

NegV1 and Secondary Negation in Old and Middle English Religious Prose*

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Abstract

A study of religious prose texts showed that negative inversion (NegV1), e.g. *Ne drife ic hine fram me* 'I shall not drive him from me' (*St. Eufrasia*, Ælfric II 338,69) was predominant in main clauses in Old English and Early Middle English but had disappeared by Late Middle English 14th century works, even in those retaining around 95% use of the *ne* negator. This phenomenon is related here to the grammaticalisation of secondary negation. In OE texts a sharp asymmetry was found in the distribution of the secondary negator *na* in favour of main clauses as against subordinate clauses. In EME subordinate clause contexts frequencies of a secondary negator were quite similar across all clause types studied, which is taken to indicate that grammaticalisation of the forms *noht/nawt* ('not') etc. was already underway. As a grammatical marker of negation, they stood in [spec,NegP], unlike *na* in OE (*contra* van Kemenade 2000). In this position the secondary negator became able to check an interpretable [+neg] specifier feature. This eventually replaced the OE grammar in which the interpretable [+neg] feature was a head feature checked by the negative prefix *ne*. As a result of this change, verb movement to C to check a strong but uninterpretable [+neg] feature (Eythórsson 2002) was lost in later Middle English.

1 Introduction

Early Middle English finite verbs in negated root clauses were normally prefixed by *ne* and showed variation in whether they stood first in the clause, inverting around the subject (NegV1), as in (1), or else displayed SV order, as in (2):

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- (1) Ne gas tu nawt te ane.
Neg go-pres-2s thou not to one.
'Thou goest not alone.'
(AR ms. Titus 18,13 (M86))
- (2) He ne gad naut to scrifte.
he Neg go-pres-3s not to confession.
'He does not go to confession.'
(Lamb. Hom. 25,24)

They also showed variation in the presence or absence of a secondary negator {not},¹ as in (3) and (4), from the Penn-Helsinki Parsed Corpus of Middle English (PPCME2) (Kroch and Taylor 2000):

- (3) Ne mihtest ðu of-earnin swa michel eadnesse swa ðe is behaten.
Neg can-pst-2s thou earn so much happiness as thee is promised.
'You could not earn so much happiness as is promised to you.'
(CMVICES1,33.390)
- (4) Nalde 3e nawt bringe me forð toward blisse wið se bale
Neg-will-pst you not bring me forth toward bliss with so sorrowful
bere.
countenance.
'Ye would not bring me forth towards bliss with such sorrowful countenance.'
(CMKATHE,51.500)

In late Middle English, Neg V1 was lost and {not} became near-obligatory. This study will attempt to show how these developments may have been related. NegV1 is common in earlier stages of various Germanic languages, such as Old English (5), Old Saxon (6) and Old Norse (7):

- (5) Ne gesomniu ic gesomnunge heara.
NEG assemble I meetings them-GEN.
'I shall not assemble their meetings.'
(Vesp. Psalter 15,4.)
- (6) Ni uuilli ik is thi mithan nu.
NEG want-1psg I it-GEN thou-GEN conceal now.
'I do not want to conceal it from you now.'
(Old Saxon Genesis 177)

- (7) Sé-kk-a ek þann Völundi / til smiðio borinn.
see+AGRs+NEG I that Völundr-DAT / to smithy carried.
'I do not see that one carried to Völund's smithy.'
(Vkv 18, Eythórsson 2002: 199)

The loss of the NegV1 construction in the later development of English was associated by Fischer (1992: 281) with the elimination of the prefix *ne*: 'In OE ... *ne* was always before the verb, so, when initial, inversion of S and V would be as it were automatic...' This situation changes in ME when *ne* begins to be lost. It remains unclear, however, to what extent this was the case and if it was, why the loss of *ne* provoked the loss of NegV1. It is tempting to link the change to cyclic changes in negation studied for a number of Germanic languages by Jespersen (1917). However, nothing in Jespersen's negation cycle explicitly involves a rise and then decline of Neg V1. Indeed Jespersen himself seems to have avoided pursuing this line of enquiry; in his well-known paradigm for change in negation, Germanic negation at the stage with only a phonetically 'light' element is exemplified by the use of S-*ne*-V order (e.g. *ic ne secge*, 'I do not say'), rather than the *ne*-V-S order which, as we shall see below for OE, was in fact highly typical of that stage.

2 Analyses of negation in the history of English

There has been a large and still expanding body of work on negation in the history of English but very little of it has much to say about the nature and loss of NegV1. Although Jack (1978); Iyeiri (2001); Frisch (1997); Tiekens-Boon van Ostade, Tottie, and van der Wurff (1999) and others, have added very substantially to our knowledge of the syntax of Old and Middle English negated clauses, little or no space was devoted in these studies to considering the NegV1 construction as such. The phenomenon is, however, studied in work by van Kemenade (1997, 2000), who analyses it in terms of movement of the finite verb to C, as do Pintzuk (1996), and van Gelderen (2003) among others. An example of NegV1 in Old English such as (8) thus receives an analysis along the lines of (9):

- (8) Ne wrohte he yet nane wundra openlice.
NEG made he yet no miracles openly.
'Yet he did not work any miracles openly.'
(Ælfr. Hom. Th. I, 26 (van Kemenade 1987: 138))
- (9) [CP C Ne-worhte; [FP he F t_i [NegP Neg t_i {TP T t_i [VP ... t_i nane wundra ...]]]]

