**UNIVERSITY OF AGDER**

# Negation in English

## - Compared to Norwegian -

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# 1  Introduction

> "In many ways, negation is what makes us human, imbuing us with the capacity to deny, to contradict, to misrepresent, to lie, and to convey irony." (Horn 2010:1)

Negation is a language universal, found in all known languages, and unique to human languages (Lindstad 2007:3). A further uniform characteristic is that sentential negation (including what could be termed 'clausal negation') always involves "the *addition* of an overt morpheme to an affirmative clause" (Lindstad 2007:24). The function of negation is fairly straight-forward: it negates parts of or the entire sentence or clause. The formal realisation, however, is more complex and varies across languages, across speakers, and even in the same speaker across contexts. Variation across languages is mostly beyond the scope of this thesis, as the focus here is on negation in English. However, sections on Norwegian will be included, since a comparison of the development of two languages with common roots may be useful to understand present-day patterns. References to other languages will occasionally be made where this seems relevant.

Since negation is a fairly wide topic, the present discussion mainly focuses on: i) the syntactic position of negative elements, and, ii) negative concord, also called double/multiple negation. Negation is a topic that is widely discussed within semantics, pragmatics, morphology, semantics and syntax. It is even discussed in phonological terms, for example Jespersen's (1917) argument that a negator may be replaced because of its phonological weakness, which is discussed in 2.3. This thesis focuses on syntax, but other aspects of negation are referred to when relevant. There are different types of negation as well as different formal realisations; the focus of this thesis is primarily on sentential negation and, due to the realisation of negative elements in the languages discussed, mainly on negative adverbs.

The thesis aims to provide a syntactic explanation of the different negation patterns of English and Norwegian and is organised as follows. Chapter 2 introduces the theoretical framework underlying the subsequent discussion. Chapter 3 surveys the development of negation in older stages of Scandinavian and English and discusses the historical differences that are important to the analyses of present-day usage. Chapter 4 is concerned with present-day negation patterns, in both standard and non-standard English, and compares English to Norwegian. Chapter 5 concludes the thesis.

# 2 Theoretical framework[1]

## 2.1 Negation

A major distinction to be made is between constituent (or local) negation and sentential (or clausal) negation (cf. Haegeman 1996:71ff.). Sentential negation typically involves negating the finite (non-lexical) verb, since this may be said to be the link of the sentence, or the 'nexus' in Jespersen's (1917) term: "as the (finite) verb is the linguistic bearer of a nexus, at any rate in all complete sentences, we therefore always find a strong tendency to attract the negative to the verb" (Jespersen 1917:44). Constituent negation means that one of the constituents is negated without the result being a negative sentence:

(1)     They live **not** far from here[2]

Although the sentence contains the negative element *not*, the sentence is not interpreted as negative: *not* negates the constituent *far from here*. This could be argued to be because the negative element follows the finite lexical verb and thus does not have scope over the verb. However, even when the negated constituent precedes the finite verb, local negation is possible, as the following examples illustrate (Klima 1964, cited from Haegeman 1996:74):

(2)     In **not** many years will Christmas fall on a Sunday
        (in not many years = not often)

(3)     In **not** many years will Christmas fall on a Sunday, will it?

(4)     In **not** many years Christmas will fall on a Sunday
        (In not many years = soon)

(5)     In **not** many years Christmas will fall on a Sunday, won't it?

Sentence (2) is negative; sentence (4) is not. This is proven by the fact that in (2) the preposed negative element triggers inversion, while in (4) it does not. The tag questions in (3) and (5) also confirm this; as will be returned to in section 2.4 only preposed negative elements with sentential scope trigger inversion, and negative sentences require positive tag-questions.

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[1] In my thesis, I do not relate to the different levels (SS, DS, LF), since these are not really relevant for my analysis: negative constructions tend to involve movement on some level, and the exact level is less interesting in this respect. The distinction between assignment and checking of features is similarly not relevant to my discussion.

[2] In the examples, negative items are marked in boldface. Examples from other languages or older language periods are italicised, followed by glosses in regular font.

According to Haegeman, the contrasts between sentential and constituent negation may be explained in terms of operators: "negative constituents which trigger inversion are operators and those that don't trigger inversion are not" (Haegeman 1996:271f.). In other words, sentential negation seems to require a negative operator. As will be discussed in the following sections, NC may also be accounted for in terms of operators: one (negative) operator binds a number of variables through absorption. From this follows that in all instances of sentential negation NC should be an available option. Operators are introduced in section 2.4, and NC in relation to operators is further discussed throughout the thesis.

The syntax of negation is a much-disputed subject. Some of the hypotheses will be briefly mentioned, but an extensive discussion of this is beyond the scope of this paper. The underlying theory of this paper is generative grammar; thus the hypotheses included are all part of this tradition. The debate concerns, among other things, i) whether a functional projection, NegP, is part of the grammar – language-specific or universal, ii) whether NegP is an obligatory part of all negative sentences, and, if so, whether there is an abstract NegP contributing negative features even when NegP does not have an overt realisation, iii) where NegP is found within the IP hierarchy (or even in CP), and iv) if the presence and location of NegP is subject to parametric variation. The debate largely started with Pollock's (1989) proposal that IP be split into two functional phrases, Agreement Phrase (AgrP) and Tense Phrase (TP). Which of these is the highest in the hierarchy is also debated, as are possible additional functional phrases such as Mood Phrase, Passive Phrase etc. In the present thesis, following among others Haegeman (1996), AgrP is assumed to precede TP, as illustrated in 0, and, largely following Lindstad (2007), NegP is assumed to occur in the following positions: immediately on top of VP or above one or both of TP/AgrP. Figure 2 roughly illustrates this, although the position between AgrP and TP is not included in this figure. The hierarchical trees that form the basis for the analyses are the following:

**Figure 1**    **Basic tree**

```
            CP
        Spec    C'
             C      AgrP
                  Spec    Agr'
                       Agr    NegP
                           Spec    Neg'
                                Neg    TP
                                    Spec    T'
                                         T      VP
                                             Spec    V'
                                                  V      ---
```
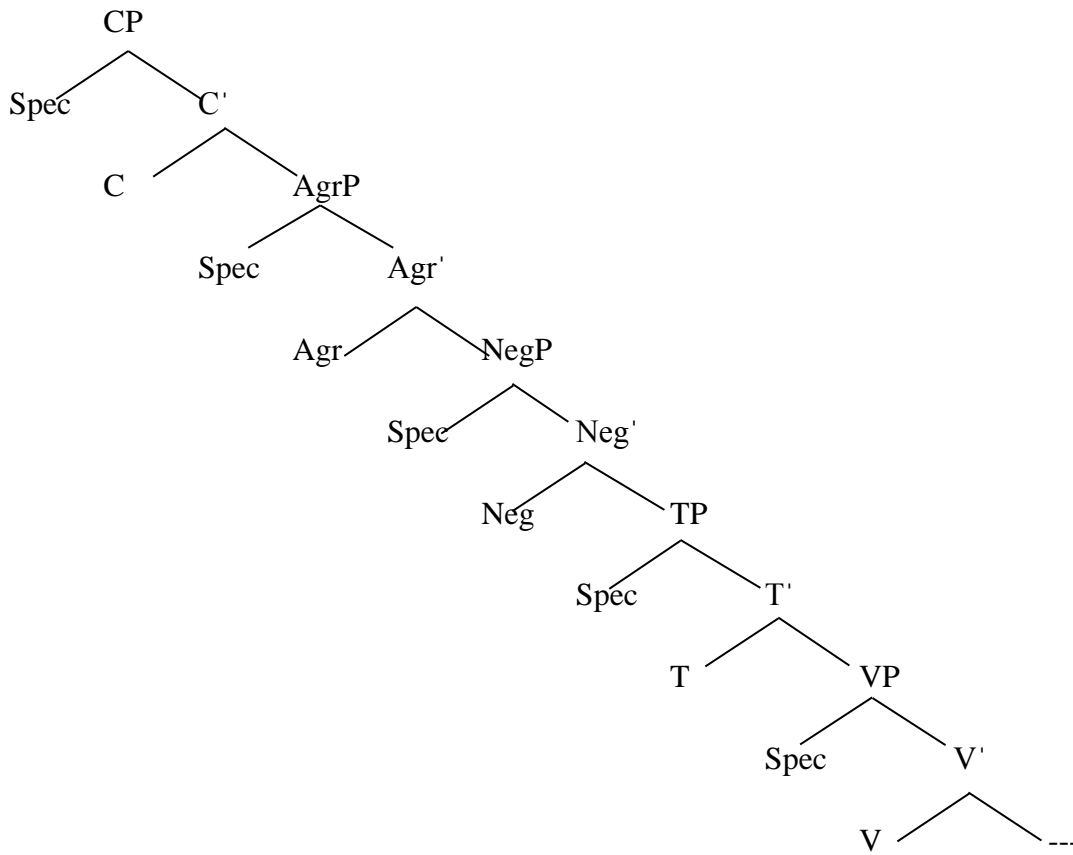
(adapted from Haegeman 1996:26, 28)

**Figure 2**    **Alternative Neg positions**

```
         Neg1
     Spec    T/AgrS
           Neg2
        Spec    V
```
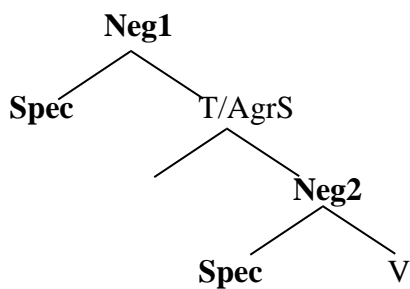
(Lindstad 2007:58)

Lindstad's (2007) structure does not include NegP, and I choose a more standard X-bar theory for this thesis. What I do adopt from Lindstad (2007) are his claims that Neg is a universal of human language, and that there are a limited number – according to Lindstad, two, and in any case more than one – of possible Neg positions generated by Universal

Grammar (UG). Figure 3 combines Lindstad's suggested positions and the hierarchical tree of Figure 1:

**Figure 3    Expansion of the basic tree**

```
        CP
      /    \
  Spec      C'
          /    \
        C       NegP
              /     \
           Spec      Neg'
                   /     \
                 Neg      AgrP
                        /     \
                     Spec      Agr'
                             /     \
                           Agr      NegP
                                  /     \
                               Spec      Neg'
                                       /     \
                                     Neg      TP
                                            /    \
                                         Spec     T'
                                                /    \
                                              T       NegP
                                                    /     \
                                                 Spec      Neg'
                                                         /     \
                                                       Neg      VP
```
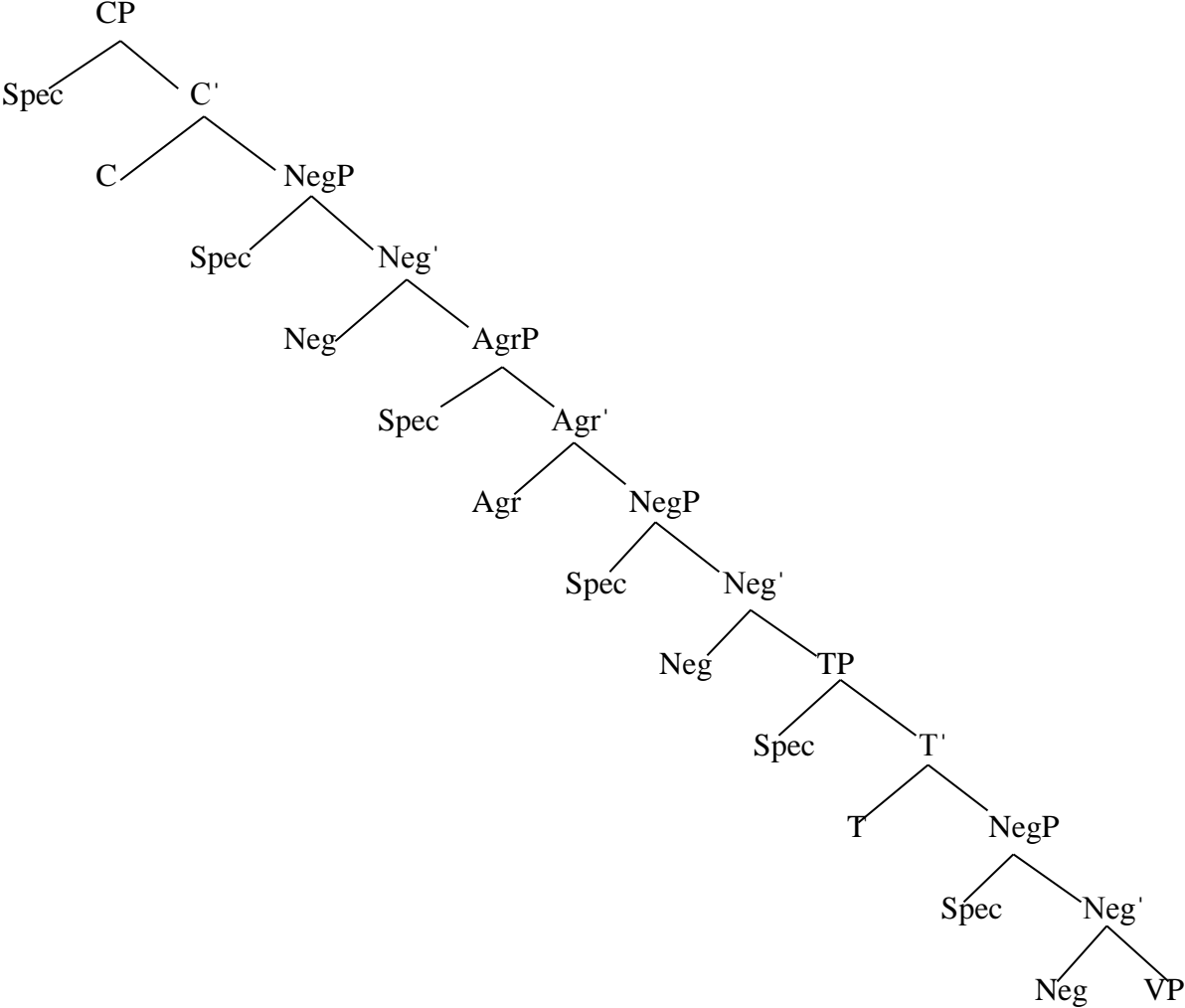
Figure 3 shows three possible projection sites for NegP: one on top of AgrP, one between AgrP and TP, and one between TP and VP. Lindstad's (2007) claim that there are only two Neg positions may still be correct, though; it is conceivable that there will only be two Neg(P) positions in a single language. However, due to the cross-linguistic variation regarding the number and nature of projections that should be included in the inflectional structure, even more projection sites would probably have to be included in Figure 3 in order to illustrate all possibilities (e.g. Modal Phrase, Auxiliary Phrase etc.; cf. Haumann 2007:191 for an illustration of these and other possible projections within the inflectional layer). This figure

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will have to be sufficient to indicate that NegP may be located either high up in the hierarchy, above or in a high position within IP, or relatively low, just above the VP.

## 2.2  **Negative Concord**

Negative concord (NC) is a feature found in many languages, for example French ((6)), Italian ((7)) and Russian ((8)). In short, negative concord means that one negative idea is expressed by means of two or more negative elements. This is seen in the examples below – of the multiple negative elements, only the main negator is given a negative translation:

(6)      *Je **n'**ai vu **personne***. (van der Auwera 2010:96)
         I NEG'have seen n-body
         'I haven't seen anybody'


(7)      *Gianni *(**non**) dice **niente** a **nessuno***
         Gianni NEG says n-thing to n-one[3]
         'Gianni does not tell anyone anything' (Haegeman 1996:44)

(8)      *Ja **ni**kogo **ni**gde **ne** videl*
         I n-who n-where NEG saw
         'I did not see anyone anywhere' (Brown (1999), quoted from Fitzgibbons 2007:14)


In Standard English (SE) negative concord is considered ungrammatical, and sentences are negated by means of a single negative element, usually *not* or *no*. However, in most Non-Standard English (NSE) dialects, negative concord is the norm (Howe 2005:189; Hock & Joseph 2009:190; Freeborn 2006:185), producing sentences like

(9)      You did**n't** see **no**body.  ('You didn't see anybody.')

Although negative concord and double (or multiple) negation is sometimes used interchangeably, I follow Haegeman (1996:78f.) in distinguishing between negative concord and double negation (DN): in an NC clause both or all negatives form one negative meaning; there can be an unlimited number of negative elements without any of them cancelling out or being cancelled out. This process may be termed absorption, and means that one operator (here a negative operator) binds a number of variables. In a sentence with DN the two (or more) negative elements retain their full negative force and hence "the first negation takes scope over, and cancels, the second" (Haegeman 1996:79).

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[3] Haegeman uses *nothing* and *no one*, I replaced these with *n-thing* and *n-one* for cohesion with the other examples.

A sentence like (9) may be ambiguous in this respect, at least in writing. The NC reading of the sentence corresponds to Standard English (SE) 'You didn't see anybody'. In speech *nobody* could be clearly stressed if a DN meaning was intended, i.e.

(10)    You didn't see *nobody* (, but… - contrastive stress)

A DN sentence is thus not a truly negative sentence, since (10) could be paraphrased to 'You saw somebody' – confirming the prescriptive 'two negatives make a positive'. However, the 'positive' reading of the sentence is on the semantic level; syntactically, we are still apparently dealing with a negative sentence, as is seen, for example, by trying to apply tag questions:

(11)    * You didn't see *nobody,* didn't you?
(12)    You didn't see *nobody*, did you?

Applying tag questions is one of the diagnostics introduced by Klima (1964) to determine whether a sentence is positive or negative: positive sentences require negative tag questions; negative sentences require positive tag questions.

Another way of determining whether a sentence is negative is through applying either *neither*-tags or *so*-tags for negative and positive sentences, respectively.

(13)    You did**n't** see **no**body, and neither did I.
(14)    *You did**n't** see **no**body, and so did I.

