts, I have analysed the use of *dare* in 3rd person singular and in simple past contexts. My data show that *dare* with 3rd person singular reference is mainly restricted to non-assertive contexts regardless its status. As Table 4 summarises, *dare* is only found in modal uses with the uninflected form in E1. From E2 onwards, 3rd person singular *dare* is attested in modal, blend and lexical constructions. The two examples found with modal status in E2 occur in non-assertive contexts, as in (31). In the case of the blend construction, there is a preference for non-assertive contexts as well, as in (32). In turn, the only lexical example is attested in an assertive context, in (10) above, repeated here in (33). In E3, modal *dare* is mainly found in non-assertive constructions and the blend construction occurs in two examples, one in an assertive and another in a non-assertive context, in (34) and (35), respectively.

Table 4: *Dare* in 3rd person singular and (non-)assertive contexts (raw data)⁷

	E1		E2		E3	
	Assertive	Non-assertive	Assertive	Non-assertive	Assertive	Non-assertive
Modal	1	6	0	2	1	5
Blend	0	0	1	8	1	1
Lexical	0	0	1	0	0	0

⁷ Due to the scarcity of the data, I will not provide normalised frequencies and will limit myself to qualitative judgements.

- (31) *T. S. what shift she'll make now with this peece of flesh In this strict time of Lent, I cannot imagine, **Flesh dare not peepe abroad now**, I haue knowne This Citie now aboute this seuen yeers, But I protest in better state of gouernement, I neuer knew it yet, nor euer heard of, (MIDDLET-E2-H, 16.334)*
- (32) *How **dares the Lambe bee** so bolde with the Lyon, quoth the Herald? (DELONEY-E2-P2, 36.126)*
- (33) *Then let them all encircle him about, And Fairy-like to pinch the vncleane Knight; And aske him why that houre of Fairy Reuell, In their so sacred pathes, **he dares to tread** In shape prophane. (SHAKESP-E2-P2, 56.C1.740)*
- (34) *[...] I admire at my next Neighbour, that hath always good store of Plate, and Coin of Gold and Silver always by her, that **she dares lye alone**, or with none but a poor simple Girl, that is her Servant; [...]* (PENNY-E3-P2, 210.346)
- (35) *Her task of work, some sighing lover every day makes it his petition to perform for her; which she accepts blushing, and with reluctancy, for fear he will ask her a look for a recompence, which **he dares not presume** to hope; so great an awe she strikes into the hearts of her admirers. (BEHN-E3-H, 188.138)*

As for the simple past uses, *durst* is attested more frequently in non-assertive sentences in the three periods under study (Table 5). However, at least two of the occurrences are located in assertive contexts in all the periods, as in (36) from E2 and in (37) from E3. This is not the case of lexical *dared* in my data, which is only found in assertive contexts, in (25) above, repeated here in (38). The fact that simple past *dared* is the new form of the verb explains the few occurrences in my data.

Table 5: *Durst* and past simple *dared* in EModE (raw data)

	E1		E2		E3	
	Assertive	Non-assertive	Assertive	Non-assertive	Assertive	Non-assertive
Modal <i>durst</i>	10	26	2	19	3	12
Lexical <i>dared</i>	0	0	2	0	0	0

- (36) *My Lord Cardinall quoth the Queene, vnder correction of my Lord the King **I durst lay an hundred pound** Iacke of Newberie was neuer of that mind, nor is not at this instant: if ye ask him, I warrant hee will say so. (DELONEY-E2-P2,40.182)*
- (37) *Aim. Turn this way, Villains; **I durst engage** an Army in such a Cause. (FARQUHAR-E3-H,63.611)*

- (38) *But here is the sport - **the footeman**, seeing it was the king's pleasure to see the wager tryed, **dared him**, which made Jemy mad, that he would run with him from Edinborough to Barwicke which was forty miles in one day; a thing as impossible as to pull down a church in one houre, and to build it againe in another:* (ARMIN-E2-P1, 22.233)

The most important conclusions drawn from Table 4 and Table 5 are: (i) the older variants, i.e. overtly uninflected *dare* in 3rd person singular and *durst* in past simple contexts, are also found in assertive clauses and still show modal features; (ii) the blend construction *dares* + *BI clause* is not restricted to non-assertive contexts (Table 4); (iii) although *dared* is only attested with lexical uses in assertive contexts in my data, the OED examples in (39) and (40) below show that *dared* can select a BI clause in non-assertive contexts and it exhibits blend characteristics.