Note that we follow van Kemenade (2000) in splitting IP into an FP projection for pronoun subjects, a TP projection for NP subjects, and an intervening NegP. Haeblerli & Ingham (to appear) suggest that this structure was already mainly giving way to NegP in a lower position by EME, but the precise location of NegP is not crucial for the analysis

¹We use the { } notation to indicate the presence of a morpheme spelt variously *noht*, *nat*, *not* etc. depending on the period and provenance of the source text.

of NegV1 presented here, so for convenience we will keep to van Kemenade's well-known analysis (see also Fischer et al. 2000). Since FP is the highest projection within IP, a finite verb appearing to the left of a pronoun subject cannot have remained within IP. Cases with full NP subjects need not require verb movement to C - they may occupy [Spec, TP], allowing a finite verb to their left to stand in F, rather than raising to C. In this article, therefore, only the relative order of finite verb and personal pronoun subjects will be taken as evidence of NegV1. The V to C analysis has also been given to negative inversion in Old Norse and Gothic by Eythórsson (2002) and Fuss (2003). As we shall see, however, these authors have given substantially differing accounts of what motivated inversion in negated clauses.

One way of accounting for NegV1 is to invoke the effect of a non-overt negative operator in CP that forces movement of a tensed element to the local head C as in the Present-Day English negative inversion construction, e.g.:

- (10) No way will I teach that class.

Here, *no way* functions as an overt negative operator element standing in [spec,CP], requiring movement of the verbal auxiliary to C. Haegeman (1995: 180ff) discussed this construction in terms of what she labelled the Neg Criterion, which requires a negated operator to stand in a Spec-Head relationship with a negative head. This kind of account is found in Fuss (2003) and van Kemenade (2000), who consider the possibility that negation in the early Germanic languages was an operator context, cf:

It seems reasonable to analyse the initial negative element in root clauses Early Old English as a Spec,CP element and to say that the finite verb, when moved, is in C. The motivation for the rise of this V-movement strategy could then plausibly come from a condition of Universal Grammar stating that an operator element in Spec,CP must be licensed by a lexically filled C.

(van Kemenade 2000: 62)

Van Kemenade adopted this analysis for early Old English root clauses in *Beowulf* beginning with the negative particle *no*, e.g.:

- (11) No ic me an herewæsmun hnagran talige ... þonne Grendel.
Not I me in war-strength inferior count ... than Grendel.
'I do not count myself less in war-strength ... than Grendel (does).'

(Beowulf 677-8, (van Kemenade 2000: 63))

In this, the 'oldest pattern' of English negation, *no* is in [spec,CP], outside the body of the clause, and separated from the finite verb. In 'Classical' late 9th-10th century prose, however, *ne* is never separated from the finite verb, according to van Kemenade (2000: 65-66); it has been established as an unequivocal Neg head, a claim for which

incorporating forms such as *nolde*, *nis* etc. provide good evidence. Van Kemenade's analysis of *Beowulf* shows very clearly that clause initial *no* in [spec NegP] failed to trigger V to C, which would appear to render the Neg criterion unexplanatory in this case.² Classical Old English prose had regular V to C, but by now *ne* was firmly in place as a head, hence it could not function as a trigger for movement of the verb to C via the Neg Criterion; again, therefore, we do not have a satisfactory analysis of NegV1.

In addition, once *ne* had established itself as a syntactic head, the expectation would be for it to have headed NegP, following standard assumptions made regarding NegP by Pollock (1989), Haegeman (1995) and others. We would then see verb movement only to the Neg head of NegP. But in later OE NegP appears within the IP domain, according to van Kemenade (2000), not above it,³ so the movement of the negated verb out of IP to C, prefixed/precliticised by *ne*, is hard to account for. Indeed, on the foregoing assumptions, once *ne* had changed its status to a negative head, we might well have predicted the loss of an earlier verb movement pattern out of IP to C, in favour of verb movement remaining within IP. Yet precisely the opposite seems to have occurred. In short, an account of NegV1 in terms of a condition requiring adjacency of elements in a Spec-Head configuration appears problematic.

Let us therefore consider Eythórsson's (2002) analysis of NegV1 in Old Norse, which does not appeal to a criterion requiring to be satisfied in an operator context. Sentential negation, even in the earliest Old Norse texts, was expressed mainly by a negative suffix *-a(t)* on negated verbs, following the obsolescence of an older negative prefix *ne*. Eythórsson took the view that NegV1 was driven by a strong [+neg] feature on C. V raises to Neg to check the head feature on Neg, then raises again to check the [+neg] head feature on C. C in Old Norse is considered as an abstract negative complementiser, hence the need to check a strong [+neg] feature in C is what drives V to C in Old Norse, not the satisfaction of some version of the Neg Criterion.