A third way of identifying negative sentences is to look for inversion of the subject and the finite verb: "preposed negative constituents" with sentential scope (and thus expressing sentential negation) trigger inversion (Haegeman 1996:72). This is further discussed in the following sections. For a brief discussion of scope see section 2.4

## 2.3  **Jespersen's Cycle**

Jespersen (1917) identifies a cyclic nature in the development of negators: the original negator is gradually weakened and loses its negative force. It is then reinforced by an additional negator which eventually is perceived as the true negator; eventually, the original negator is dropped, and the cycle may start over again. The development of English negation, illustrated in TABLE 1, seems a perfect example of the cycle: the original negator *ne* came to be used in combination with emphatic and/or reinforcing, *noht*, which eventually replaced *ne*

during the Middle English period. This is further discussed in chapter 3. The main stages of Jespersen's cycle in English can be illustrated with the following table:

**TABLE 1      Jespersen's Cycle in English**

| *Stages* | | | *Optionality* |
|---|---|---|---|
| a. *ic **ne** secge* | Old English | Subj **Neg** V-T | a´. *ic **ne** secge (**noht**)* |
| b. *I **ne** seye **not*** | Middle English | Subj **Neg** V-T **Neg** | b´. *I (**ne**) seye **not*** |
| c. *I say **not*** | Early Modern English | Subj V-T **Neg** | |
| 'I don't say' | | | |

(adapted from Lindstad 2007:22)

The table shows that NC is the regular form of negation at stage b, and an option in the transition stages a´ and b´, until the cycle has come from single *ne* in OE, through stages with optional and obligatory NC, to single *not* in present-day Standard English.

The reason for the initial weakening of the first negator is, according to Jespersen, the loss of phonological strength, requiring the addition of a phonologically stronger negator as reinforcement. However, as is argued by Lindstad (2007) this claim is inaccurate and may even be incorrect, as witnessed by data from Old Norse (ON), where the weak negator *ne* was temporarily reinforced or replaced by the similarly weak *at*, with the allomorph *t* (cf. Lindstad 2007:93ff.), as illustrated in (16).

(15)      er sina mælgo **ne** man-**að**
          that Refl.Poss loquacity **Neg** remembers-**Neg**
          'that he does not remember his loquacity'
                  (Ls 47, Eythórsson 2002:194, quoted from Lindstad 2007:35)

(16)      Byrði betri / berr-**at** maðr brauto at
          Burden better carries-**Neg** man road on
          'One does not carry a better burden on the road'
                  (Háv 53, Eythórsson 2002:195, quoted from Lindstad 2007:36)

But, even if the new negator *at* seems similar in weakness to *ne* – if not weaker – there is still some form of reinforcement involved, which may be termed 'syntactical reinforcement': the fact that the negator shows up in an unexpected place in the sentence, may in itself increase the salience of the negation.

## 2.4   Scope of negative elements – negative operators

Negative clauses have several similarities with interrogative clauses. One similarity is that both clause types (in Standard English) require negative polarity items such as *anything* rather than positive polarity items like *something* or negative quantifiers/indefinites like *nothing*. Another similarity is that preposed negative elements (in a position similar to the landing site for *wh*-elements) in both clause types trigger inversion. Furthermore, this inversion is subject-auxiliary inversion – both clause types require the presence of an auxiliary. (*Auxiliary* is defined in this thesis as a cover term for *be*, *have*, modals and periphrastic *do*). When there is no auxiliary, *do*-insertion is obligatory.

Interrogation and negation both involve more or less abstract functional processes: *wh*-items transform a sentence into a question, and negative elements form denials, rejections, protests, contradictions and so on. Given the potentially quite insubstantial phonological realisation of both *wh*-items and negative elements, it is logical that the processes transforming declaratives into interrogatives or negatives include more abstract components than just for example the negative element *n't*. The component which forms interrogative clauses is a *wh-operator*, and – the *wh*-item typically being in a specifier position – requires a 'Spec-head configuration' with a head with a [+WH] feature (e.g. C) (Haegeman 1996:95). Negation, when located in the specifier of NegP, similarly requires a Spec-head configuration with a head – Neg – which has the feature [NEG]. Conversely, when the negative element is in Neg, a Neg-operator in Spec/NegP is required. This is formulated as the 'Neg-criterion' (Haegeman 1996:106f.):

(17)   **Neg-criterion**
   a.   A NEG-operator must be in a Spec-head configuration with an $X^o$ [NEG];
   b.   An $X^o$ [NEG] must be in a Spec-head configuration with a NEG-operator.
   c.   NEG-operator: a negative phrase in a scope position;
   d.   Scope position: left-peripheral Aʹ-position [Spec, XP] or [YP, XP].

Explained specifically for English, this entails that the negative head *n't* needs a non-overt Neg-operator in Spec/NegP in order to be licenced. French, on the other hand, has the overt negative element *pas*, which is located in Spec/NegP, and functions as an overt operator for the head *ne*.

The Neg-operator licences the negative head, and – more importantly in this context – possibly negative concord: as mentioned above, NC may be explained in terms of absorption, with a (neg-)operator creating a (neg-)chain. The following is an illustration of a negative chain in a post-verbal negative sentence (Haegeman 1996:187):

(18)     He [NegP     OP$_i$     [Neg$^o$ 0] said  **no**thing$_i$]
                      [NEG]     [NEG]               [NEG]

In any language which relies on the presence of non-overt Neg-operators to licence negation, a chain of negative elements may be licenced by the same operator.

The type of negation – sentential or constituent negation – may also be accounted for in terms of the *scope* of the negative element. Sentential negation requires the negative element to have scope over the sentence (or at least the matrix clause), whereas in instances of constituent negation the negative element scopes only over the local constituent. In addition, although sentential negation logically implies negating sentences, it is possible to negate a subordinated clause without affecting the nature of the whole sentence. Within generative grammar, a scope position may be defined as 'left-peripheral Aʹ-positions' (Haegeman 1996:17), i.e. typically specifier positions of projections not associated with the arguments of the verb (subjects, direct/indirect objects, PP complements), which are termed A-positions (Haegeman 1996:5). Generally, this often means that the element located in the specifier of the Aʹ-position highest in the hierarchy – or first in the sentence – has scope over the following elements. However, this account may be complicated by movement: the moved element leaves a trace in its base position, and the trace and the moved element form a chain. The moved element may have scope over a lower element which in turn scopes over the former's trace; this explains the ambiguity of (19) (Haegeman 1996:16):

(19)     Everyone will invite someone.

In this example, *everyone* scopes over *someone*, which has scope over the trace of *everyone* (Hageman 1996:17).[4]

Also relevant for negative clauses are the island phenomena, another similarity to interrogative clauses. An extensive discussion of this phenomenon is far beyond the scope of my thesis, but an illustration of the inner island effects of negation is worth including in order

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[4] Haegeman uses the term *c-command*, but for reasons of space, some elements of the theory have to be excluded from the present discussion.

to having a more complete account of the theoretical peculiarities of negation (Travis 1984; Kayne 1986, quoted from Rizzi 1990:15):

(20)        It is for this reason that I believe that John was fired.
(21)        It is for this reason that I do**n't** believe that John was fired.

Example (20) is ambiguous; the 'reason' may refer to either the speaker's belief or the reason why John was fired. Sentence (21) is unambiguous; the 'reason' here can only refer to what motivates the speaker's belief. Conversely, extraction of arguments from the embedded clause ((22)) is not blocked by negation (Ross 1983, cited from Rizzi 1990:15):

(22)        Bill is here, which they (do**n't**) know.
(23)        *Bill is here, as they (*do**n't**) know.

This is explained in terms of Rizzi's (1990) 'relativized minimality', an elaboration of Chomsky's (1986) 'Barriers' theory, a simple explanation of which is that an element is defined as a barrier when movement over it results in ungrammaticality (Cook/Newson 1996:263ff.). Relativized minimality elaborates as follows: "An element will minimally govern its trace if there is no other 'typical potential governor' that is closer to the trace. [T]ypical potential governors [are] a governor in an A-position (for an element in an A-chain) [or] a governor in an A-bar position (for an element in an A-bar chain)" (Cook/Newson 1996:272).

## 2.5   **Positions of negative elements in English**

English is normally considered to have two "syntactically distinct negative markers", *not* and *n't*, with *not* located in Spec/NegP and *n't* in Neg (Haumann 2007:194). This correlates with Lindstad's (2007:58) positions for negation illustrated in Figure 2 (repeated below as Figure 4), even though his figure does not include maximal projections: his 'Neg1' corresponds to Neg, and 'Spec' to Spec/NegP:

**<u>Figure 4</u>**    **Alternative Neg positions**
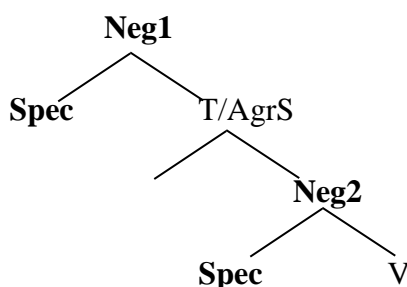
However, as indicated above, Lindstad's identification of two universal positions for 'Neg' (with the additional 'Spec' positions) seems too limited. As illustrated in Figure 3, there seem to be at least three possible Neg positions; possibly, there is one potential NegP position for each inflectional projection site utilised in a language, but that is mere speculation, and will not be pursued any further in this thesis. What is relevant here is that there are a limited number of positions generated by UG. Jespersen's cycle may be more comprehensible in the light of this claim – when one negator loses its force, there are only a few possible alternative locations where an element may express and/or be interpreted as a negative element (Lindstad 2007). Whichever reinforcing element is used in one of these positions has the potential of being identified as the true negator.

Additionally, according to van Gelderen (2008), Jespersen's cycle may be illustrated with the following figure:

**Figure 5    Illustration of NegP/Jespersen's cycle**
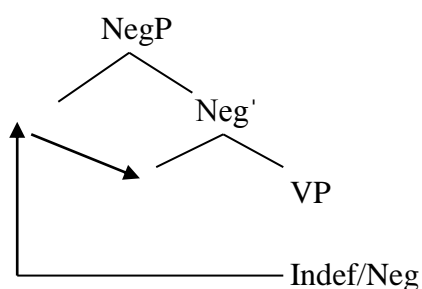


(van Gelderen 2008:198)

The figure shows how the element in head position disappears, the negative in specifier position is reanalysed as a head, leaving the specifier position available to e.g. an indefinite, adverb, or negative verb; the cycle may then start over again. If this account is correct, it should come as no surprise that in English NC is available as an option – the surprise should rather be that in Standard English NC is *not* an option!

Van Gelderen's account is complicated by the fact that English is considered to have the two negative markers *not* and *n't* each occupying one of the two positions relevant to the cyclical nature illustrated in Figure 5. Van Gelderen's proposal is that the head *not* is cliticized to the verb, giving *n't* in 'can't' and 'don't' (2008:198). That *n't* is a clitic seems fairly straight-forward on a morphological level; the complications to van Gelderen's account

are syntactical. First, the location of *not* is often assumed to be in Spec/NegP (cf. e.g. Haegeman1996:189). *n't,* on the other hand, is assumed to be "the overt realization of Neg°" – in other words, the head (Zanuttini 1991, Pollock 1993, cited from Haegeman 1996:189). Second, Sportiche (1992) argues that clitics in general are heads, with their own criterion similar to the 'wh-criterion' and the 'Neg-criterion' (cited from Haegeman 1996:111). Thus, initially, van Gelderen's account seems to be wrong both regarding the head-nature of *not*, and regarding the relation between *not* and *n't* that seems to be underlying her analysis. However, I would like to challenge the traditional view of *not* as the Spec of NegP, thus possibly redeeming van Gelderen's analysis. This is discussed in section 3.6, in relation to the development of the English word order, and further in chapter 4 for present-day English.

Many languages have one negative marker to express sentential negation and other markers to express constituent negation; English *n't* "only serves to negate finite clauses" (Lindstad 2007:97). In this, English *n't* is similar to Old Norse *-at* and Norwegian contracted form *'ke*, which, according to Lindstad, suggests that these negators either are or will become "full functional heads" (Lindstad 2007:123). However, there is an important difference between English *n't* and Norwegian *'ke*: *n't* only cliticizes to auxiliaries, whereas *'ke* may cliticize to lexical verbs as well as auxiliaries, as well as pronominal subjects and objects (Lindstad 2007:115f.):

(24)　　Jæ tro-r'a**'ke**.　　　　tror henne ikke > tror'a ikke > tror'a'ke
　　　　I believe-T$_{Pres}$'her'Neg
　　　　'I don't believe her'

Thus, the Norwegian clitic appears to be a true (phonological) clitic rather than a functional head (Lindstad 2007:116) as opposed to the English *n't*.

## 2.6　(Negative) Polarity Items/Negative Indefinites

The '(Negative) Polarity Items' ((N)PIs) in English are non-assertive indefinite pronouns, e.g. the *any*-series (*anything*, *anyone* and *anywhere*, or just *any*). Common to all of these is that they are used in interrogative and negative clauses (as well as conditional and comparative clauses, which will not be discussed here); in affirmative clauses the *some*-series is used instead. Negative indefinites (negative quantifiers with e.g. Haegeman), are indefinites which contain an overt negative element, for example *nothing, no one, nowhere, no*). These may alternatively be substituted for NPIs in negative clauses according to the principle of negative attraction, which requires the negative element to be introduced as early as possible in the

clause and never be preceded by any polarity items. In other words, the negative is attracted to the first indeterminate/indefinite, obligatorily if this is the subject (Labov 1972). Consequently, the following sentence is ungrammatical, since it breaks this principle by not giving the polarity item *anybody* the negative form *nobody*:

(25)        * Anybody did**n't** show up for work last Monday

Due to the principle of negative attraction this would have to be expressed as:

(26)        **Nobody** showed up for work last Monday

In relation to negative concord in English, the NPIs are highly relevant, since NC is very commonly found when negative indefinites are substituted for NPIs in negative constructions.

## 2.7   **Language change**

The concept of language change is obviously important to a discussion of linguistic development. However, the focus of the thesis is more on syntactic aspects of negation than on theories of language change, and only a few relevant change mechanisms are sketched here.  The main mechanisms of change that are relevant in this thesis are i) change from above, ii) change from below, and, iii) grammaticalization. These are introduced briefly in the following subsections.

### 2.7.1   **Change from above**

The concept 'change from above' means above "the level of conscious awareness" (Chambers/Trudgill 2008:75f.). This type of change typically occurs when a certain linguistic feature has become stigmatized to such an extent that a speaker becomes aware of it. There are often social benefits to change, such as more career options, better grades in school, less ridicule and so on. Conversely, the alternative linguistic feature is associated with higher prestige, and may be indicative to the hearer – consciously or subconsciously – of a higher level of education and/or class, and even more intelligence. This kind of change is very often associated with the socially mobile upper working/lower middle class, which are the social groups most frequently initiating the change (cf. e.g. Chambers/Trudgill 2008:153ff.). In addition to the social mobility, these groups are also associated with linguistic insecurity, wanting to be associated with higher classes and distancing themselves from lower classes (cf. McMahon 1994:243ff.).

### 2.7.2   Change from below

This is the opposite change mechanism, meaning change "from below the level of conscious awareness" (Chambers/Trudgill 2008:75f.), i.e. a linguistic change occurs without the speakers' conscious awareness that a linguistic feature that is changing. There is no desire to change the feature; nor are there any aspects of stigmatization or benefits involved. One typical cause of this kind of change is language contact: speakers in a bilingual society are exposed to alternative linguistic features and may subconsciously be influenced by these to an extent that they adopt them into their own language. This is particularly the case when a society is stably bilingual over an extended time period, which was the situation in northern England in the Old English period, which is discussed in section 3.2.

### 2.7.3   Grammaticalization

Grammaticalization may be a word or expression changing from being a lexical item to becoming a functional or grammatical item, or further changing from an open-class to a closed-class functional category. A more technical definition is that "grammaticalization shifts a linguistic expression further toward the functional pole of the lexical-functional continuum" (Haspelmath 1999:2). In other words, the process typically entails narrowing in meaning and/or function. Important aspects of grammaticalization are that it appears to be both unidirectional and irreversible (cf. Haspelmath 1999). The English negator *not* may be taken as an example of this process: it originated as an indefinite phrase *na wiht* 'no creature' (van Gelderen 2008:198). At the original stage, the phrase would have been an argument (e.g. an object), which later developed into a negative indefinite and gradually into a pure negator. The final stage of the development appears to have been what could perhaps be termed reanalysis: the position of *not* was reanalysed from Spec/NegP to Neg$^o$. However, as the head of NegP seems to constitute an even more restricted, and thus 'grammatical', category than the specifier position, this final step may also in fact be called grammaticalization. My main reason for calling the head position more restricted is that only the true negator is found here; negative elements such as indefinites which move to a scope position are typically analysed as operators, located in Spec/NegP.

The theoretical background laid in this chapter serves as the basis for the discussion in the following chapters – diachronic in chapter 3 and synchronic in chapter 4.

# 3 Development of Negation in Old Norse and (Standard) English

This chapter starts out with a brief outline of the development of negation in Old Norse. This will be a reference base for the subsequent sections on the historical stages of English. In addition to providing a brief survey of the historical development of negation in English, these sections discuss the nature of the change that occurred. Language change may either be 'change from below' or 'change from above', meaning below or above the 'level of conscious awareness' (Chambers/Trudgill 2008:75f.). The historical development of negation in English suggests that both of these processes have contributed to the present-day diverging negation patterns, with only a minority of dialects without NC: the development in northern England was due to a change from below, whereas in the south, the reverse process – change from above – took place. Additionally, the decrease of NC will be related to the development of *any* in section 3.5 and periphrastic *do* in 3.6.