- (39) *Louely Eleanour, Who **darde for Edwards sake cut** through the seas.* (a1592 R. GREENE Frier Bacon (1594) sig. C)

- (40) *They **dared not doe** as others did.* (1641 J. BURROUGHES Sions Joy 26)

As mentioned in §3.1, layering explains the 3rd person singular contexts. A similar situation pertains the simple past and conditional contexts. In E2, my data show, on the one hand, the typical modal use of *durst* with either BI clauses or the modal past construction and, on the other hand, the lexical counterpart with the new form *dared* and NP complementation (§3.2 above). No examples of *dared* and sentential complements are found in my data. However, the OED (s.v. *dared* v¹⁴ β.) provides four examples of this new form, given in (39) and (40) above and (41) and (42) below.⁸

- (41) *She **darde to brooke** Neptunus haughtie pride.* (a1592 R. GREENE Frier Bacon (1594) sig. C)

- (42) *They **dared not to stay** him.* (1650 T. FULLER Pisgah-sight of Palestine II. vi. 145)

Examples (39) and (41) correspond to the E2 period of my database, and (40) and (42) are classified in E3. Examples (39) and (40) exhibit both modal and lexical features. The lexical features are the adoption of the past forms *-de* and *-ed*. The occurrence of *dared* in an interrogative clause in (39) and with direct negation *not* and with a BI complement in (40) are modal characteristics. In consequence, unlike Beths (1999) and Taeymans (2004), I claim that examples (39) and (40) are instances of the blend construction. In turn, examples (41) and (42) are instances of lexical *dare*, with inflection for past tense and *to*-infinitive complementation

⁸ Like Beths (1999: 1095), I provide the OED examples with the simple past form *dared*, already illustrated in (15) to (18) in §3.2, and repeated here for convenience in (31) to (34).

4. Conclusions

In this study I have reviewed the relevant literature on the status of *dare* in the history of English and described its behaviour in ME and EModE. In particular, I have analysed the rise, evolution and modern status of the simple past form *dared*, and the obsolescence of the old form *durst* in simple past and conditional contexts. A number of factors have favoured the obsolescence and replacement of *durst* with *dared* in simple past contexts and with the form *dare* in conditional contexts: (i) *durst* is attested in so-called ‘modal past’ constructions (Denison 1998: 176-79) and this indicates that *durst* is losing reference to past events; (ii) *dare* undergoes a process of regularisation from M4 onwards; (iii) *durst* shows a low degree of flexibility in the highly frequent construction *durst* + *BI clause*. Hence, *durst* becomes a weak competitor when another similar construction with additional functions comes into play: *dare* occurs in present simple and conditional contexts, and *dared* is used in simple past contexts and as a past participle.

I have also argued that the construction *dared* + *BI clause* shows blend features (cf. Beths 1999; Taeymans 2004). Two factors support this: (i) the evolution and use of the 3rd person singular form *dares* (vs. *dare*), and (ii) the type of context in which *dares* + *BI clause* and *dared* + *BI clause* occur. As for the former, layering of *dare* is at work in both 3rd person singular and simple past contexts. With respect to the context, the older variants *durst* and the invariable 3rd person singular *dare* prefer non-assertive contexts, but they are also found in assertive environments showing modal status. Taking into account the examples provided by the OED and those in my data, the new variants *dares* and *dared* are also attested in both (non-)assertive contexts when they select a *BI clause*. Hence, layering and the possibility of occurrence in (non-)assertive constructions are involved in the new forms. My findings support that *dares* and *dared* show the same evolution, but with a time lag between both forms.

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Abbreviations

BI= Bare Infinitive

EModE= Early Modern English

IP-MAT= matrix clause

ME= Middle English

MED= Middle English Dictionary

NP= Noun Phrase

OED= Oxford English Dictionary

PDE= Present-day English

PPCEME= Penn-Helsinki Parsed Corpus of Early Modern English

PPCME2= Penn-Helsinki Corpus of Middle English

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