At a later stage, the *-at* suffix was lost and Old Icelandic sentential negation became expressed by the postverbal negator *eigi* ('not'). It may be that the loss of a [+neg] feature on C was related to the demise of morphological negation in Old Norse in favour of the newer *eigi* form, a possibility we shall consider below as regards Middle English. In some languages, negation and the C projection do show a link, as Eythórsson's work demonstrates. In others, however, negation seems not to be linked to C. In French, for example, there is no trace of NegV1, and even the earliest stages of Old French show no negative inversion after initial negated adverbials such as *ja(mais)* 'never'. A universal [+neg] feature in C acting as a trigger for V to C is therefore undesirable, in our view.

²One might conceivably wish to appeal to LF raising of V, but the NegV1 phenomenon in OE/EME specifically involves the overt movement of the negated verb in initial position.

³However, a partial tree in van Gelderen (2003: 21) indicates that for her NegP in OE was above the IP domain.

It impedes progress on the major problem signalled very clearly by van Kemenade's research: how variation and change in the syntax of negation, as handled descriptively by Jespersen's cycle, can be handled within a formal syntactic framework.

Rowlett (1998) offered a formalisation of Jespersen's cycle in terms of an alternation between Neg and [spec,NegP] as the locus of a 'syntactico-semantic feature' [+neg]. The phonetically more substantial negators are in [spec,NegP] and the phonetically lighter ones in Neg. In his analysis, 'the morpho-phonological locus of negation can shift cyclically between [spec,NegP] and Neg with intermediate stages at which both positions are associated with phonological material or the negative marker has an ambivalent status' (Rowlett 1998: 97). Although Rowlett was not dealing with the history of English as such, his analysis can in our view be insightfully applied to developments in English negation from OE onwards.

In Ingham (2005) an account is proposed of V to C movement in terms of the properties of formal features, which incorporates Rowlett's proposal of cyclic shifts in the locus of negation within the structure of NegP. Following analyses of negation within the Minimalist Programme of Chomsky (1995: 277ff) by Brown (1999); Svenonius (2002) and Jäger (2003), two kinds of formal [+neg] features were distinguished, interpretable and uninterpretable. Though the latter are morphologically instantiated, they do not contribute to the semantic interpretation of a clause. In a negative concord language, e.g. Old High German (Jäger 2003), several such formal features may be generated in the derivation, corresponding to each formally negative element. These features are checked and deleted during the derivation. However, the interpretable feature, which must be visible to the semantic interface level to provide the negative interpretation of the clause, is not deleted, and thus 'remains accessible to the computation' (Chomsky 1995: 281). Rowlett's 'syntactico-semantic feature' can be taken as equivalent to an interpretable feature in minimalist terms, which then allows us to conceptualise the abstract counterpart of Jespersen's cycle as an alternation in the structural position of the interpretable [+neg] feature.

The proposal made in Ingham (2005: 181ff) is that in OE and EME this interpretable [+neg] feature was borne by Neg; as such, though checked against the negative morpheme *ne*, it was not deleted and therefore remained available to be attracted to C by a strong Neg feature on C, following the analysis for Old Norse of Eythórsson (2002). In the following partial analysis (with TP omitted for convenience) of the EME example (12a), we see successive movement of *ne con* up to Neg, then ultimately to C:

- (12) a. Ne con ich saien non falsedom.
Neg can I say no falsehood.
'I can say no falsehood.'
(*Dame Sirih* 65)
b. [CP_C^{[+neg]uninterp} Ne con_i [FP_{ich} F t_i [NegP Neg^{[+neg]INTERP} t_j [VP v t_j [VP saien non falsedom]]]]]]

The negated verb moves out of its VP projection to Neg, then to F (van Kemenade 2000), still with the interpretable [+neg] feature, and is then attracted overtly by the strong uninterpretable feature on C. In the course of the Middle English period, however, this derivation became impossible when the interpretable [+neg] feature became a Spec feature; the head feature on Neg now became uninterpretable. It was therefore checked and deleted in NegP, at a point before the negated verb raised to F (again, TP is omitted for convenience):

- (13) [FP Ich ne con_i [NegP Spec^{[+neg]INTERP} Neg t_j [VP v t_j [vpsaien non falsedom]]]]⁴

At this point in the derivation the negated verb no longer carried a [+neg] feature, so further movement would not allow it to check a [+neg] feature in C. Had an unchecked strong [+neg] feature remained, the derivation would therefore have been blocked, hence a grammar with a strong [+neg] feature on C would be unviable. No such problem, however, would be faced by a grammar without a [+neg] feature in C. It was the shift of the interpretable [+neg] feature to becoming a Spec feature, in terms of Rowlett (1998), rather than the overt loss of the head negator *ne*, which played the decisive role in the loss of NegV1 in the Germanic languages. The [+neg] feature on C was lost because a grammar arose in which it could no longer be checked, and – following the assumptions of Kroch (1989) – this grammar successfully competed with the old grammar in which it could be.