## 3.1 The Development of Negation from Old Norse to Norwegian

The precursor of ON, Common Scandinavian, had the same negator as OE, *ne*, but by the time of ON (ca. 800 AD) preverbal *ne* seems to have been lost in spoken language and is an archaism preserved only in formulaic verse and prose" (Haugen 1986:158, quoted from Anderwald 2005:131f.). Still, according to Eythórsson (2002:190), in early ON, negation was expressed by affixes, either by the prefix *ne* or by the suffix *at*, or by both simultaneously. But the "usual negator even in Old Norse was a postverbal marker *eigi* or *ekki*", which developed into the negators of the present-day Scandinavian languages – Danish *ikke*, Norwegian *ikke/ikkje*, Swedish *icke*, and Icelandic *ekki* (Anderwald 2005:132).Furthermore, again according to Eythórsson (2002:193ff.), *ne* "was unproductive even in early Old Norse", having an "extremely limited distribution [and] displaying the characteristics of an archaism" and actually surviving "only as a frozen morphosyntactic pattern in poetry with roots in archaic tradition":

(27)     *Út þú **ne** komir / órom hǫllom frá*
          out you-SG NEG come-SUBJ our halls from
          'May you not come out of our halls' (Vm 7, quoted from Eythórsson
          2002:193)[5]

---

[5] Eythórsson's abbreviations are what he calls 'standard abbreviations', referring to Kuhn (1983:IX-X) (Eythórsson 2002:219, n.4)

The suffix, *-at/-a*, on the other hand, was still optional at this stage, "shown by the fact that *ne* and *-at/-a* … can occur in the same text":

(28)     */ ef Gunnarr **ne** kømr-**að***
if Gunnarr NEG comes+NEG
'if Gunnarr does not come' (Akv 11, quoted from Eythórsson 2002:194)

However, bare *-at* shows productivity: its distribution is far less limited and it is more frequent. In the Poetic Edda[6] *ne* occurs 41 times, the combination *ne -at* 13 times, and bare *-a/-at* over 240 times (Eythórsson 2002:219, n.7). Furthermore, *ne* is not found in Old Norse prose, "surviving only as a frozen morphosyntactic pattern in poetry with roots in archaic tradition", whereas *-at* is not restricted to poetry, and is "found in early prose" (Eythórsson 2002:193f.). But *-at* also has limitations: it is restricted to finite verbs ((29)) and imperatives ((30)):

(29)     *Byrði betri / berr**-at** maðr brauto at*
burden better carries+NEG man road on
'One does not carry a better burden on the road' (Háv 10, 11, quoted from Eythórsson 2002:195)

(30)     *sifa silfr / lát-**a**-ðu þínom svefni ráða*
bonds-GEN silver let-IPV+NEG+you-SG your sleep rule
'let peace-money not disturb your sleep' (Sd 28, quoted from Eythórsson 2002:195)

For expression of sentential negation with non-finite verbs, adverbs like *eigi* were used ((31)), and these adverbs were even an option for negating finite verbs ((32)):

(31)     *Enn Atli qvaðz / **eigi** vilia*
but Atli said-REFL NEG want
'But Atli said that he did not want' (Od 22, quoted from Eythórsson 2002:195)

(32)     *Hon ein því veldr, / er ek **eigi** má-k buðlungs mǫnnom bana*
she alone it causes that I NEG may+AGRs prince-GEN men kill
'She alone it causes that I may not kill the prince's men' (HHv 26, quoted from Eythórsson 2002:195)

---

[6] The language of the Poetic Edda is "an archaic stage of West Norse"(Eythórsson 2002:191), and it consists of "a group of poems most of which are contained in a manuscript known as Codex Regius…dating from ca. 1270…[W]ith respect to the morphosyntax of negation, the poems preserve arachaisms which are otherwise not, or only very poorly, documented in Old Norse" (Eythórsson 2002:219, n.1)

Regarding the status of *-a/-at* in ON, Eythórsson (2002:206) finds evidence for NegP – rather than the base generated negative feature on the verb – in the distribution of inflectional morphemes:

(33)     *kalla-ð-i-sk-**at***
         V+T+AGRs+Voice+NEG
         'wasn't call'

(34)     */ má-**k**-**a**-**k** því leyna*
         may+AGRs+NEG+AGR$_S$ it conceal
         '…may it not conceal'          (Eythórsson 2002:208)

One of Eythórsson's arguments is that the voice marker *sk* intervenes between the tense/agreement markers and the negative suffix, which is illustrated in (33). The voice marker originated as reflexive pronouns *sik*, and should accordingly rather have been attached to the verbal complex to the right of Neg (Eythórsson 2002:205). Another argument is that *-a/-at* never attaches to non-finite verbs, suggesting that the suffix is attached to the finite verb as it moves through the inflectional system (Eythórsson 2002:206). Finally ON had a first-person subject agreement marker *-k* which could occur both left and right of the negative suffix, which is illustrated in (34), with the subject agreement marker underlined (Eythórsson 2002:207ff.). This final argument could by extension be taken as an argument against the claim that verbs are base-generated with inflections in general as well, which is further discussed in section 4.1.

Moreover, Eythórsson claims that *ne* had become reanalysed as "a prefix on the verb (V) in Old Norse, but *-a/-at* is the result of a reanalysis of an adverb (a negative polarity item) as an affix generated in Neg, attaching to the finite verb as it moves to this position" (2002:207). The original negator being reduced to a generally unstressed prefix explains its vulnerability to the process of syncope, i.e. loss of weakly stressed syllables from the middle of a word (Alego/Pyles 2004:33), which affected "all unstressed syllables including prefixes, in Proto-Norse" (Eythórsson 2002:197). An even earlier phonological rule excluded unstressed syllables from clause-initial position, which explains the fact that in the early Old Norse the suffixal *-a/-at* was more frequent "with verbs in clause-initial position" (Eythórsson 2002:197, 194). Hence, *-a/-at* took over the role of main negator by necessity until the more salient *eigi/ekki* prevailed.

As a summary of this development, 'Jespersen's cycle' in Old Norse can be illustrated as follows:

**TABLE 2      Jespersen's cycle / Old Norse**

**stage 1**:    single preverbal negator *ne*
**stage 2**:    preverbal negator *ne* with optional suffix *-at*
**stage 3**:    suffixal negator *-at* with optional preverbal *ne*
**stage 4a**:   single suffixal negator *-at* with *eigi* as negator for non-finite verbs
**stage 4b**:   *-at* and *eigi* as options for negating finite verbs
**stage 5**:    single negator *eigi*

TABLE 2 shows that there are some clear differences between the English and the Old Norse 'cycles'. The adverb which eventually developed into the modern negator was never used simultaneously with any of the older forms; the transition stage with two negative items expressing one negative idea consisted of the original negator *ne* with a suffixal negator *-at*. The latter negator was also lost from Old Norse, whereas in English the originally reinforcing negative element remains the main negator in present-day usage. Furthermore, according to Eythórsson (2002:204ff.) *-at* was generated in Neg, the same position as the original *ne*. This is an important difference, since in English, it seems that the new negative element was generated in Spec/NegP, and was reanalysed as the head of NegP later on. Furthermore, Eythórsson argues that there is a negative feature in C, either overt or covert; [+NEG] in C triggers verb movement to C in Old Norse, and is argued to do so for V2 languages in general (Eythórsson 2002:216ff., 192). This will not be extensively discussed in this thesis, since the variation in movement in the inflectional layer provides sufficient complexities for my discussion. *Eigi* in Old Norse was a negation adverb rather than an enclitic negative marker like *ne* and *at* (cf. e.g. Eythórsson 2002:217), and is more simply analysed as a phrasal negator located in Spec/NegP. It is important to stress that *eigi* was from the start a single negator, and the negative element in Neg was non-overt.

## 3.2   **Old English**

Old English (OE) was largely a synthetic language, with an extensive system of declensions affecting nouns, pronouns and adjectives, as well as many classes of verb inflections. Negation in OE was primarily expressed through the morpheme *ne*, which was frequently attached to common words, particularly verbs, such as *ne + is > nis*, *ne + willan > nillan*

(Quirk/Wrenn 2001:54f).  Double or multiple negatives with NC readings were common, such as in these examples:

(35)　　　*ac hi þær **n**efdon **n**ænne*[7] (but they there had-not none).
　　　　　(Peterborough Chronicle AD 443, in Freeborn 2006:16)

(36)　　　*Eala þu freond, **n**e do ic þe **n**ænne teonan* (Friend, I do[-not] thee no wrong).
　　　　　(Matthew 20:13, in Mitchell/Robinson 2007:65, note 2)

These examples illustrate that negation in OE was primarily in stage a. of Jespersen's cycle, according to TABLE 1, p.13. The main negative element was (preverbal) *ne*, and the adding of extra negators was optional, and was frequently used for emphasis.

There are also examples which may be termed 'verb phrase negation',[8] since the preposed negative elements *nænne* and *nænig* precede the finite verb, and the negation of the verb is redundant:

(37)　　　*and he **n**ænne rædboran **n**æfð*
　　　　　and he not-one advisors not-had
　　　　　'and he had no advisors'
　　　　　　　　(Ælfrid's preface to Genesis, in Mitchell/Robinson 2007:206, 114)

(38)　　　*ond hiera **n**ænig hit geþicgean **n**olde*
　　　　　and them.*gen*. not-any it accept not-would
　　　　　'and none of them would accept it'
　　　　　　　　(Cynewulf and Cyneheard, in Mitchell/Robinson 2007:222, 20)

Finally, there are also examples of what van Kemenade (1999) calls 'double sentential negation':

(39)　　　*... **n**e meahtest þu hi **n**a forleosan*
　　　　　 not could you them not lose
　　　　　'you could not loose [sic] them' (Boeth.3.7.17.20, quoted from van Kemenade 1999:153)

(40)　　　*Ne bið **n**a se leorningcniht furðor þonne his lareow*
　　　　　not is not the apprentice further than his master
　　　　　'The apprentice is not ahead of his master' (ÆHomp.XIII. 134, quoted from van Kemenade 1999:149)

---

[7] Macrons, or length-markers, have not been included in the OE examples here since these are used quite inconsistently in the literature. As my focus is on syntax rather than phonology this should not affect any of the arguments.

[8] See Austin (1984) for a discussion of four types of NC: 'sentence element negation', 'verb phrase negation', 'conjunctive negation' and 'paraphrastic negation'. These are mostly outside the scope of this thesis, since the 'sentence element' type is the most relevant ones for present-day usage.

These two sentences also illustrate van Kemenade's claim that the negative elements have fixed positions in Old English. In (39) both the subject and the object precede the second negative element, whereas in (40) no other constituent intervenes between the finite verb and the second negative element. A major difference between these two sentences is the realisation of the sentence elements: in (39) both the subject and the object are pronouns. According to van Kemenade (1999:157) pronoun subjects precede the negative *na*, and objects may optionally also precede *na* when realised as pronouns. This is claimed to be because of a separate position for pronoun clitics, namely the specifier position of a projection van Kemenade terms 'Functional Phrase'[9], and which is located just below C in van Kemenade's analysis (1999:157ff.):

**Figure 6**   **Tree with FP**
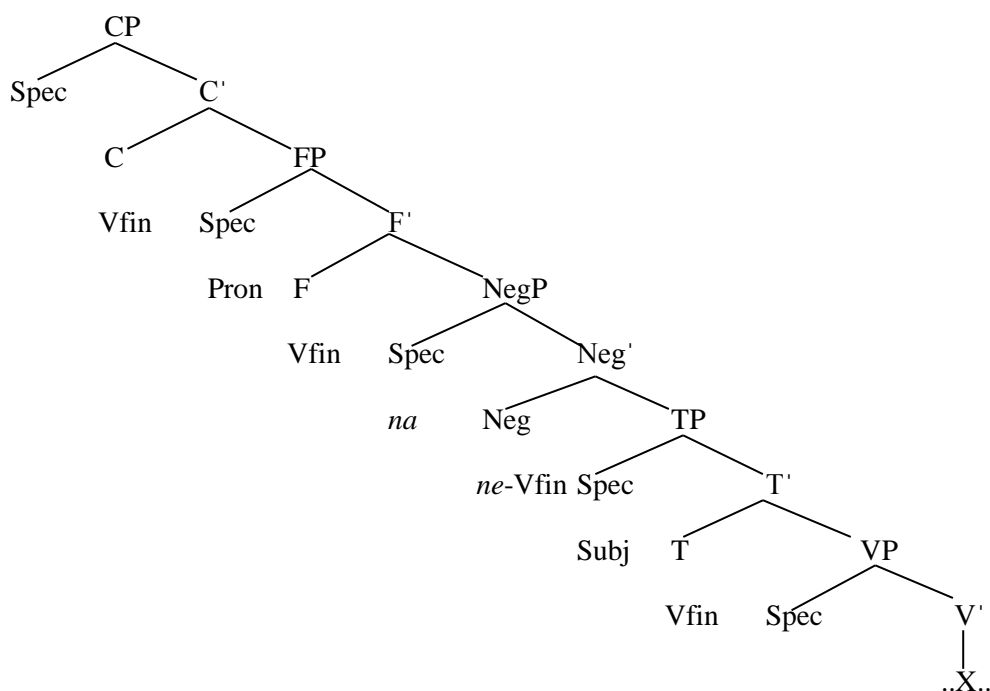


According to Kroch (1999:24f.) the finite verb moved to C in the northern dialect of OE, but only as far as to I in the southern dialects. Thus, Figure 6 seems inaccurate for the northern dialect, but the proposal of an FP especially for pronouns is interesting. As will be further discussed in section 3.6, pronouns are central to word order differences between northern and

---

[9] Van Kemenade (1999:162, n.7) explains that she uses FP "as short for a neutral Functional Projection, to avoid prejudging its precise status." Referring briefly to Wackernagel (1892) and 'second position facts', she states that these issues are "far beyond the scope of this article" – as they are in this thesis.

southern dialects as well. Because of the likely relevance of the nature of linguistic change, the situation in northern England is further discussed in the following sub-section.

### 3.2.1 Northern England

In northern England, the situation differed from the rest of the country in that Viking settlements provided close contact with speakers of Old Norse (ON) and "long exposure to bilingualism" (Strang 1986:281). The effects were "the kinds of simplification that are known to take place when people speaking similar languages communicate together, or when a pidgin language begin to be spoken" (Freeborn 2006:161). Some degree of pidginization must certainly have been involved, at least in the sense of Trudgill's definition that '[p]idginizatioin can be said to occur whenever adults and post-adolescents learn a new language' (1989, quoted from Trudgill 2009a:99). According to Trudgill as well, this kind of language contact situation often results in some degree of simplification (see Trudgill 2009a for discussion).

The Viking settlers were on equal social terms with the rest of the population – evidenced by the fact that ON influenced even 'primary linguistic items' such as the third-person-plural pronouns *they, them, their* (Strang 1986:266), as well as by the reduction and loss of OE inflections taking place "more quickly in the Northern and Midland dialects spoken in or close to the Danelaw" (Freeborn 2006:161) Because of the common origin of the two languages, they are thought to have been "mutually intelligible", with the inflections used being a major difference (Freeborn 2006:161), which explains why these were relatively early lost in these regions. Further indication of the closeness of the two language communities is the nature of Scandinavian loanwords compared to, for example, Norman: Scandinavian loanwords affected every-day, even basic, vocabulary, without any 'special connotations'; Norman borrowings reflect 'higher prestige' (Hock/Joseph 2009:260f.) as well as 'cultural and political dominance', mostly constituting vocabulary for social spheres like administration, law, art and so on (Barber/Beal/Shaw 2009:156).

As noted above, in 3.1, Common Scandinavian had the same negator as OE, but by the time of ON, *ne* to have been lost in spoken language. Thus, bilinguals in the north would have extensive exposure to an alternative, post-verbal negation pattern, strengthening the natural tendencies of Jespersen's (1917) negative cycle. According to Anderwald (2005), the influence of ON explains present-day variation, which is further discussed in 3.3. Since the negation pattern changed in ON before it did so in OE, there will have been a certain period with competing input. Children acquiring language will have to identify patterns in their input

in order to set the parameters and develop a grammar. This is mainly a subconscious process controlled by innate language faculties and may be described as "selecting, from the options provided by UG, the grammar which best fits the majority of the data" (Henry 1995:79).

The concept of simplification might be important to consider in this context. According to Trudgill (2009b:314f.), the loss of negative concord in Standard English may be seen as a simplification, since it represents a loss of redundancy in the form of loss of 'repetition of information'. But NC may in fact be seen as a simpler form of negation, which 'aids the receiver to understand a message [...] through encoding the same chunk of information more than once' (Anderwald 2005:129, note). Also according to Jespersen,

> "it requires greater mental energy to content oneself with one negative, which has to be remembered during the whole length of the utterance both by the speaker and by the hearer, than to repeat the negative idea (and have it repeated) whenever an occasion offers itself" (Jespersen 1917:72).

Consequently, to label repeated negative elements 'redundant' seems inaccurate, at least from a cognitive perspective. Formally, simplification in the form of less repetition of information may also be seen as a slightly inaccurate label, given the fact that Standard English employs polarity items in place of the non-standard negative items. Thus, it seems that the situation here has been rather one of 'borrowed, added complexity', the result of "stable, long-term, co-territorial, contact situations involving child-hood – and therefore pre-threshold and proficient – bilingualism (Trudgill 2009a:101). If then the OE-speaking children retained the new negation pattern when they had children of their own, the next generation would have had even less input of the old negation pattern, and the old pattern may have disappeared completely in some communities. This process is seen in the loss of inversion in Belfast English imperatives, which is discussed in 4.3, as well as in the loss of Finnish influence in the dialect of Sappen, see 4.5.