For reasons of continuous diachronic data availability, Ingham (2005) was based exclusively on verse sources: the crucial developments as regards the loss of NegV1 were hypothesised to have occurred during the central Middle English period, in which not much prose data is available. However, that research left open a number of questions. Among these was the issue of whether those prose works in the later 14th century that are known to have retained substantial use of *ne* (see e.g. Jack 1978) would show linkage between the overtness of *ne* and the presence of NegV1. The prediction made by Ingham (2005) was that they would not, since NegV1 seemed to have disappeared earlier, at least in the verse data. Secondly, the overt element expressing [+neg] in Spec NegP was predicted to establish itself concurrently with the point where NegV1 shows a decline. In other words, much greater use is expected to have been made in Middle English of

⁴Following Haegeman (1995) and others, we take it that a Neg operator in [spec,NegP] forming an operator chain with *non falsedom* corresponded to the interpretable feature in (13).

secondary negation before the sharp decline in NegV1 observed in ME verse around 1300 by Ingham (2005). In particular, if a secondary negator was becoming grammaticised we should expect evidence that it was not purely serving as a reinforcing negator.

Van Kemenade's discussion of OE *na* as a secondary negator in OE acknowledges that it was relatively rare, whereas in later ME the secondary negator became the dominant negating element. The rise of a secondary negator can be seen as consistent with the [+neg] feature shifting back to being a Spec feature; this lasted through an intermediate phase when both head and Spec had overt phonological material. Rowlett's (1998) analysis does not directly address NegV1, since it is mainly concerned with French, but certainly has implications for the maintenance and loss of NegV1, to be discussed below.

Frisch (1997) shows that the frequency of the secondary negator in Middle English rose considerably in the first half of the 14th century, but his database included both prose and verse, including some of the works analysed in Ingham (2005), so neither Ingham's nor Frisch's work has been able to establish whether an earlier rise of secondary negation was observed in prose alone. Accordingly, the present study will report the results of an investigation into the use of secondary negation, as well of NegV1, in OE, EME and LME prose.

3 The study

3.1 Aims and procedures

As discussed above, we sought to address two issues, the timing of the demise of V to C in negated main clauses, and its interaction with the rise of secondary negation. On the theoretical assumptions discussed in §2, direct evidence for or against movement of a negated verb to C would come from negated main clauses with personal pronoun subjects. We therefore established a database of negated main clauses with a personal pronoun subject, to be analysed in terms of the position of the finite verb and the pronoun subject. Only clauses with no clause-initial constituents before the sentence subject were used, so as to avoid interference by V2 order after initial non-subject constituents, notably objects and adjuncts.⁵ Initial vocative expressions and exclamations such as oaths were not excluded, however, since we take them not to form part of the syntactic structure of the clause. Main clauses were identified as any clauses not linked to another clause by a conjunction; clauses introduced by co-ordinators *and*, *bute*, or *ac* ('but') were thus considered separately, since in Old English (Fischer 1992: 277) they did not show V to C except after other preposed non-subject constituents.

Data in target contexts were categorised according to whether the finite verb preceded

⁵The structural analysis of V2 in OE and ME is left open for present purposes, but see Haeberli (2002) and sources therein.

the subject pronoun (VS), or vice versa (SV). Three types of clauses containing *ne* were excluded; for convenience, these are exemplified with verse examples used in Ingham (2005), but they were also found in prose. These were, first, clauses that were formally but not semantically negative, in particular those with *ne...bute*, e.g.:

- (14) Pou nart bute of 3oung age.
 Thou Neg-be-pres-2s but of young age.
 'You are only young.'
 (*Childhood of Crist* 810)

Here, despite the superficially negative form (*ne...bute*), it is affirmed that the addressee is young. Inversion of a subjunctive verb where the clause has a jussive interpretation was also excluded, as in:⁶

- (15) Ne bi hit neuere so derk.
 Neg be hit never so dark.
 'Be it never so dark.'
 (*Floris & Blaufleur* 236)

Finally, we excluded negated clauses conjoined by *ne* (= Latin *neque*, *nec*), e.g.:

- (16) Ne þou ne shalt hym nou3þ loue.
 Neg thou neg shalt him not love.
 'And you shall not love him.'
 (AR Pepys 67,1)

This was because the presence of conjunctive *ne* in such clauses could have influenced the likelihood of use of repeated negative elements in the body of the clause.