## 3.3  **Middle English**

In the Middle English (ME) period negation was at stage b. of Jespersen's cycle (cf. TABLE 1, p. 13). Standard negation was *ne…noht* (and all the variant forms, e.g. *naht*, *nat*, *not*), with single, post-verbal *noht* as an option. This is probably most accurate as a description of the early ME period, as the negation pattern changed toward stage c. during the ME period, but multiple negatives were still common, illustrated here with an example from Chaucer:

(41)     *He **never** yet **no** vileyne **ne** sayde*
         *In al his lyf unto **no** maner wight.* (Mack/Walton 1994:3, 70f.)
         he never yet no rude-words not said
         in all his life to no sort of person
         'He never said any rude words to anybody in all his life'


The negation pattern started to change relatively early in the ME period, and the new pattern continued to spread throughout the period. In early Middle English two changes occur that are important steps towards the new negation pattern: the OE 'emphatic negative *ne…naht*' becomes increasingly frequent, and *naht* acquires its post-verbal position "almost without exception" (Fischer 1996:280). The original emphatic nature of *ne…naht* is gradually lost when it becomes the regular negator (Fischer 1996:280f.). In accordance with Jespersen's cycle (1917) the newer negative element *naht/noht* (later *nat/not*) is interpreted as the true negator, making the old negator *ne* redundant:

(42)     *His hors were goode, but he was **nat** gay* (Mack/Walton 1994:3, 74)
         'His horse was good, but he was not richly clothed'


When exactly the changes started and how they spread cannot be accounted for with certainty. However, ME texts provide us with an indication – as long as the conservative nature of written language and the limited amount of texts (including limited social and geographical variation) are taken into account. ME texts indicate that *nat/not* is the common negator in Late Middle English, "but there are some texts of the southeastern region (notably Chaucer […]) where *ne…not* and unsupported *ne* are still used" (Fischer 1996:280f.). This gives an indication that the change began in the north, gradually spreading south, which is what would be expected given the bilingual communities in the north discussed in the previous section. In southern England there were no Viking settlements and thus no direct ON influence. Consequently, the changes would be of a different nature from the changes 'from below' in the north. However, as the relevant changes in the dialects which subsequently developed into present-day Standard English were not completed until the Early Modern period, the nature of the change in southern dialects is included in the discussions in the following sections.

One element of the variation in the negation patterns in ME is important to note: *naht* (whether alone or in the combination *ne...naht*) is not found in constructions where other negative elements such as *never* or *noon* 'none'; nor is it found in implicitly negative

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environments, where unsupported *ne* is still found in ME (Fischer 1996:281ff., example from Alfred's *Boethius* II pr.6, 95-6, quoted from Fischer 1996:282):

(43)     *...that **no** man douteth that he **ne** is strong in whom he seeth strengthe.*
         that no man doubts that he neg is strong in whom he sees strength
         'that no man doubts that someone who shows strength is strong'

Similarly, French *pas* cannot co-occur with n-words (Giannakidou 2000:460, n.2):

(44)     * *Marie **n'a pas rien** dit*. 'Mary didn't say anything'

This is relevant for my thesis in that it indicates the position of *not* in the earliest stages of its development into main negator, and will be discussed further in chapter 4. For now, it suffices to note that the earlier occurrences of *not* indicate a specifier position, exactly as predicted by van Gelderen's account of Jespersen's cycle illustrated in Figure 5, p.17.

## 3.4   **Early Modern English**

In Early Modern English (EMnE) texts most of the morphological and syntactic features of PDE can be found, at least as one of several alternative forms, with an important exception – periphrastic *do*, which is discussed in 3.6. As for negation, stage c. of Jespersen's cycle seems to be reached, with single *not* becoming the standard negator (alternating with 'do not'):

(45)     *Looks it **not** like the king*?     (Hamlet, I, I, 43, quoted from Roberts 1993:293)

From the beginning of the seventeenth century, NC "seems to disappear for two centuries" (Jespersen 1917:65) – at least in writing, which may be because "double negatives of the sentence element type had already been consigned to the status of sub-standard English" (Austin 1984:142). In addition to the negative particle *not* negating the verb, this type of negation has "a second negative word, used where Standard English would substitute the positive, [and] is a sentence element [which] in Present-day English usually follows the verb phrase" (Austin 1984:138). In other words, example (9)  above, repeated below as (46) for convenience, is an example of this type of NC, since the negative indefinite 'nobody' is substituted for Standard English negative polarity item 'anybody':

(46)     You did**n't** see **no**body.  ('You didn't see anybody.')

More common in EMnE is "conjunctive (or resumptive) negation", with the negative conjunction, *nor*, followed by a second (or several) negative element(s) (Austin 1984:139f):

(47)     ***Nor ne'er*** *wed woman, if you be* ***not*** *she* (As You Like It, line 4394,
         http://www.openshakespeare.org)


(48)     *And that* ***no*** *woman has,* ***nor never none****, Shall mistris be of it* (Twelfth Night,
         *quoted from Strang 1986:152)*

Hock and Joseph (2009), however, cite an example from Shakespeare which has to be
classified as sentence element negation:

(49)     *I can****not*** *go* ***no*** *further* (Shakespeare, As You Like It, 2.4.9, quoted from
         Hock/Joseph 2009:190).

It is not specified in which edition this is found, but www.openshakespeare.org provides one
'Gutenberg' version with 'can go no further', and one 'Folio' version with 'cannot'.
Nevertheless, this type of NC is rare in the EMnE texts, suggesting that 'standard English' is
being established in writing by this point in time.

One suggested explanation for why negative concord is not accepted in present-day
Standard English is that eighteenth-century prescriptive grammarians like Robert Lowth
stated that two negatives make a positive (Austin 1984:140f). This prescription may be
influenced by Latin, which does not have negative concord (Hock & Joseph 2009:189f), or
even by (mathematical) logic, in which a negative and a negative make a positive. This
explanation no longer has much support: as mentioned above, negative concord appears to
have been more or less lost (at least in writing) already by the EMnE period, and certainly by
the time of Lowth and the other prescriptivists.  However, the Latin influence probably still is
part of the explanation. The EMnE language available today was (obviously) written by the
members of society who actually were literate. Education at the time was to a large extent
based on studies of the classical languages, and these may have had a great influence on the
language used by the writers of the period. Thus, Latin may have been an additional source of
N1 (one negative, i.e. a language/dialect that does "not permit more than one negative
quantifier per negative clause" (Bernini & Ramat 1996:187, cited in Anderwald 2005:133))
input for the educated, strengthening the influence of the negative pattern spreading from the
north.

A sociolinguistic perspective on the change in negation in EMnE largely confirms the
proposal made earlier, namely that the change in the south was of the 'change from above'
type: as the following figure shows, the leaders in the change were primarily of the 'middle
ranks':

**Figure 7    Multiple negation according to social rank**[10]
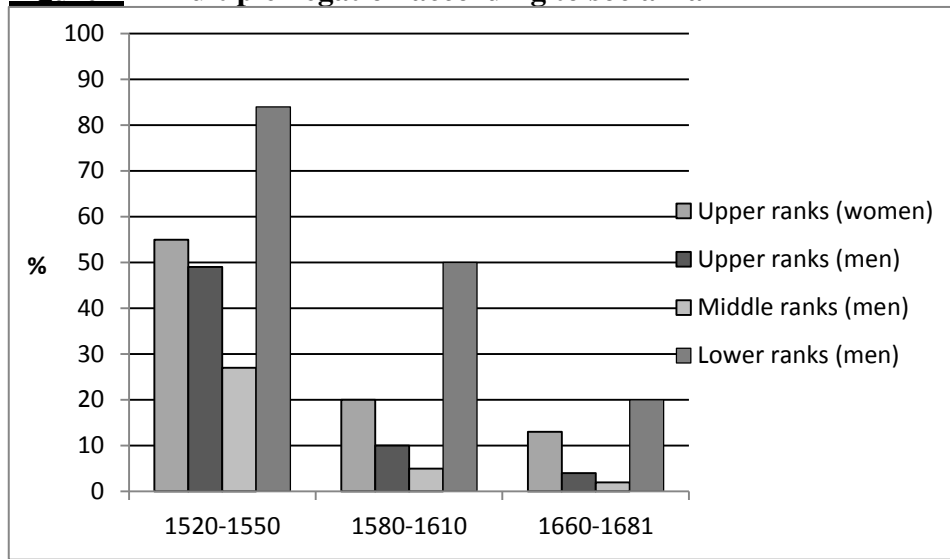


(from Nevalainen 1999:523)

The women's relatively high percentage of NC usage further indicates that this language change is derived "from the professional registers of educated people" – in other words, a change 'from above' (Nevalainen 1999:524ff.). This point is even more clearly shown in the following table, in which the upper and middle ranks of Figure 7 are divided into three groups: non-professional upper ranks, upper-rank professionals, and social aspirers. Although there are no data for the 'social aspirers' from the two earliest periods, the high percentages in the two later periods indicate the prestige associated with the new single negation form:

**TABLE 3    Decline of Multiple Negation; Gentry and Professionals. Percentage of Single Negation (-MN)**

|  | 1460- | 1479 |  |  | 1480 | -1519 |  |  | 1520 | -1559 |  |  | 1560 | -1599 |  |  |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|  | +MN | -MN | & | Total | +MN | -MN | & | Total | +MN | -MN | & | Total | +MN | -MN | & | Total |
| **I** | 111 | 11 | 9 | 122 | 18 | 6 | 25 | 24 | 42 | 36 | 46 | 78 | 32 | 298 | 90 | 330 |
| **II** | 57 | 10 | 15 | 67 | 29 | 15 | 34 | 44 | 98 | 68 | 41 | 166 | 30 | 133 | 82 | 163 |
| **III** | -- | -- |  | -- | -- | -- |  | -- | 27 | 109 | 80 | 136 | 1 | 54 | 98 | 55 |

**I: Non-professional upper ranks; II: Upper-rank professionals; III: Social aspirers**
(from Nevalainen 2006:263)

The data from the third period of the table, 1520-1559, show that the social aspirers used single negation almost twice as frequently as the other two groups, clearly indicating the

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[10] 'Upper ranks': royalty, nobility, gentry; 'middle ranks': professionals, merchants, social aspirers; 'lower ranks': other ranks below the gentry.

'change from above'-nature of this particular change. As for the differences between northern and southern dialects, the corpus does not, according to Nevalainen, contain enough data for detailed regional study. The shortage of northern texts is particularly relevant to a discussion of NC, but the data that are found do not "in any way contradict the recent suggestions that the demise of multiple negation might have had its origins in the north" (Nevalainen 2006:262ff.). There are even some data which support the proposal that the process started earlier in the north, based on the Corpus of Early English Correspondence (CEEC), from the period 1480-1519 (Nevalainen 2006:275, n.3): City of London writers have 94 per cent NC, writers at Court 58 per cent, East Anglian writers have a 93 per cent NC rate, whereas northern writers only show 45 per cent NC in this period. The numbers of occurrences are relatively low,[11] but the relative percentages provide further indication of the early change in the northern parts of England.

To summarise this section, the corpus studies – although not detailed enough for reaching any confident conclusions – do not rule out the possibility of the change spreading from the north. However, this is only part of the explanation. As the sociolinguistic data show, the socially mobile middle class were the most eager to adopt the new negation pattern, suggesting awareness as well as possible stigmatisation of the old pattern by then. The prescriptive grammars in the eighteenth century would thus be prescribing what had already been the common way of expressing negation among the 'standard' English users over the previous two centuries. The next section extends the perspective to the increased use of 'any', and through this, among other things, aims to strengthen the argument made that social mobility was a major contributing factor to the change of negation patterns. Section 3.6 briefly sketches the relevant changes in word order causing – and perhaps being caused by – the new negative structure.

## 3.5  **Development of *any***

This section relies largely on Iyeiri (2002). Her article focuses on five time periods in the Helsinki Corpus of English Texts: ME1 (1150-1250), ME2 (1250-1350), ME3 (1350-1420), ME4 (1420-1500), and EMod1 (1500-1570). The following figure shows the early development of *any* in different non-assertive contexts:

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[11] City of London:n=35, Court:n=31, East Anglia:n=153, North:n=11

**Figure 8**   *Any* **in some typical non-assertive contexts (per 10,000 Words)**
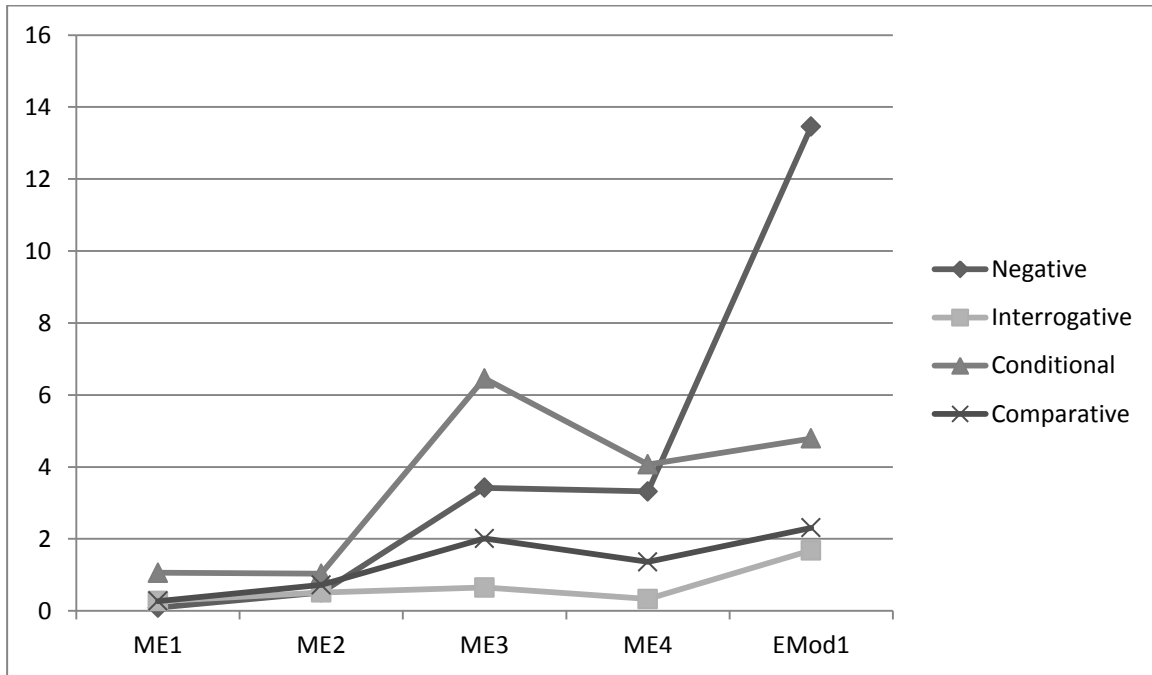


(Iyeiri 2002:212)

The relevance of the data in this figure lies in the indications that i) negation was an important context for non-assertive *any* (or in other words, the use of polarity items started to spread), and ii) *any* had already begun to be used in potential NC environments before the major decline in its usage in dialects other than the northern.

The following table attempts to illustrate possible dialect differences in the developments of *any*. It should be noted that for the periods 'ME1' and 'ME2', no northern texts are included (Iyeiri 2002:220), but the figure still gives an indication that the use of 'any' may have started in the East Midlands. According to Iyeiri, this may be explained by the large amount of law texts from this region. This may further be interpreted as evidence of the importance of the relation to professional register involved in the development of the *not…any* pattern which was noted above, in 3.4 for the decrease of NC.

29

**Figure 9**      Development of *any* in different dialects of ME(per 10,000 Words)
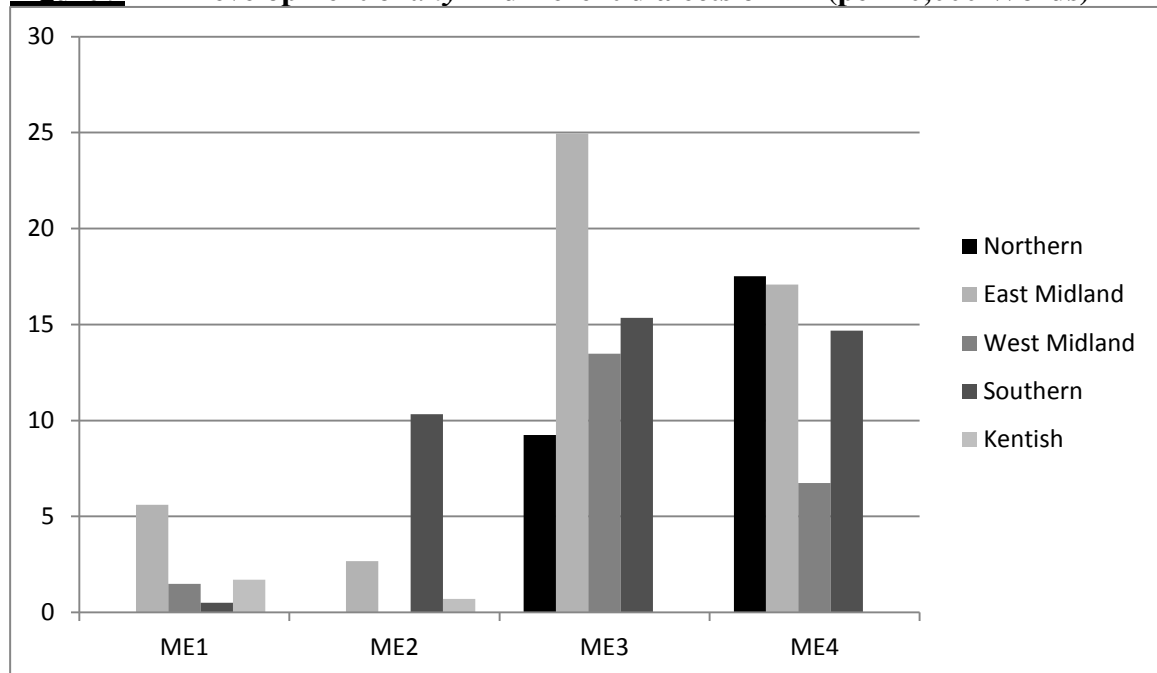


<div align="right">(Iyeiri 2002:219)</div>

It is claimed that the dialect spoken in London at Caxton's time, the second half of the 15th century, was 'more heavily influenced by Central and East Midlands than was once thought' (Bragg 2003:103), and that the East Midland influence was caused by "immigration of merchants, &c., from the EMidl who became well-to-do and thereby gave their form of English a prestige that caused its adoption a an upper-class one in London" (Bennett/Smithers 1989:lvi). As Figure 9 shows, in 'ME3', *any* was far more frequent in the East Midland dialect than in the other dialects. Assuming that this dialect – through interaction with northern-dialect speakers as well as (historically) ON speakers – also had a low degree of NC, this gives a strong indication of both the timing and source of the spread of the negation pattern.

     As for the social stratification, Iyeiri (2002) does not provide any figures that may be directly compared to Figure 7. However, the argument that the spread of single negation may be related at least to professional aspects of social rank is also reflected in the development of *any*:

**TABLE 4     Texts with highest frequencies of *any***

| Periods | Texts | Genres | *Any* |
|---|---|---|---|
| ME3 | Proclamations, London | Documents | 32,89 |
|  | *The Cloud of Unknowing* | Religious treatises | 12.75 |
|  | Returns, London | Documents | 10.78 |
|  | Wycliffe, New Testament | Bible | 7.27 |
|  | Judgements, London | Documents | 7.09 |
| ME4 | John Paston, *Paston Letters* | Letters, private | 30.67 |
|  | Metham, *Physiognomy* | Handbooks, other | 20.83 |
|  | *The Statutes of the Realm* | Law | 18.68 |
|  | Capgrave, *Abbreuiacion of Chronicles* | History | 13.27 |
|  | Petitions, London | Documents | 11.98 |
| EMod1 | *The Statutes of the Realm* | Law | 106.02 |
|  | Thomas More | Letters, private | 32.68 |
|  | The Trial of Sir Nicholas Throckmorton | Proceedings, trials | 20.66 |
|  | Roper, *The Lyfe of Sir Thomas Moore* | Biography, other | 20.22 |
|  | Thomas Wolsey | Letters, non-private | 18.52 |

(Iyeiri 2002:217)

This table lists for each period the five texts in which *any* is most frequently found, and Iyeiri stresses that for all of the periods, documents and/or law texts are included in the 'top five' (Iyeiri 2002:217). Additionally, it could be added that of the list entries 'private letters', one is represented by Thomas More who was a lawyer, and the other by John Paston, also " a lawyer like his father" (http://www.luminarium.org/medlit/pastonletters.htm).

## 3.6   **The Development of Do-Periphrasis/Change of Word Order**

Descriptions of the development of do-periphrasis often refer to Ellegård's (1953) figures, shown in Figure 10. The figure indicates a major increase around year 1500, which is approximately when *any* and non-NC negation became increasingly regular. Additionally, it is claimed that there is a correlation between the disappearance of the OE/ME negative marker *ne* and the spread of periphrastic *do* (Mossé (1968), cited from Roberts 1993:335, note 7). Consequently, the more general syntactic changes are very relevant to the discussion of negative concord in this thesis. In particular, the following observation of Jespersen's is important to the following discussions:

> "*Not* was attracted to the verb, even before it was reduced to *n't* as an integral part of a coalesced verbal form; thus instead of *will I not* we find *wol not I* as early as Ch. (A3131); both positions in Ch. E. 250 Wol **nat** oure lord yet leve his vanytee? Wol he **nat** wedde?" (Jespersen 1917:116). ('Will not our lord leave (behind) his foolishness (OED)? Will he not marry?')

Figure 10  Percentages of *do* in various sentence types[12]
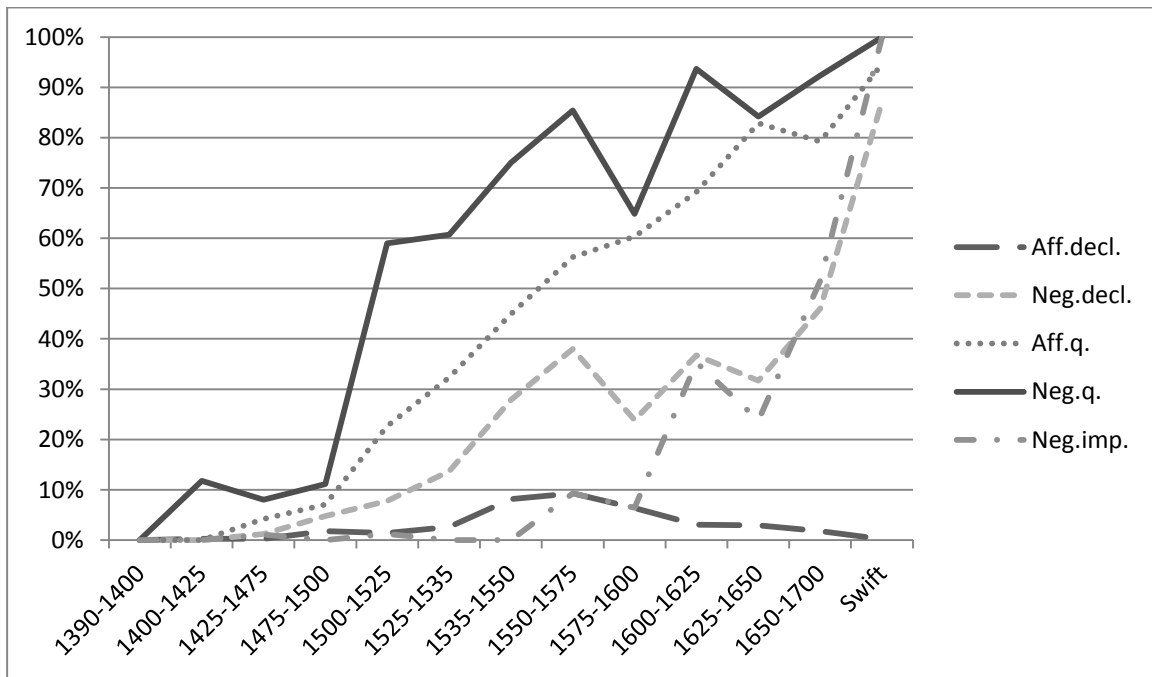
(based on 'Table 7' in Ellegård 1953:161, see appendix)

Moreover, again according to Jespersen (1917:117), "[t]he contracted forms seem to have come into speech, though not yet in writing about the year 1600". This is interesting, since it suggests that *not* already had head status at this early stage. As Jespersen's cycle in English may be explained in terms of the negative indefinite *nowiht* 'nothing' being employed in the Spec/NegP position as a reinforcing negative element, it does not seem likely that once *not* reaches head status, this stage of development should be reversed. The status of *not* in present-day English is further discussed in chapter 4, for now, the following table illustrates the gradual substitution of *n't* for *not* found in COHA,[13] from the earliest year included, 1810, to modern usage, here represented by search results from year 1990:

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[12] 'Aff.decl.'=affirmative declarative, 'Neg.decl.'=negative declarative, 'Aff.q.'=affirmative question, 'Neg.q.'=negative question, 'Neg.imp.'=negative imperative

[13] The numbers in this and corpus-based tables in the following section are taken from the following corpora: BNC (British National Corpus), which contains 100 million words, COCA (Corpus of Contemporary American), with 425 million words, COHA (Corpus of Historical American), with 400 million words. Corpora last searched April 11th 2011.

**TABLE 5**    *Not* vs. *n't* – historical tendencies

|      | [v*] not | [v*] n't | Total  | % [v*] not |
|------|----------|----------|--------|------------|
| 1810 | 5751     | 782      | 6533   | 88.0       |
| 1840 | 73561    | 10139    | 83700  | 87.9       |
| 1870 | 89789    | 34109    | 123898 | 72.5       |
| 1900 | 97874    | 53564    | 151438 | 64.6       |
| 1930 | 86736    | 82528    | 169264 | 51.2       |
| 1960 | 78262    | 94020    | 172282 | 45.4       |
| 1990 | 71890    | 134953   | 206843 | 34.8       |

This table suggests the interchangeability – and hence equality – of *not* and *n't* historically, and supports my argument that *not* was analysed as head of NegP relatively early. Further support is found in Roberts' (1993:305) claim that "[i]n the 17th century, *not* becomes a head", which he relates to when *not* first starts to block movement of lexical verbs as well as the emergence of *n't*, noted by Jespersen (see above). Prior to this, the phrasal status of *not* is seen in its lack of verb-movement blocking and by the fact that it could be stylistically fronted, or topicalized (Roberts 1993:304f.).

One interesting explanation of the relationship between the changes in negation and the growth of periphrastic *do* is provided by Frits Beukema. He proposes (with Pollock (1989))[14] that "the θ-opacity of a particular head in the functional domain is responsible for blocking the raising of θ-assigning verbs across negation" (Beukema 1998:22). The θ-opacity has parametric variation and may be 'strong', i.e. 'θ-transparent', or 'weak', i.e. 'θ-opaque'. This is further related to the strength of the verb-attracting feature of Infl, which may similarly be strong or weak: a strong V-feature triggers raising of the verbs in overt syntax, whereas a weak V-feature does not trigger raising, and (within a minimalist approach), verbal inflections are checked through covert LF movement. The changes in the two parameters are illustrated with the following table:

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[14]Beukema diverges from Pollock in proposing that the "blocking head" is Neg rather than Agr.

**TABLE 6**     **Parameter settings of Infl and Neg**

|  | Pattern A | Pattern B | Pattern C |
|---|---|---|---|
| Infl | strong | weak | weak |
| Neg | strong | strong | weak |
| Examples | eats not<br><br>cannot eat | not eats<br><br>cannot eat | does not eat<br><br>cannot eat |

(adapted from Beukema 1998:23, 16)

'Pattern A' of this table represents Old English and early Middle English, and is gradually replaced by 'pattern B' and 'pattern C', which "arise in tandem in the fifteenth century" (Beukema 1998:16). 'Pattern B' was relatively short-lived, it was found only in the 16th and 17th centuries, and collapsed due to its instability with different strength values for Infl and Neg (Beukema 1998:22f.).

The word-order changes have regional differentiation similar to what was discussed for NC in the previous sections: the northern English dialect had inversion with pronoun subjects as well as with NP subjects, illustrated with an example from "the Northern Prose Rule of St. Benet, an early 15th century document from an isolated part of Yorkshire that seems to have preserved features from an earlier time". In the Midland dialect only pronoun subjects triggered inversion (Kroch 1999:24):

(50)        þe alde sal sho calle þarto
             the old shall she call thereto

**TABLE 7**     **NP-V-S versus NP-S-V word order with NP and pronoun subjects.**

|  | NP subjects | | | Pronoun subjects | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Dialect | Number inverted | Number uninverted | % inverted | Number inverted | Number uninverted | % inverted |
| Midlands | 50 | 4 | 93 | 4 | 84 | 5 |
| North | 7 | 0 | 100 | 58 | 3 | 95 |

(from Kroch 1999:25)

This is another dialect difference which may be attributed to "Scandinavian influence on northern Old English" from the 10th century onwards (Kroch 1999:25). Again, this indicates the close relationship between Old Norse and Old English, affecting even syntax. However,

this also indicates that despite the common origin and extensive language contact, other factors have affected the language development in the south. ON influence on southern dialects was mainly indirect, and thus too weak to effect a general implementation of ON changes in English, even though these changes were indicated in the northern dialect. Accordingly, the present-day situation with different negative patterns of English and Norwegian was established. This is the topic of the following chapter.

# 4   Negation in present-day English and Norwegian

This chapter is concerned with the negation patterns of present-day English and Norwegian. Comparison of these will show that the negative elements are given different syntactic treatments in the two languages. In her article 'Negative cycles' (2008), van Gelderen presents examples of 'negative concord' in Norwegian, which she interprets as proof of progress in the negative cycle in Norwegian. Although this will not be discussed extensively, since the primary language in question here is English, I will show that English and Norwegian negation have different underlying analyses, one yielding negative concord as an option, and the other not. In English, as is known, NC is a feature of nearly all non-standard dialects, which in itself is proof that English syntax allows NC. The chapter starts out with some theoretical refinement suggested by the historical account of the preceding chapter, and which are necessary to the following discussion. This concerns verb movement and the use of (overt) word order as 'evidence' for determining the location of *not* and *n't*.

## 4.1   Verb movement and word order

Beukema's account presented in 3.6 is attractive in that it provides a coherent explanation of the nature of verb movement – diachronic as well as synchronic – but there is at least one important drawback: this account requires verbs to be base-generated fully morphologically inflected. Some arguments against this were mentioned in section 3.1 related to ON. Another clear argument against this is Åfarli's (2010) study of *amerikanorsk* ('American-Norwegian') (cited from Åfarli (2011):[15]

(51)      *spente* 'spent', *setla* 'settled', *hunta* 'hunted', *klosa* 'closed', *kleima* 'claimed'

Common to all of these verbs are that they consist of an English verb stem with Norwegian morphology, which would not be possible if verbs are base-generated in with inflections.

However, Beukema's proposal could be modified to accommodate this: weak Infl is more accurately termed weak Agr, and verbs may still move overtly to T for tense morphology. Assuming that NegP dominates TP (cf. Haegeman 1996:33), movement to Agr would still be impossible in negative clauses, and *do*-insertion would be triggered by the presence in T of a ('stranded') raised verb unable to raise any further.[16] English still retains Agreement as a linguistic feature, although overtly only instantiated in the third-person-

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[15] Åfarli's examples are taken from Haugen (1953); they are cited here from Åfarli (2011).
[16] Cf. Åfarli (2011), who similarly questions the presupposition of intrinsic inflectional features.

singular present-time *-s*; there is no evidence suggesting that verbs with *-s* are realised in positions different from verbs agreeing with other persons or tenses, all other factors being equal. Accordingly, all verbs could be argued to move (overtly) to T, and only when further movement to Agr is blocked, an Aux is inserted in T; the Aux then receives the morphological inflections and moves to Agr.[17] Conversely, Norwegian does not appear to need Agr as a feature: as long as no verbs have any agreement morphology there is no reason why Agr should be preserved in the inflectional system; thus, θ-opacity does not necessarily constitute a movement-blocking factor in Norwegian.

As noted above, in 2.5, the English negative markers *not* and *n't* are commonly assigned the status of Spec/NegP and head, respectively. However, the historical data introduced in 3.6 indicate that *not* had head status at an early stage of its development into the standard English negator. One common argument in favour of the Spec/NegP status of *not* is that it may be 'stranded' ((52)) rather than being moved along with the Aux in I-C movement ((53)), which is taken as confirmation of the head status of *n't* (Haegeman 1996:189f.):

(52)　　　Has John not left?

(53)　　　Hasn't John left?

Christensen (2003) analyses negation in English and the Scandinavian languages, and uses this syntactic pattern as evidence against the head status of Danish *ikke* as well as English *not*. These two negators, unlike in the other Scandinavian languages, cannot be topicalized, are not moved to C along with the finite verbs, and may not, like Norwegian *ikke*, for example, be cliticized (Christensen 2003:2):

(54)　　　No: Ha'kke du set [sic] den?[18]

(55)　　　Da: * Har-ikke du set den?

(56)　　　En:* Have-not you seen it?

The availability of topicalization in the other Scandinavian languages is taken as evidence for their phrasal status: "Elements that can be topicalized must be XPs in order to fill Spec-CP" (Christensen 2003:2; cf. also section 3.6 for early *not*). An additional argument against the

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[17] Alternatively, inflectional affixes could be lowered onto V in its base position, this process – 'affix hopping' – is also potentially subject to blocking by the presence of Neg. However, the question of raising vs. lowering is not really relevant to the arguments made and will not be discussed any further.
[18] Christensen attributes the Norwegian example to Johannessen (1997:3).

head status of Danish *ikke* as well as *not* is that these elements block Aʹ movement. However, as the English clitic *n't* is commonly assigned head status, the following examples show that this is not a very strong argument in favour of differentiating *not* and *n't* (examples from Vikner (2001), quoted from Christensen 2003:4):

(57)     a. *It is terrible [how clever]$_1$ you are not t$_1$
         b. *It is terrible [how clever]$_1$ you aren't  t$_1$
         c.  It is terrible [how stupid]$_1$ you are t$_1$

Danish *ikke* and English *not* are assumed by Christensen to be XPs, despite the fact that they cannot topicalize, which is explained in terms of a constraint called 'LEXTOP': "The topic must have lexical content" (Christensen 2003:16). Further, Danish *aldrig* 'never' is assumed to sit in Spec/NegP, like other negative operators. The parallels between *aldrig* and *ikke* are taken as evidence of the location of *ikke* in specifier position: the two elements are "in complementary distribution and…both license sentential negation and NPIs" (Christensen 2003:21). However, as discussed above, in 2.4, non-overt operators may satisfy the neg-criterion when there are no overt negative operators. For English the neg-criterion is assumed to apply at S-structure (cf. Haegeman 1996:165ff.); accordingly, non-overt operators are obligatory when the negator is located in the head of NegP.

Christensen's most important arguments against the location of *not* in Neg$^o$ are related to verb movement: Danish *ikke* and *not* "do not block verb movement" (Christensen 2003:2). This is clearly inaccurate, as movement of lexical verbs is always blocked in English negative clauses. Accordingly, Christensen's argumentation is strongly weakened, and will be disregarded for English. For Danish, his account may still be correct, but Danish is not one of the languages in focus here, and will not be discussed further. More relevant is that "while *n't* is taken along by the moved Aux…*not* can be stranded" (Haegeman 1996:190). However, the negator is not necessarily stranded, as the following example illustrates (Haegeman 1996:190):

(58)     Has not John been there too?