Clauses were divided for the purpose of the analysis into (i) potential V1 contexts, that is, root negated clauses where no non-subject constituent preceded the clause subject (cf. (1) and (2) above), (ii) subordinate clauses introduced by subordinating conjunctions, especially *þat*, *3if* and *whan*,⁷ but including other subordinators (17), and (iii) co-ordinate main clauses introduced by a co-ordinating conjunction, viz. *and*, *bute* and *ac*, (18):

- (17) ...þei3 he ne sette nou3þ his herte ...þere vpon.
 ...though he neg set-subj neg his heart ...there upon.
 '...though he may not set his heart on it.'
 (AR Pepys 75,31)

⁶This example serves only to illustrate a jussive clause; it would in any case have been excluded as it contains the negated indefinite *neuere*.

⁷But excluding *for*, which was not clearly a subordinating conjunction, especially in Old English, where unlike clear subordinating conjunctions it did not co-occur with the finite verb in clause-final position.

- (18) ...and it ne shal nou3þ be bynomen hir.
 ...and it neg shall not be taken away her.
 '...and it shall not be taken away from her.'
 (AR Pepys 101, 34)

The other variable in the analysis was the presence of absence of a secondary negator. For this purpose we were fairly catholic, allowing {not}, *nawiht*, *na*, *no*, and *nalles* to count as secondary negators (the last of these was not in fact found in the target contexts).⁸ The use of the prefixal negator *ne* was also recorded, a category in which we included incorporated *n*-forms such as *nis*, *noide* etc.: these also sufficed in OE and EME to express negation, as did *ne*.

This analysis considered only clauses where negation was expressed by either one or two negative particles. Negation involving the OE negated indefinites *nan* ('no', 'none'), *næfre*, ('never') *nahwor* ('nowhere') and their ME counterparts was excluded since, at least up to the 14th century (Jack 1978; Iyeyi 2001), these were in complementary distribution with a secondary negator, and their presence would thus have biased outcomes against secondary negation.

3.2 Data Sources

Pre-modern English texts vary on a number of dimensions other than by date: they differ quite widely in genre, style, and content,⁹ but the hazards of textual transmission have not always left us with an even representation of different text types. Finding syntactic differences between texts that vary considerably, not only on the temporal dimension, but also in some of these other ways may leave the question open as to whether we can ascribe differences between them to the effects of grammar change. Ideally, it must surely be preferable to base analyses on texts that are closely comparable on dimensions other than that of time. Although with older English the vagaries of the textual record will place limits on what is possible in this regard, we can nevertheless quite often find considerable points of similarity. These can most often be found in the domain of religious prose of various genres, especially saints' lives, sermons, and devotional treatises.

We set up a database of OE, EME and LME sources, trying as far as possible to compare similar texts across time. We chose a group of prose saints' lives from Old English and the three prose saints' lives from the Katharine group of EME texts. The OE Gospel of Nicodemus and LME Gospel of Nicodemus were included as were St Matthew's Gospel (Chs. 1-20) from the WS Gospels and an equivalent text from the

⁸We also included occasional examples of *nan þing* 'no thing' used as a negative particle rather than in object function, as long as no ambiguity arose, e.g. where another constituent clearly functioned as direct object.

⁹See Mazzon (1992: 162, 165) for some discussion of how negation may be affected by such factors.

LME Pepys ms. 2498 Gospel Harmony. We used the part of the Titus ms. of the *Ancrene Riwe* that parallel passages in a long extract from the LME version of *Ancrene Riwe* (corresponding to M44-158) found in the same ms. Pepys 2498. Finally, we included eleven items from the EME Lambeth Homilies set against sermons from the LME *Miroir* sermons in ms. Hunter 250. The latter were chosen out of many LME sermons because according to the editors (Duncan and Connolly 2003) ms. Hunter 250 exemplifies the 'type II' language variety of LME (Samuels 1963), which was identified in terms of certain lexical and morphological preferences, such as *þei3* 'though', *no3t*, *no* 'not', as well as the *-ende* participial ending instead of '-ing'. Among the features of the type II variety is the retention of *ne*, which made it of key importance to the present study; the EEPP and the three ms. Pepys 2498 texts also share this trait.

In Table 1, the sources selected are listed according to sub-genres of religious prose, namely Biblical prose versions or adaptations, saints' lives, homiletic works, and devotional treatises. The accidents of textual survival have meant that these categories could not be filled for all periods. For example, EME has no Biblical prose, and LME prose does not appear to offer a body of saints' lives. OE sermons are available, but including them would have overloaded the database in favour of OE, so they were not sampled. In any case the OE saints' lives in some cases appear to have been delivered as sermons, so it is not clear that these two sub-genres were independent. The guiding principle in establishing the sample range was to establish a body of data sources that was roughly comparable in size and genre across the three periods of the language. No text was included unless it possessed an analogue in at least one other period.