A corpus search yielded the following results:

**TABLE 8   Movement/stranding of *not***

|  | COHA | COCA | BNC |  | COHA | COCA | BNC |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| [v*] not [n*] | 4234 | 3712 | 812 | [v*] [n*] not | 803 (15.9%) | 937 (20.2%) | 272 (25.1%) |
| [v*] not [p*] | 7256 | 6546 | 16695 | [v*] [p*] not | 41862 (85.2%) | 13189 (66.8%) | 4619 (21.7%) |
| [v*] not[ pn*] | 2816 | 4663 | 1941 | [v*] [pn*] not | 355 (11.2%) | 330 (6.6%) | 3697 (65.6%) |
| Totals | 14306 | 14921 | 19448 |  | 43020 | 14456 | 8588 |
| % | 25 | 50.8 | 69.4 |  | 75 | 49.2 | 30.6 |
| COCA+BNC |  |  | 34369 |  |  |  | 23044 |
| % |  |  | 59.9 |  |  |  | 40.1 |

'v*': verbs, 'n*': nouns, 'p*': personal pronoun, 'pn*': other pronouns, e.g. indefinites[19]

These results should be read with a certain caution, since they are compiled without any experience or competence in corpus search, and there may be relevant constructions that are left out. In addition, the examples should be studied in much more detail regarding clause types, possible intervening punctuation etc. However, the results suggest interesting tendencies, the most important of which is that in the contemporary corpora, COCA and BNC, *not* appears to have moved along with the auxiliary in a majority of the instances, 59.9 per cent. The historical corpus, COHA, shows the reverse trend, with 75 % '*not* stranding'. However, the overwhelming majority of these cases is found with the pattern '[v*] [p*] not'. Historically, there have been similar tendencies of pronouns treated in a manner different from nouns, and it is quite likely that the cases in question should be analysed as a form of 'pronoun raising' rather than '*not* stranding'. Google searches[20] support the claim that *not* is not necessarily stranded, in fact, for the following examples '*not*…pronoun' is a far more frequent pattern than 'pronoun…*not*':

(59)     Do you **not** agree – 34,700,000
         Do **not** you agree – 59,600,000
         Do**n't** you agree – 105,000,000

(60)     Do you **not** think that – 63,400,000
         Do **not** you think that – 172,000,000
         Do**n't** you think that – 17,800,000

---

[19] BNC does not seem to have this distinction, which is why I have included both patterns in my searches; for my purpose, the personal pronouns would have been sufficient.
[20] Searched April 17th 2011.

For reasons of time, it has not been possible to analyse the examples to any extent, and, again, the numbers should be read with some caution. A brief look at some of the first examples suggests e.g. the need to study if there is a majority of non-native English speakers who produce the relevant constructions and, if so, if this eventually could cause a linguistic change in the native speakers of English as well. Furthermore, examples with intervening punctuation and non-sentential negation would have to be excluded. However, there seems to be a tendency for the relevant constructions to be complemented by '*with* - object', or by subordinate nominal *that*-clauses, exemplified in (61) and (62), which suggests that sentential negation is a possibility with these constructions.

(61)     Do **not** you agree that your company needs IT support?

(62)     Do **not** you think that leaders have to be extrovert?

Another typical occurrence of this construction resembles a tag-question. It is realised as a subordinate clause, or even as an independent clause, seeking confirmation and/or listener involvement; here the negative element has clausal/sentential scope, and these examples should also count as sentential negation:

(63)     Practically nothing quite compares to a seaside trip, do **not** you agree?

The conclusion to this discussion so far is that the claim of different locations for *not* and *n't* is not supported by the findings from corpora and Google. On the contrary, the two negators seem to be treated quite similarly, with the fairly frequent 'pronoun…*not*' pattern possibly generated through pronoun raising rather than stranding of *not*. The following sections extend the discussion to other features of present-day negation, starting with the use of *never* as sentential negator in 4.2, Irish English imperatives in 4.3, conjunctive negatives in 4.4, non-standard Norwegian negation in 4.5, Norwegian imperatives in 4.5.1, and, finally, a brief survey of NC in present-day non-standard English in 4.6

## 4.2     *Never* **as Sentential Negator**

Although *not* and *n't* are the most common negators in English, there is another option, *never*, which is quite commonly used for expressing past tense negation in non-standard English dialects, and which may be termed an 'emphatic negative' (Cheshire/Edwards/Whittle 1993:67, Beal 1993:198):

(64)        I **never** broke the window ('I did**n't** break the window')

This suggests a certain degree of bleaching, which is commonly involved in the process of grammaticalization: non-standard English *never* appears to have lost the SE meaning 'not on any occasion' and is now in many dialects "merely an emphatic negative" (Beal 1993:198). However, *never* is an acceptable sentential negator even among speakers of Standard English, suggesting that even SE *never* has been somewhat bleached (Cheshire 1998:32f.):

(65)        He got ready to spring down from on high right among the spears of the goblins…But he **never** leaped (Tolkien, *The Hobbit*)

What is interesting about *never*, is that, despite the possible interchangeability with *not* suggested by example (64), syntactic analyses of the two variants show important differences between the two negators. As an illustration of this, the following sentences found in Cheshire (1998:41) are analysed:

(66)        I **never** went to school today

(67)        I did**n't** go to school today

Assuming that verbs do in fact move to T, as proposed above, in 4.1, the differences between relevant parts of the two negative clauses may be illustrated with the following trees. The raising of *never* is presumed to be triggered by the (covert) neg-feature, which attaches to the verb as it raises through Neg. As the neg-criterion states that "a NEG-operator must be in a Spec-head configuration with an $X^o$ [NEG] (Haegeman 1996:106), *never* raises and adjoins to the specifier of AgrP.

**Figure 11  I never went to school today**
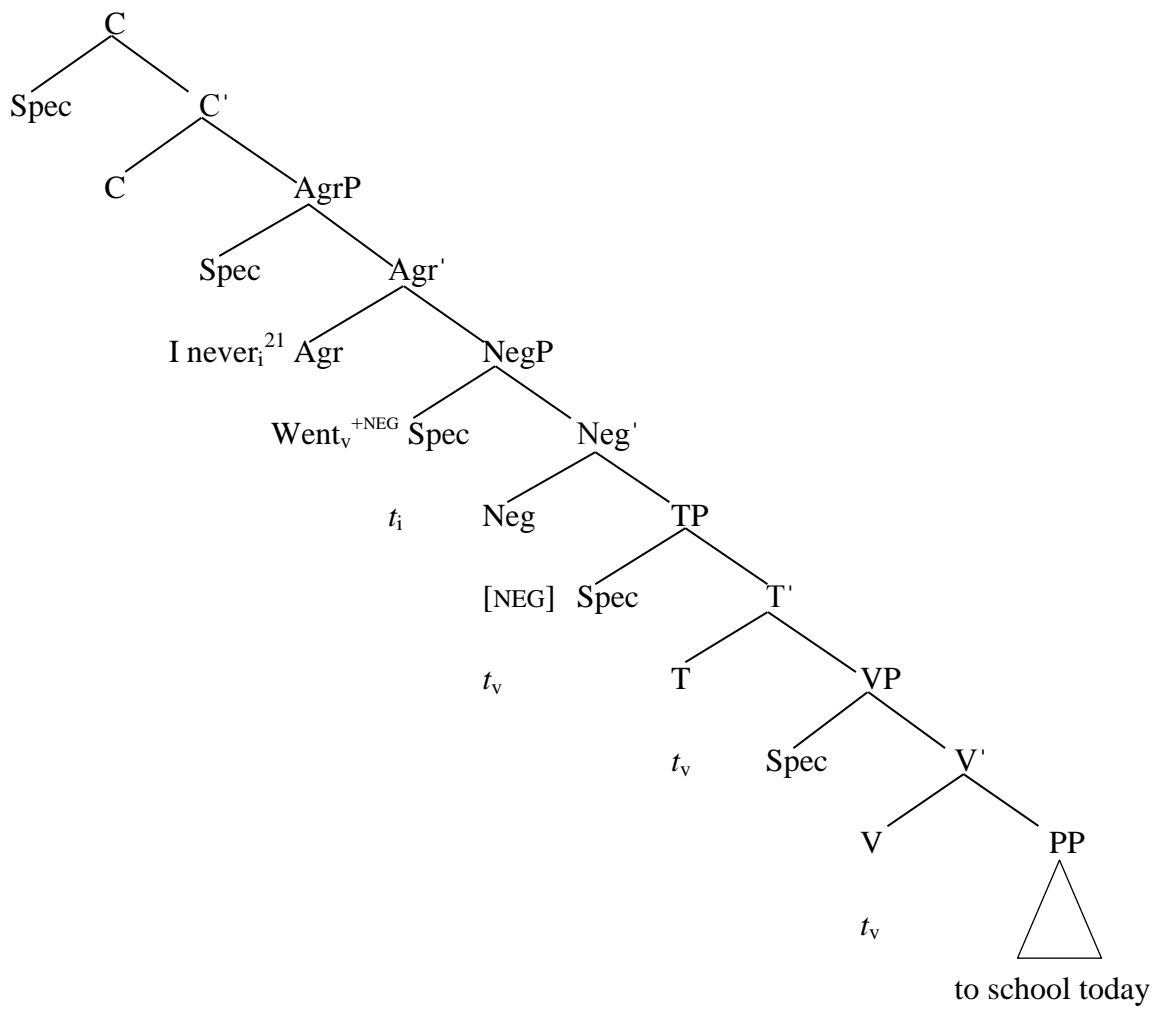
```
                    C
          ┌─────────┴─────────┐
        Spec                 C'
                     ┌────────┴────────┐
                     C               AgrP
                             ┌────────┴────────┐
                           Spec              Agr'
                                     ┌────────┴────────┐
                      I neverᵢ²¹    Agr            NegP
                             ┌────────┴────────┐
                      Wentᵥ⁺ᴺᴱᴳ  Spec         Neg'
                                      │   ┌──────┴──────┐
                                     tᵢ  Neg          TP
                                          │    ┌────────┴────────┐
                                       [NEG]  Spec             T'
                                               │      ┌─────────┴─────────┐
                                              tᵥ      T                  VP
                                                      │          ┌────────┴────────┐
                                                     tᵥ        Spec             V'
                                                                        ┌────────┴────────┐
                                                                        V               PP
                                                                        │
                                                                       tᵥ            to school today
```

**<u>Figure 12</u>  I didn't go to school today**
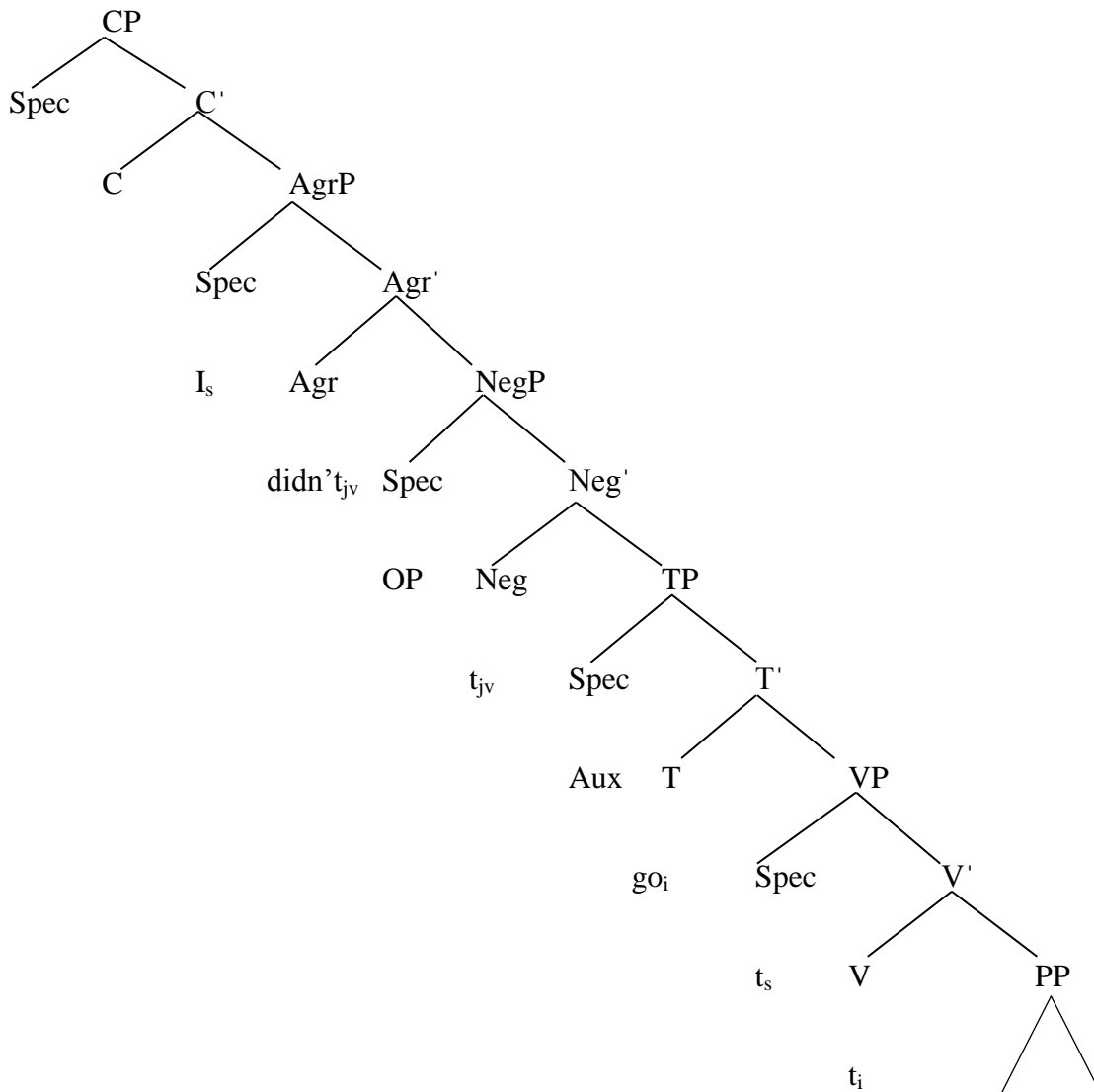


Cheshire (1998) proposes that Jespersen's cycle in English has been slowed down or even stopped because of the prescriptive grammar of SE. However, the bleaching which may be observed for *never* and the indications that *never* is located in Spec/NegP suggest that the cycle may still be effective in present-day English, at least for spoken, colloquial varieties.

For comparative purposes, the Norwegian translations of examples (66) and (67) are, respectively:

(68)       Jeg gikk **aldri** til skolen idag.
           I went never to the- school today

(69)     Jeg gikk **ikke** til skolen idag.
         I went not to the-school today

Most strikingly, the Norwegian sentences are realised in exactly the same way – there is no syntactic consequences of substituting the standard negator *ikke* 'not' for the alternative *aldri* 'never'; most importantly, in both sentences the lexical verb raises. The most important explanation for these contrasts is that the English negator *not* is located in the head of NegP; both of the Norwegian negative elements as well as *never* are located in the specifier. Consequently, *not* must be licensed by a non-overt operator which restricts verb movement, whereas *never* and the Norwegian negators are overt operators. The non-overt neg-feature (as opposed to the overt head *not*) does not block or restrict verb movement, and neither does the operator block head movement, given that it is not a head.

## 4.3    **(Negative) Imperatives and Inversion in Irish English**

This section is mainly based on Henry (1995), in which imperative constructions in Belfast English are analysed in some detail. Although Irish English may have some peculiarities due to historical influence of Irish, Belfast English is taken as an example of non-standard English and used for comparison with Norwegian in 4.5.1. In Belfast English, like Standard English, imperative constructions may include an optional, preverbal overt subject. Unlike SE, though, Belfast English also has the option of an inverted imperative pattern (Henry 1995:47). Regarding this inverted pattern, BE is divided into two 'subdialects', one of which ('Dialect B') allows inversion with all verbs; in the other ('Dialect A') it is restricted to "a subset of intransitive verbs" (Henry 1995:50)

Since inversion clearly is a word order phenomenon, what is involved is typically movement, or raising, of either the verb or the subject (or both). Evidence of verb raising is found in the verb's position relative to negative markers and adverbs (Pollock 1989, Vikner 1991, cited in Henry 1995:60). Verbs preceding negatives and adverbs strongly suggest "movement of the verb at least as far as I" (Henry 1995:67). However, negative imperatives appear to have a (third) standard "invariant negative marker, *don't*", located in C in both SE and Belfast English (Beukema and Coopmans 1989, Zhang 1991, cited in Henry 1995:68). Thus, negation is not a good diagnostic of verb raising in imperatives, but adverbs may still be used.

In dialect A, imperative verbs follow sentential adverbs:

(70)        Always come you here when I call you.

(71)        *Come always you here when I call you.

(72)        *Come you always here when I call you.

Additionally, adverbs may not come between verbs and subjects:

(73)        Quickly run you home.

(74)        *Run quickly you home.

According to Henry, the word order of (73) indicates that the verb has not moved out of VP, "[a]ssuming that at least VP adverbs are left-adjoined to VP… the verb-subject order must arise for another reason" (Henry 1995:60). The suggested reason for this is 'unaccusativity': some intransitive verbs are seen to have subjects "which are actually underlying objects". The underlying structure of (75) would be (76):

(75)        He goes to school.

(76)        Goes he to school.

In a Minimalist approach, languages may differ in whether movement occurs before or after spell-out. Movement before spell-out is overtly spelt out (results in word-order changes), whereas movement after spell-out is "abstract movement without overt reflex[es]" (Haegeman 1996:22). Thus, in Belfast English, it seems that movement in imperatives may occur after spell-out. This is further explained by the strength of the NP feature of Tense: normally this feature is strong and triggers subject-raising, even when the NP feature of Agr is too weak to trigger further subject-raising to Spec/Agr$_s$. Imperative constructions appear to lack this feature strength of Tense: there is no (overt) tense marking,[22] and an imperative may be strengthened by emphatic *do*, which is inserted under Tense (Henry 1995:32, 62).

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[22] This does not imply that imperatives are not finite; nor does it imply that T is absent, which would be problematic for NegP, since TP is assumed to license NegP (cf. Haegeman 1996:122). An alternative could be to postulate an ImpP, but these issues are beyond the scope of this thesis.

(77)  Do come in.

(78)  *Do you come in.

(79)  Go you there. (Henry 1995:52)

(80)  Do**n't** go you away. (Henry 1995:55)

If Tense is not instantiated in imperatives, the subject is not required to move to Spec/Agr$_s$, in other words, T is what triggers subject raising out of VP (Henry 1995:63). Consequently, case checking is postponed to after spell-out, and checked/assigned at LF level (Henry 1995:63).

In dialect B, as noted above, inversion is available for all verbs. Compared to the restricted occurrence of inversion in dialect A, this suggests that dialect B has different structure and movement patterns. However, for negative imperatives inversion only occurs when they are "unaccusative or passive and the apparent inversion does not involve verb movement but rather lack of subject raising, as in dialect A" (Henry 1995:68). "Summarising our findings about dialect B, then, we have argued that it is similar to dialect A in that subject-raising is optional, but it differs from dialect A in that the verb moves to C" (Henry 1995:77). Movement of a verb to C triggers (obligatory) object shift to Spec/Agr$_o$ for weak object pronouns which is illustrated by examples (81) and (82), in both of which the weak object pronoun *them* is raised. Objects preceding subjects are due to a lack of subject raising, seen in (82), where the subject remains *in situ*, in Spec/VP. This is further illustrated in (83), where the subject is unable to precede the sentential adverb *always*:

(81)  Tell you them always the truth.

(82)  Tell them always you the truth.

(83)  *Tell them you always the truth.

This kind of object movement in BE is similar to the (Mainland) Scandinavian object shift in that what is affected are only weak pronominal objects, not nominal objects (as seen in the ungrammaticality of (84); the pronominal version is included as (85) for comparison) nor co-ordinated or stressed pronouns; it depends on main verb raising and the raised ('shifted') object must precede sentential adverbs. In Scandinavian languages, object shift also moves the object in front of negation; in BE imperatives negation is marked by *don't* in C, illustrated in (86) (Henry 1995:73), overt subjects may not intervene between *do* and *not* (87), or even appear with uncontracted *do not* at all as shown in (88) (Henry 1995:50). "In a sense, it seems as if English has 'latent' object shift, which in most varieties does not show up because of a

lack of main verb-raising, but surfaces when a dialect contains a construction involving main verb-raising" (Henry 1995:74):

(84)    *Vi vant konkurransen **ikke**.
        we won the-competition not  ('We did not win the competition.')

(85)    Vi vant den **ikke**.
        we won it not  ('We did not win it.') (both examples from Svenonius 2002)

(86)    Do**n't** you speak to me like that.

(87)    * Do you **not** speak to me like that.

(88)    * Do **not** you speak to me like that. (all three examples from Henry 1995:50)


As noted above, it is likely that the NP features of both Agr and Tense are weak in imperatives; conversely, it seems that the V-features are strong, triggering auxiliary movement to C. An indication of this strength is the fact that $Agr_s$ is "capable of identifying an empty category [i.e. null subject] in imperatives" (Henry 1995:76f.).

One final aspect of BE imperatives is interesting in this context, namely the apparent changes in progress. Younger speakers have less inversion, and the pattern of dialect A is becoming the dominant pattern; for children under the age of 12, there is no inversion at all (Henry 1995:78). This is explained in terms of language learning as involving selection of the option from UG that best fits the majority of the input data (Henry 1996:79). This is seen in the Norwegian dialect of Sappen as well, which will be discussed in section 4.5, after the discussion of another negation pattern in which English differs from Norwegian, namely negative conjunctions.

### 4.4    **Standard English – Negative Conjunctions**

Standard English (SE) does not have any of the types of NC that are commonly discussed. The status of SE as an English dialect may be debated, though, since it is commonly viewed as literary, educated language usage, above all signalling social status, with virtually no geographical variation. It is the only accepted written dialect of English; in speech it is estimated that only 12-15% of the British population actually speak SE (Trudgill 2000:124). However, in the use of negative conjunctions, even SE seems to display some form of negative concord, which is what this section discusses.

The standard negative conjunctions in English are *neither … nor*. These seem to be derived from the negator *ne* cliticized to *either … or*. This could possibly be argued to be a compound conjunction, with a single negative reading, but there are arguments against this. First, both *neither* and *nor* are used independently, as these examples show:

(89)  […] but he would**n't** talk and **neither** would any of the others. (COCA)

(90)  No, they did**n't**, **nor** do most Americans. (COCA)

There is a construction in Norwegian which appears to be similar, *ikke … heller*, meaning *not … (n)either*. The difference is that *heller* depends on *ikke* for a negative reading, and is thus more accurately termed an NPI. The translation illustrates how English *neither* expresses negation independently.

(91)  *Columbus spurte **ikke** om veien, og det gjør **ikke** jeg **heller*** (NoWaC)
      Columbus asked not about the.road and that do not I either(NPI)
      'Columbus didn't ask for directions, and neither do I'

COCA search for 'n't [v*] neither' yields only 9 results, one example of which is (92), while the same search with 'either' instead of 'neither' yields as much as 985 results, exemplified by (93), which suggests that *neither* is indeed treated as a negative:

(92)  He suspicioned that would**n't** work **neither**, but he was willing to try anything.

(93)  Alex did**n't** know. Caroline did**n't** know **either**.

Jespersen (1917, chapter 10) divides 'negative connectives' into seven groups; English is found in his second group, type 'nc[1] A nc[2] B', where 'nc' means 'negative connective', and 'nc[1]' and 'nc[2]' means that the two connectives are different, but both are negative. Norwegian, on the other hand is placed in the 'nc A c B' type, where the second connective, 'c' is not negative. With this type of negative connection, "the negative force of nc is strong enough to work through A so as to infect B" (Jespersen 1917:106).

Klima (1964) expresses similar ideas when he discusses sentence negation in terms of strong and weak negation:

"By the analysis…all instances of sentence negation were characterized by the presence of the pre-verbal particle *neg* in the derivation; the differentiation into strong versus weak corresponds to how far down the derivation *neg* may retain its status as a pre-verbal particle, as opposed to being incorporated into another constituent. In the

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final shape of two of the words discussed, *never* and *neither*, the prefix *n-* (*n-ever, n-either*), can be attributed to the constituent *neg*." (Klima 1964:270)

In addition to the similar idea that the negative scope depends on the strength of the *neg* feature, Klima's 'pre-verbal particle *neg*' bears some resemblance to the neg-operator discussed several times already in this thesis. Incorporating the account of negative conjunctive pattern of English into the account of the neg-operators I will make the following proposal: there is parametric variation in the nature of neg-operators, which may be termed 'strong' vs. 'weak'. This parameter is the main feature responsible for the possibility of NC readings in English as opposed to Norwegian: in English the neg-operator may be called 'strong', thus capable of licensing multiple overt realisations of [NEG] in otherwise typical NPI environments; in Norwegian the operator is 'weak', and may not license other overt negative elements in the sentence, only NPIs.[23] Conversely, the non-overt Neg is strong, in a similar sense as Klima and Jespersen express. Negation in Norwegian is the focus of the following section.

## 4.5 **Norwegian Negative Clauses**

According to van Gelderen (2008), Norwegian is starting to show early signs of Jespersen's cycle. This is seen in the dialect of Sappen (argued to be due to influence from Finnish), as well as in examples from Norwegian web sites (included below). The expression which is argued to represent this development is *ikke…aldri* ('not…never').

In the 1800s, there was extensive Finnish immigration to Sappen; Norwegian settlement came primarily in the 1900s, with the first monolingual Norwegian teacher arriving in 1905 (forskning.no). The dialect of the descendants of the Finnish immigrants is called '*Kvensk*', and there has been extensive mutual influence between Norwegian and Kvensk – so much so that Kvensk as of 2005 has the status of language rather than just a Finnish dialect (kvensk institutt.no). The influence of Kvensk on Norwegian is seen in non-standard Norwegian syntax such as (both examples from forskning.no):

(94)     *Jeg har **ikke aldri** smakt sånne brød.*
          I have not never tasted such breads
          'I have never tasted such bread.'

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[23] Eythórsson's (2002) account of neg-features in C noted in 3.1 could be an alternative to my proposal, but the complications suggested by e.g. topicalisation of negative constituents related to V2 make this topic too complex to implement into this thesis.

(95)     *I gamle daga dem som dreiv med skogbruk, frakta veden med hest til veien.*
         in old days them who dealt with forestry, moved the.wood by horse to the.road

Sentence (95) is syntactically non-standard since it violates the verb-second rule of Norwegian, whereas sentence (94) is 'ungrammatical' in having two negative elements. However, the test sentences are only accepted by the oldest informants: the group 'Age 4'(78-81), who are of the bilingual generation, accept nearly all of the sentences; the 'Age 3' group (50-62) – the first generation to become Norwegian monolinguals – accept slightly less; the youngest informants (35-45 – 'Age 2' and 17-32 – 'Age 1') generally reject the sentences (forskning.no).

**Figure 13**  **Acceptance of non-standard Norwegian constructions**
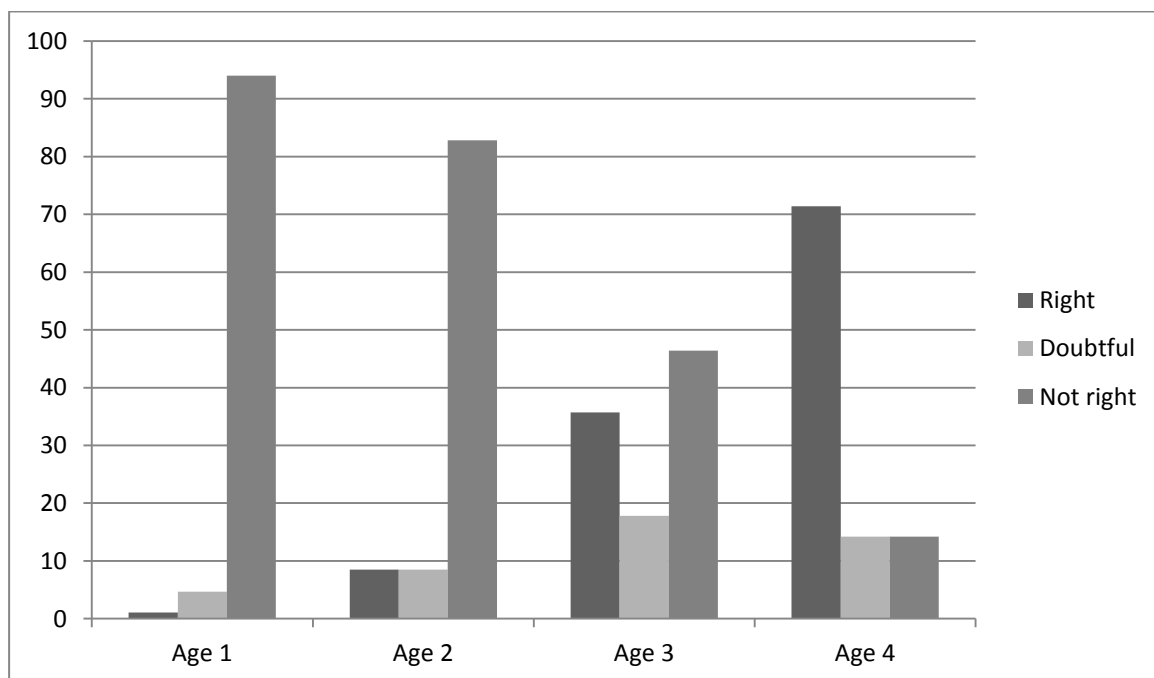


(From Sollid 2006:135)

Signs of language change, especially syntactic changes, in one community where there is close contact with a second language, can hardly be said to be sufficient evidence for a general change in progress. Evidence of further spread over both space and time is needed to determine whether this is truly a sign of a new stage in Jespersen's cycle. When, in addition, the study shows that the younger speakers reject the 'change', it is no longer possible to call it a change at all. Sharp stratification between older and younger age groups signals change away from the features favoured by the older groups; in Sappen, the younger groups strongly

reject the non-standard features. Thus the Sappen dialect does not appear to be a valid argument in favour of a new stage in Jespersen's cycle in Norwegian.

The examples from web sites found by van Gelderen also show the *ikke…aldri* pattern:

(96)     […] *jeg merket **ikke aldri** at noen hadde kjærestebesøk den tiden jeg jobbet der.*'
         […] because I never noticed (= not never) that anyone had visits from loved ones the time I worked there.
         (http://www.nkbf.no/Nyheter/2004/Brunbord_1_04.htm, cited from van Gelderen 2008:209)

(97)     *USA bør **ikke ALDRIG** være et forbilde når det kommer til integrering.*
         'The US should never (= not never) be an example when it comes to integration.'
         (http://www.superserver.no/invboard/index.php; 21 June 2005, cited from van Gelderen 2008:209)

There are a few examples of *ikke…aldri* in the speech corpora of UiO's Textlab – one example in each of the corpora – but in those it was possible to listen to, the *ikke* is not very distinct, and is possibly more of a false start than anything else.

In Tekstlab's written corpus NoWaC (in which 700 million words are compiled from Norwegian web sites), a search for '*ikke aldri*' yields 20 results,[24] 7 of which follow *sjelden* 'seldom' (i.e. 'seldom, if not never'), an example of which is (98), 4 other examples have a DN reading – or at least not an NC reading, as illustrated by (99), one example, (100) is a sentence from the Sappen study, one, (101) is what appears to be a mocking 'word-for-word' translation from Russian, and 7 appear to be NC, such as (102).

(98)     *… han sier sjelden – om **ikke aldri** – nei til en halvliter eller tre.*
         he says seldom if not never no to a half.liter or three
         '… he says seldom – if not never – no to a beer or three.'

(99)     *Det fineste i livet er **ikke aldri** å falle, men å reise seg hver gang vi faller.*
         the nicest in the.life is not never to fall but to rise oneself every time we fall
         'The best in life isn't never to fall, but to get back on our feet when we do fall'.

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[24]  0.029 ipm. (instances per million words). http://www.tekstlab.uio.no/cgi-bin/nowac/nowac.pl?corpuslist=NOWAC_1_0&searchstring=ikke+aldri&searchpositional=word&searchpostag=all&searchtype=conc&contextsize=60c&sort2=right&terminate=100&llstat=on&collocspanleft=1&collocspanright=1&collocfilter=all

(100)    *Jeg har **ikke aldri** smakt sånne brød.*
         I have not never tasted such breads
         'I have never tasted breads like that.'

(101)    *Jeg ga **ikke aldri ingen** memoarer til **ingen**, sa Nikita Khrujtsjov.*
         I gave not never no memoirs to nobody said N. K.
         'I never gave any memoirs to anybody, said N. K.'

(102)    *... og **ikke aldri** la deg utnytte av noen gutt...*
         and not never let you exploit by some boy
         'And never let yourself be taken advantage of by some boy.'

For comparison, a search for *aldri i livet* 'never in my life' yields 89 results, and *ikke i det hele tatt* 'not at all', 86 results. These are not the actual numbers of occurrences, however, only a number of examples probably due to limitations of the web interface. A written corpus that is not based on web sites, Oslo-korpuset, with 18.5 million words does not turn up a single result for *ikke...aldri* – only with intervening punctuation or words; hence none of these examples have a possible NC reading. This indicates certain differences between 'traditional' writing and online writing: internet is open to everyone who wants to share their ideas publicly; posting is immediate; a large number of web sites have no editors or quality controls.

In addition to the lack of quality controls, postings on web sites are often spontaneous, many times in response to other postings on a discussion board that has provoked a (strong) reaction. The postings often appear to be of a rather hasty nature, with many typos and ill-formed sentences in general. The occurrences of *ikke … aldri* may be interpreted as two competing thoughts, reflecting a possible doubt as to the emphasis the writer wishes to express.  Similar to the discussion in 4.2 regarding *never* and *not* in non-standard English, *aldri* may be said to have more emphatic strength than *ikke* in Norwegian. Given the different degrees of emphatic strength, *aldri* and *never* are perhaps not very natural reinforcers for *ikke* and *not*; it would be more natural in both languages to substitute the stronger negator for the weaker when reinforcement is desired. The additional temporal component of *ikke* and *never* might not necessarily be a relevant argument, since, as discussed in section 4.2, a process of bleaching or grammaticalization could gradually reduce and eventually eliminate this temporal component.

Finally, a Google search for '*ikke aldri*' turns up 19,700 results.[25]  Although this may seem like a fairly high number, there is one major problem with a Google search like this: the search engine simply locates the search words indiscriminately, regardless of even such a 'simple' factor as punctuation, so that a number of irrelevant examples like the following are incorrectly included in the results:

(103)    *Hva? Trøstespiser du **ikke? Aldri**?*
         what? comfort-eat-pres. you not? never?
         'What? You don't eat for comfort? Never?

For an accurate number, each of the examples would have to be assessed individually, a task which of course is unfeasible within the current time frame. For comparison, the search phrases "*aldri i livet*" and "*ikke i det hele tatt*" are also included here, with 626,000 and 3,600,000 results, respectively.[26] Since there is normally no punctuation interfering within these phrases, the contrast – especially between "*ikke i det hele tatt*" and "*ikke aldr*i" – is highly indicative of the unproductivity of the "*ikke aldri*" pattern.