Three works allowed comparison between OE and LME. First, there are the Ælfredian and 14th century versions of the Psalter, already mentioned above. A comparison between similar texts is also afforded by the existence of both an OE and a LME version of the Gospel of Nicodemus, though unfortunately the manuscripts have not preserved the same passages from these works. The same manuscript as the LME Gospel of Nicodemus also contains the Pepsian Gospel harmony, which in terms of content can be compared with the corresponding part of an OE text, the so-called *West Saxon Gospels* in the Camb. ms. A dating from the 11th century (ed. Liuzza).

We used OE and EME prose versions of saints' lives, albeit mostly of different saints. Four of them were OE works attributed to Ælfric, to which we added the *Life of Saint Margaret* in the West Saxon version in Corpus ms. 303. The five OE saints' lives constituted a roughly equivalent body of text to compare with the three rather longer EME saints' lives.

With the devotional treatise *Ancrene Riwe*, a comparison between EME and LME is afforded by the Pepys ms. and the Titus ms. version, the redaction that is thought to have been closest to the EME text. Here, however, a difficulty arose insofar as the LME text was not composed independently but was a reworking of the original. Survivals of NegV1

| OE | EME | LME |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--|
| <u>Biblical Prose</u> | | |
| <i>Psalms, Edited</i> | | |
| <i>Gospel of Nicodemus</i> | | <i>EEP Psalter Addl ms. 17.376</i> |
| <i>WS St Matthew's Gospel</i> | | <i>Gospel of Nicodemus ms. P 2498</i> |
| | | <i>Gospel Harmony ms. P 2498</i> |
| <u>Homiletic Prose</u> | | |
| | WM Lambeth Hom. 1-5, 7-8, 14-17. | <i>Miroir sermons ms. Hunter. 250,</i> <i>sermons 1-5</i> |
| <u>Devotional treatises</u> | | |
| <i>Ancrone Riule</i> | Titus ms. | <i>Ancrone Riule ms. P 2498</i> |
| <u>Saints' Lives</u> | | |
| <i>St Margaret</i> | | <i>St Margaret</i> |
| <i>St Eufrasia</i> | | <i>St Katherine</i> |
| <i>St Mary of Egypt</i> | | <i>St Juliana</i> |
| <i>St Eustace</i> | | |
| <i>De 7 Dormientibus</i> | | |

Table 1: Data sources.

could therefore arise as archaisms left in the later text which would leave it uncertain whether such usages were representative of the 14th century LME. To circumvent this problem, we took advantage of the fact that 14th century text adds considerable material interwoven with the material retained from the 13th century Titus ms. text. Our EME analysis used the section of *Ancrone Riule* corresponding to M44-158 (the preceding pages have been lost), while the LME analysis used the same part of the work, but only those passages added in the later version.

To set against the LME *Miroir* sermons, selected for their use of Type II language traits (Samuels 1963) as mentioned above, we used those texts from the OE *Lambeth Homilies* which are not known to have been re-workings of OE originals.

We considered but excluded the LME *Vices and Virtues* in ms. Huntingdon 147, as it makes quite frequent use of the *ne* particle. As a translation of the 13th century French text *la Somme le Roi*, however, it could, especially as regards secondary negation, have shown an effect of the syntax of the French source. To the best of our knowledge, the original text remains unpublished, so verification of this question is impossible. In the impracticable case of other LME texts translated or imitated from French, the *Miroir* sermons and the *Gospel of Nicodemus*, which were used here, the sources were available for verification, but in fact made little use of secondary negation in the contexts scored for this research.

Naturally, it is not being claimed that our procedure strictly matched texts of one period with their counterparts in another. Rather, we claim that the range of variation within the source material was reduced by the procedure of not including a particular source text unless we could find a text from another period that was similar in genre, and where possible in content.

3.3 Results

In the main study we first compared realisation of NegV1 in NegV1 contexts, that is, in clauses having a personal pronoun subject, and no pre-subject constituent other than the verb itself, where this was the case. The results are shown below in Table 2:

| | OE | | EME | | LME | |
|-------|----|------|-----|------|-----|-------|
| | N | % | N | % | N | % |
| SV | 5 | 10.4 | 8 | 21.6 | 41 | 100.0 |
| VS | 48 | 89.6 | 29 | 78.4 | 0 | 0.0 |
| Total | 53 | | 37 | | 41 | |

Table 2: Use of NegV1 in NegV1 contexts.

These data indicate that NegV1 had completely gone out of use by the second half of the 14th century. In EME, the rate of NegV1, high in OE, is in some decline, though it

still accounts for the bulk of the data, as with the verse data in the corresponding period in Ingham (2005).