The conclusion to my discussion of *ikke aldri* is that there is little evidence that signals a new stage of Jespersen's cycle in Norwegian. However, what does indicate a possible change in progress is an apparent change in word order patterns of embedded clauses. Again, the focus of the thesis being on English, this will not be extensively discussed, but for comparative purposes it is still worth brief considerations. After noticing this construction a few times in discussion board postings, I wanted to compare the frequency of the two word order constructions. The corpus search (NoWaC) was not very useful for comparing frequencies, since here apparently only a limited number of examples are displayed for frequently occurring words and phrases. The corpus was still helpful in excluding some of the least common constructions. Google searches for some of the more common constructions showed the following tendencies:[27]

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[25] Searched April 11th 2011.
[26] Searched April 12th 2011
[27] Searched April 11th 2011

**TABLE 9       Neg-v/V and v/V-Neg patterns in Norwegian**

|  | Search phrase C-S-Neg-v/V | Results | Search phrase C-S-v/V-Neg | Result |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 'that I don't know' | *at jeg ikke vet* | 6,870,000 | *at jeg vet ikke* | 19,000,000 |
| 'that it won't be(come)' | *at det ikke blir* | 13,800,000 | *at det blir ikke* | 8,210,000 |
| 'that I don't have' | *at jeg ikke har* | 55,600,00 | *at jeg har ikke* | 82,000,000 |
| 'if it's not' | *hvis det ikke er* | 56,000,000 | *hvis det er ikke* | 66,700,000 |

TABLE 9 shows, quite unexpectedly, that with the exception '*at det ikke blir*' the 'C-S-v/V-Neg' is the most frequent pattern – unexpected because Norwegian is an asymmetric V2 language: V2 is triggered in main clauses, whereas the typical pattern of embedded clauses is 'C-S-Neg-v/V'. It is important to note that the examples above include specific pronouns and auxiliaries or verbs; the total numbers of the patterns would require a great amount of further study in order to include all possible combinations of subjects and (auxiliary) verbs. The numbers provided in TABLE 9 do, however, clearly indicate a striking contrast between the '*ikke aldri*' pattern and this pattern: 19,700 to 82,000,000 only for the single example '*at jeg har ikke*'. Due to limited time, an extended study of these patterns is not undertaken in this thesis. However, if the tendencies of a changed word-order pattern for embedded clauses are regularised, this could have a major impact for the clitic '*ke* which was discussed above, in 2.5: with the 'C-S-v/V-Neg' pattern, only the finite verb will eventually be available for cliticization of '*ke*. This, in turn, could effect a change from specifier to head status of '*ke*, which would then require the presence of a covert neg-operator. There is at least a theoretical possibility of NC developing in Norwegian as a consequence of these changes.

This change from asymmetric to symmetric V2 (disregarding the complementizer) is similar to an early stage of the word order changes in English. How this develops further is impossible to predict, but the possibility of NC readings in Norwegian at some point in the future as a result of this cannot be ruled out. Although based on a very limited set of evidence, the '*ikke aldri*' construction as a sign of a new stage in Jespersen's cycle does not seem to be verified. Thus, the conclusion to this section is that insofar as there are early indications of a possible changed negation pattern, the apparent change in progress in the word order pattern of subordinate clauses is a much more likely candidate than some sporadic occurrences of '*ikke aldri*'.

### 4.5.1 (Negative) Imperatives in Norwegian

For the purpose of comparison to Irish English imperatives, TABLE 10 illustrates possible negation/adverb sites in Norwegian imperatives:

**TABLE 10    Negation/adverb sites in Norwegian**

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| a. | (**Ikke**) | kom | (**ikke**) | hit! | |
| | (Neg) | come | (Neg) | here | 'Don't come here!' |
| b. | (*Ofte) | kom | (ofte) | hit! | *ofte* 'often' |
| c. | (*Aldri) | kom | (aldri) | hit! | *aldri* 'never' |
| d. | (*Sjelden) | kom | (sjelden) | hit! | *sjelden* 'seldom' |
| e. | (*Alltid) | kom | (alltid) | hit! | *alltid* 'always' |
| f. | (*Vanligvis) | kom | (vanligvis) | hit! | *vanligvis* 'normally' |

(adapted from Lindstad 2007:106)

As the table illustrates, sentence-initial position is available only to negative *ikke* – none of the other adverbs may occur in this position. This sentence-initial negation position is not found in Danish or Swedish, only in Norwegian (Lindstad 2007:106, Eide 2002:232). When the negative is located in sentence-initial position, it may only be preceded by *vennligst* 'please/kindly', which is "discourse oriented" (Lindstad 2007:106). This is similar to English imperatives, where *don't* may be preceded by 'please' for more politeness or less harshness.

There are, however, a couple of major structural differences between the Norwegian 'Neg-V' imperatives (Eide 2002:232) and the English *don't*-imperatives. First, the Norwegian Neg-V structures ((105)) do not take an overt subject (Platzack and Rosengren 1998, cited in Eide 2002:232), and, secondly, these imperatives "do not license other sentence adverbials" (Eide 2002:232). Example (104) shows the opposite construction, V-Neg, where both overt subjects and other sentence adverbials are acceptable:

(104)    ***Kast** (du) derfor **ikke** (du) boka på golvet!*
Throw (you) therefore not (you) book-DEF on floor-DEF
'Therefore, don't throw the book on the floor!'

(105)    *(*Derfor/*du) **ikke** (*derfor/*du) **kast** (*derfor/*du) boka på golvet!*
(therefore/you) not (therefore/you) throw (therefore/you book-DEF on floor-DEF

These two alternative imperative constructions strongly suggest not only that NegP is in fact available in Norwegian negative clauses, but also that there are even two available NegP

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positions, one high (dominating the inflectional structure), and one low, just on top of VP (cf. e.g. Lindstad 2007:120).[28] As an illustration of the contrast to 'don't' imperatives, a Google search[29] shows the quite high numbers of occurrences of the *don't* construction with 'ever' and 'never', respectively:

(106)      'Do**n't** you ever forget' – 6,970,000 results

(107)      Do**n't** you never forget' – 32,000,000 results

Interestingly, *never* is far more frequent than *ever* in this particular construction, suggesting that this may in fact be 'non-standard' imperative usage, favoured by the same speakers who favour NC, but for reasons of time and space this will not be pursued any further.

## 4.6   **Negative Concord in Non-Standard English**

'Non-standard English' is a complex term which may not be defined in a very simple manner. Speakers of non-standard English are found in every geographical dialect; regional variation (which includes more non-standard forms) is more prominent the lower a speaker's social rank, as illustrated by the following figure:

**Figure 14**   **Dialect variation in the UK** (from Trudgill 1984:188)
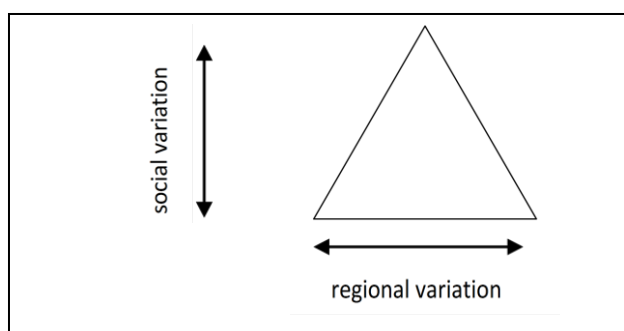


The term Standard English, on the other hand, is defined as literary and educated language, regulated by grammatical rules and restrictions, and is the only accepted written language. This section primarily focuses on non-standard English.

Like most other non-standard English dialects, Belfast English (BE) has negative concord (Harris 1993:169):

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[28] The account of Belfast English imperatives in 4.3 suggests that the location of the lower NegP (Lindstad's Neg2) could be more precisely defined as just on top of TP rather than VP. The reason for this is that Norwegian imperatives are morphologically different from the infinitival forms. Alternatively, the imperatives are realised as the stem form of the verbs, and infinitives have infinitival morphology. This is beyond the scope of this thesis; what is relevant here is the presence of the higher NegP (Lindstad's Neg1).

[29] Searched April 19th 2011

(108)      She **never** lost **no** furniture **nor no**thing
           (She didn't lose any furniture or anything)

What this example shows, is as much as four negative elements where SE may only have one; 'nor' is substituted for 'or', and the sentence elements 'any furniture' and 'anything' are expressed negatively as 'no furniture' and 'nothing'. Since the first negative element, 'never', has sentential scope, all of following constituents are redundantly negated. Interestingly, in a sentence with no less than four negative markers, the standard negator(s) *not* and *n't* are not used.

The following table shows the geographical variation of NC in British English:

**TABLE 11      NC in British English dialect areas**

|            | *Total* | *NC* | *% of total* |
|------------|---------|------|--------------|
| Scotland   | 499     | 44   | 8.8          |
| Wales      | 71      | 8    | 11.3         |
| North      | 371     | 51   | 13.7         |
| Midlands   | 178     | 53   | 29.8         |
| South West | 830     | 329  | 39.6         |
| South East | 482     | 225  | 46.7         |
| Total      | 2431    | 710  | 29.2         |

(Anderwald 2005:127, table 5)

There is a clear difference between northern and southern dialects, a difference which is argued to be caused by the close contact with the Old Norse of the Vikings in the north (Anderwald 2005:130-4), as discussed in 3.2. What is interesting about this table, though, is the fact that NC is still found as a dialect feature even in the north. Given time, I should have liked to explore the relation between age and NC, in order to have some indication as to the direction of the current development. As mentioned related to the language contact situation in Sappen (section 4.5), sharp stratification between the oldest and the youngest language users is a clear sign of language change; the linguistic feature favoured by the younger groups will almost certainly replace the feature favoured by the older groups.

Searches similar to those for Norwegian '*ikke…aldri*' give similar results: '*never [v\*]*
*n't*' ('v\* is a wildcard for verbs in general) yields 9 results in COCA (Corpus of
Contemporary American English), 2 in BNC (British National Corpus), 12 in COHA (Corpus
of Historical American English), and none in the TIME (Time Magazine) corpus. Moreover,
of the 2 in BNC, one, (109), is clearly *not* an example of NC:

(109)     "The phone? It's working again?" "It **never** was**n't**"
(110)     "…I was just scared stiff that I **never** could**n't** enjoy the dance on Sunday…"


Some of the examples from the COCA search do have an NC reading:

(111)     "Hush old man. You **never** did**n't** understand nothing." ('never understood
          anything')
(112)     "So you're a union man." "**Never** was**n't**" said Buster, "except in service."
          ('never was')


There is one example (from speech) that shows a false start – made even clearer by the
speaker's including 'has' in the correction:

(113)     "Right, right. And that has **never**- has**n't** happened yet."


But most examples are of the DN kind, a typical example of which is:

(114)     "And we wrote a lot of crap and we did that fast too. But we **never** did**n't**
          have a good time while we were working." ('always had')[30]


A search which even more closely parallels the Norwegian *ikke…aldri* is 'never not',
without any intervening words. This search gives 82 results (in COCA), none of which may
plausibly be labelled NC. A typical example is:

(115)     I knew the second he never called me back, because he would **never not** call
          me back. I knew something had happened.


As the clitic *n't* is argued to be a head, and *not* a specifier, a tempting explanation of NC
suggests itself in terms of Head/Spec differences. That *n't* is a head is shown "by the fact that

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[30] The context is an (NPR_Sunday) conversation with composer John Kander, and the quote is part of an
explanation of how easily and quickly they wrote songs.

it is moved along with the auxiliary in I-C movement" (Haegeman 1996:189). However, as the following examples illustrate, NC is not restricted to *n't*:

(116)    I'm **not** doing **no**thing wrong. (COCA)

(117)    You're not taking care of jack. You're **not** doing **no**thing. (COCA)

Here, it could perhaps be argued that 'I'm not/you're not' is a way of avoiding the more substandard 'I ain't/you ain't', but as seen in the next example, this is also seen in constructions where *ain't* cannot simply be substituted for *will not*:

(118)    […] and tell your friends and people up there that I will **not** do **no**thing for you and I have. (COCA)

Further examples are found through searching Google:[31]

(119)    I did **not** do **no**thing – 33,600,000 results

(120)    I did**n't** do **no**thing – 56,500,000 results

Although the numbers show a majority of contracted *n't*, the high number of occurrences of *not…nothing* indicates that the two forms have a certain degree of interchangeability.

As a conclusion, in order to complete the comparison between the regular negators *not/n't* and *never*, a similar Google search was done for *never*:

(121)    I **never** did **no**thing – 9,150,000 results[32]

The fact that NC is also found with the specifier *never* suggests that NC in English cannot be explained simply in terms of differences between Head and Spec/Head status. Rather, it seems that the proposal of strong or weak operators is supported by these observations: in English, the neg-operator is strong and able to license and absorb multiple negative elements, irrespective of whether the operator is overt or covert. In Norwegian, the neg-operator is weak, and is unable to license more than one negative element, while on the other hand, the neg-feature of $Neg^0$ is strong enough to affect the whole clause or sentence.

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[31] Searched April 13th 2011.
[32] Searched April 14th 2011.

# 5    Conclusion

In this thesis, the main aspects of English negation discussed were negative concord and syntactic positions of negative elements. The discussion included a comparison to Norwegian negation patterns and diachronic as well as synchronic perspectives for both languages. The aim of the thesis was to find a syntactic explanation of the different negation patterns in the two languages, particularly related to negative concord.

Following the general introduction, chapter 2 introduced the theoretical framework underlying my discussion. Chapter 3 described the development of negation patterns in English and Norwegian, showing that both languages were originally V2 languages with preverbal *ne* as main negator. In Old Norse, this changed very early, through a transition period with the suffix *-at* to present-day *ikke* following the finite verb. In English, V2 was lost, *ne* was retained at a much later stage than in ON, and was reinforced by negative adverbs. Present-day Standard English has the single negator *not* following the finite verb, as in Norwegian, but in most English dialects this is reinforced through NC constructions. Moreover, English requires do-support in negative clauses, which suggests that movement of lexical verbs is more restricted in English than in Norwegian. Chapter 4 discussed imperative clauses, verb movement, the use of *never* as sentential negator and compared contracted *n't* to uncontracted *not*. Uncontracted *not* was argued to be a head like *n't* based on historical arguments which were strengthened by data from present-day usage. Also, possible changes in progress were discussed for Norwegian, namely NC and V2 constructions even in embedded clauses.

I would like to stress again that the most important basic observation regarding the differences between English and Norwegian negation is that most dialects of English allow NC, whereas Norwegian dialects generally do not. The accounts of the historical development of negation in the two languages provide the first indications of the diverging present-day patterns: in English, *not* was initially introduced as an emphatic, supporting negator in specifier position of a NegP which retained an overt negative element in its head, namely *ne*. In Old Norse *eigi* replaced both of the former negators *ne* and *at*; simultaneous occurrences, if they existed at all, lasted for a too short period of time to be recorded in the ON texts. The further development of *not* in English suggests that it was assigned head status relatively early, a grammaticalization process not likely to be reversed.

Evidence from present-day negation patterns in English and Norwegian lead me to propose that the major differences between the two languages may be summarised as follows: the English negator *not* is – like *n't* – located in the head of NegP, whereas Norwegian *ikke* is located in Spec/NegP; and English sentences negated by the sentential negators *not/n't* require the presence of a non-overt neg-operator in Spec/NegP, Norwegian *ikke* is an overt operator in itself.

The conclusion to this thesis is that the strength of the neg-operator is the crucial element related to negative concord: a strong operator is able to license (and absorb) several elements with overt neg-features in one sentence, i.e. NC. A weak operator does not license other overtly negative elements, only NPIs. The neg-operator is weak in Norwegian and strong in English, with the effect that NC is possible and even expected in English, and not in Norwegian. The reason why Standard English does not have NC seems to be the effects of ME/EMnE speakers' choices of prestige forms and the subsequent standardisation of these. More linguistically 'democratic' Standard English, for example in schools, NC would be very likely to become the regular negation pattern of English. Further study of English, Norwegian and other languages is needed in order to determine whether the proposal of an operator-strength parameter bears out as a language universal. A study relating neg-operators to languages with neg-movement such as Russian would be of particular interest. An extension of the study to other types of operators is also needed to determine if this is a parameter of operators in general, and whether features such as NC may be predicted by this parametric variation.

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Tekstlab: http://www.hf.uio.no/tekstlab/

## Appendix

Data for Figure 10, 'Table 7. Use of *do* in various types of sentence' (Ellegård 1953:161):

| Period | Aff. decl. | | Neg. decl. | | Aff. q (a, v) | | Neg. q (a, v) | | Neg. imp. | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | do | n | do | s | do | S | do | s | do | s |
| 1390-1400 | 6 | 45000 | 0 | -- | 0 | -- | 0 | -- | 0 | -- |
| 1400-1425 | 11 | 4600 | 0 | 177 | 0 | 10 | 2 | 15 | 0 | 52 |
| 1425-1475 | 121 | 45500 | 11 | 892 | 6 | 136 | 2 | 23 | 3 | 279 |
| 1475-1500 | 1059 | 59600 | 33 | 660 | 10 | 132 | 3 | 24 | 0 | 129 |
| 1500-1525 | 396 | 28600 | 47 | 558 | 41 | 140 | 46 | 32 | 2 | 164 |
| 1525-1535 | 494 | 18800 | 89 | 562 | 33 | 69 | 34 | 22 | 0 | 101 |
| 1535-1550 | 1564 | 19200 | 205 | 530 | 93 | 114 | 63 | 21 | 0 | 72 |
| 1550-1575 | 1360 | 14600 | 119 | 194 | 72 | 56 | 41 | 7 | 4 | 39 |
| 1575-1600 | 1142 | 18000 | 150 | 479 | 228 | 150 | 83 | 45 | 8 | 117 |
| 1600-1625 | 240 | 7900 | 102 | 176 | 406 | 181 | 89 | 6 | 65 | 119 |
| 1625-1650 | 212 | 7200 | 109 | 235 | 116 | 24 | 32 | 6 | 5 | 16 |
| 1650-1700 | 140 | 7900 | 126 | 148 | 164 | 43 | 48 | 4 | 17 | 16 |
| Swift | 5 | 2800 | 61 | 9 | 53 | 3 | 16 | 0 | 28 | 0 |

In this table 'do' refers to occurrences of *do*-constructions, 's' refers to occurrences of 'single verb' in environments where *do* was a possible alternative, and 'n' is the total of 'do+s' (Ellegård 1953:157ff.).