Let us turn now to the issue of secondary negator use, where we sought to ascertain whether secondary negation was establishing itself across a range of clause types. The nominal/pronominal status of clause subjects seemed not to be criterial for this purpose, so clauses with full NP subjects, except those with a negated indefinite subject, were included. The results are set out in Tables 3-5. Note that in these tables data for secondary negator use include *ne...not* as well as uses of *not* by itself, since the cases of the latter were non-existent prior to the LME data, and even here were rare enough not to be worth reporting separately.

| | <i>ne</i> only | | secondary negator | | TOTAL |
|-----|----------------|------|-------------------|------|-------|
| | N | % | N | % | |
| OE | 35 | 55.5 | 28 | 44.5 | 63 |
| EME | 21 | 43.8 | 27 | 56.2 | 48 |
| LME | 2 | 3.6 | 53 | 96.4 | 55 |

Table 3: Secondary negation in main clause NegV1 contexts, overall.

| | <i>ne</i> only | | secondary negator | | TOTAL |
|-----|----------------|------|-------------------|------|-------|
| | N | % | N | % | |
| OE | 90 | 94.7 | 5 | 5.3 | 95 |
| EME | 52 | 53.6 | 45 | 46.4 | 97 |
| LME | 8 | 7.0 | 106 | 93.0 | 114 |

Table 4: Secondary negation in subordinate clauses, overall.

Secondary negation is near-categorical by the LME period, but in EME occurs only about half the time. As such, this rise over time is unsurprising in the light of earlier quantitative research (Frisch 1997; Iyeiri 2001). In addition, however, these data show that the rate of secondary negation in subordinate clauses greatly increases, from a rate of barely 5% in OE to approaching 50% in EME; it is thus tending to catch up the rate of secondary negator use in main clauses (Table 2). The very sharp distinction made in the OE texts between these clause types as regards secondary negation is in the process of being eliminated in EME.

In co-ordinated clauses (Table 5), OE showed a level of secondary negator use intermediate between the quite high level of use in root clauses, and the very low level of use we noted in subordinate clauses.

EME co-ordinate clauses show a similar level of secondary negator use to subordinate clauses, but here the sparsity of co-ordinate clause data in EME must incline one to caution. The small number of data points here appears to be a result of our restriction of co-ordinate contexts to those introduced by the equivalents of *and* and *but*, excluding

| | <i>ne</i> only | | secondary negator | | TOTAL |
|-----|----------------|------|-------------------|------|-------|
| | N | % | N | % | |
| OE | 28 | 75.6 | 9 | 24.4 | 37 |
| EME | 4 | 50.0 | 4 | 50.0 | 8 |
| LME | 2 | 4.2 | 45 | 95.8 | 47 |

Table 5: Secondary negation in co-ordinate clauses, overall.

ne, on the grounds mentioned earlier. Apparently, negated clauses in this period strongly tended to be introduced by *ne*.

The rise of secondary negation in Middle English as compared with the decline of NegV1 is represented in Figure 1. Also shown is the very high level of *ne*-retention in the Middle English texts, which it should be remembered, however, were selected for this trait.

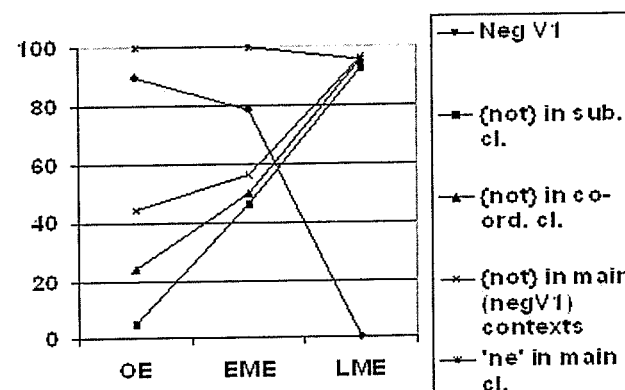


Figure 1: Percentage use of *not* (or other secondary negation) in different clause types, compared with the use of NegV1.

In the EME period secondary negation is on the rise in all clause types, as compared with OE. It was already strongest in V1 context main clauses in OE, where it was found nearly 45% of the time. Between OE and EME it rises most sharply in subordinate clauses, where it had been rare in OE, and tends to converge towards a common rate of use in all clauses around 50%. By LME all clause types had risen together to a level of secondary negation not far short of 100%.

The graph seemingly shows a temporal association between the beginnings of the decline of V1 in EME and the rise of secondary negation, but none between the latter and the loss of *ne*. *Ne* prefixation in EME was still categorical, and remained present at a level of over 95% in main clauses in the LME texts.¹⁰ Thus, as in the verse texts

¹⁰However, it must be borne in mind that the five LME texts were selected for this trait, so the high

studied in Ingham (2005), the presence of *ne* and NegV1 are unmistakably shown to have been dissociated: the retention of *ne* did not mean the retention of NegV1.

In our analysis, what caused the complete loss of NegV1 was rather the grammaticalisation of postverbal negation that had taken place by LME. Even in EME, we observed that in certain texts, particularly the *Ancrone Riwele* and the Lambeth Homilies 7-8 and 14-17, the expression of negation postverbally was becoming close to routine. The clear indication given from the EME and LME frequencies is that the grammatical use of secondary negation disregarded clause type, which can be taken as a sign of incipient grammaticalisation. In OE this was not the case: the secondary negator *na* may therefore best be seen as having been a discoursally licensed adverb anchored to the speaker, and thus with a function related to illocutionary force (cf. Haegeman 2003). Its tendency to be absent in subordinate clauses would thus have been natural, since speaker-related illocutionary force tends to be a main clause property.

Following van Bergen (2003), we therefore do not adopt van Kemenade's (2000) analysis of the OE secondary negator *na* as a NegP item. Rather, it was discourse-licensed, perhaps by a 'Force' feature (cf. Haegeman 2003) in CP. Since this form of licensing would normally occur in main rather than in subordinate clauses, its highly asymmetric distribution in the OE data analysed here would thus be natural. In ME *noht*, *nawt* etc. became grammaticised as a marker of negative polarity. Though it was still optional in EME, its use was shifting away from discourse licensing. It was not yet able to express clausal negation by itself, however: *Ne* was strictly obligatory in the EME texts studied, and frequently sufficed to express negation, unlike in LME, cf:

- (19) a. 3if þu naues gult.
If thou neg-have-pres-2s sin-ppt.
'If you have not sinned.'
(AR Titus 97,34 (M284))
- b. If þou ne haue nou3th agylt.
If thou Neg have not sin-ppt.
'If you have not sinned.'
(AR Pepys 124,8)

In connection with these examples, it should be mentioned that although we avoided including rewritten forms of sentences from the EME *Ancrone Riwele* in the analysis of the LME version, much of the time the latter modified the original, as is illustrated here.

level of *ne*-retention should not be regarded as representative of LME at this period.

4 Conclusion

We began the present study by asking whether EME prose showed any effect of the loss of NegV1, and within the texts sampled a certain decline was indeed observed. We then wished to consider whether this development was associated in the same texts with a rise in the incidence of secondary negation and found that this was again the case. We further noted that whereas in OE secondary negation is quite sensitive to clause type, hardly affecting subordinate clauses, in EME this restriction had been lost, and secondary negation now appeared very commonly in all three major clause types studied. The use of the negative prefix *ne* was categorical, however, in all three clause types in the EME data analysed. This last finding was of course expected in the light of earlier research. It can be concluded, therefore, that the re-organisation of the English clausal negation system was underway in the EME period, as a secondary negator assumed an ever growing role in the expression of negation.

The rise of a secondary negator was a significant development as it undermined the motivation for an interpretable feature on the Neg head. The older grammar required any secondary negator to lack a grammatical interpretable feature, as regards the syntax-semantics interface, since negation was 'expressed', in the sense of Ladusaw (1992), by *ne*. Instead it functioned discoursally as a reinforcing element. However, as time went on, its increasingly frequent use in negated clauses of all major types militated against its interpretation as merely a reinforcing adverbial (lexical) element, and in favour of its grammaticalisation within NegP. Seen from a learnability perspective, the acquisition of a grammar with an interpretable Spec feature in NegP would have become increasingly probable as the presence of {not} grew in reliability as a cue to such an analysis. The perspective on grammar change outlined in Lightfoot (1999), in which changes in the environment of language use in the frequency of an element not originally part of the grammatical system leads to a reorganisation of syntactic parameters, seems to sit well with the present account. New grammars in which a [+neg] head feature 'mutated' to a spec feature would tend to be acquired, ultimately at the expense of the old grammar in which the interpretative [+neg] feature was a head feature.

Before these conclusions are endorsed, some expression of caution is in order, especially as regards the data coverage of the study. The sampling procedure in this research is acknowledged to have been fairly restrictive, and the size of the database was accordingly relatively small in comparison with the whole-corpus studies now being practised in much historical syntax research. However, sample size was traded off in this case against comparability of results across historical periods, with genre variation considerably reduced. Linguistic variation across genres such as chronicles, prose fiction, legal and administrative documents, and technical treatises, as well as all forms of verse, has not influenced our findings, which we believe enhances their validity. It can thus be affirmed

that within the same small range of sub-genres major changes occurred with respect to the syntax of negation in Middle English that had gone to completion by the mid-to-late 14th century. The 'tipping point' for such changes may well, therefore, have been around 1300, as proposed by Ingham (2005) on the basis of verse evidence. The two studies are thus consistent, on the basis of independent samples. However, the virtual absence of prose for this period, and the existence of numerous other genres of pre-modern English that we have not analysed, must make our conclusions regarding the timing of the changes provisional.

On the theoretical level, the account we have given of grammar change here and in Ingham (2005) is we believe, economical and empirically substantiated. No appeal is made to what seems to be an empirically somewhat problematic condition on CP as an operator context. It handles the NegV1 phenomenon in terms of the properties of features on minimalist syntactic assumptions, relating the timing of the decline of NegV1 to the grammaticalisation of secondary negation via a change in the locus of an interpretable [+neg] feature, independently necessary to express negation at the syntax-semantics interface. The only additional postulate required is that of a strong [+neg] feature on C, which accords with the analysis by Eythórsson (2002) of NegV1 elsewhere in early Germanic.

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