The use of periphrastic *do* in Early Modern English negative declaratives: evidence from the Helsinki Corpus

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1. INTRODUCTION

The aim of this paper is to offer a preliminary account of the emergence and development of negative sentences with auxiliary *do* throughout the Early Modern English period. In particular what will be examined is the general process of syntactic change that made periphrastic *do* obligatory when no other auxiliary verb was present in negative statements. The Early Modern sections of the Helsinki Corpus of English Texts[1] (1500-1710) will serve as a basis for the description and explanation of some of the relevant linguistic, textual and chronological factors affecting the choice of *do+not+V* vs. *V+not*. The results will be measured both quantitatively and qualitatively.

The general history of the development of negation in English has been described by several authors (Jespersen 1940: 426–467; Traugott 1972: 146–148; Denison 1993: 447–452). Negation in OE was carried out by the unstressed negative particle *ne* preceding the verb. In eME, unstressed *ne* was reinforced by an emphatic form which had developed from an OE intensifying periphrasis, *nawiht/noht* 'not at all'. This new form, *not/nat*, immediately followed the tensed verb in the clause, and after some time, with the dropping of the weak form *ne*, *not/nat* became the standard mark of negation. Thus, in clauses containing the emerging set of auxiliary verbs, the ME structure has been maintained in Modern English. But from the 15th century onwards a new form with auxiliary *do* developed as a morphological marker of person and tense in negative, interrogative and imperative sentences where no other auxiliary tensed verb was present. So, basically, throughout the eModE period there was a choice between negating with *do* followed by the particle *not* preceding the main verb (as in modern English in *I do not say*) and negating with the adverbial form *not* following the verb (as in *I say not*). In addition, a third hybrid pattern with *not* preceding the base form of the verb and without the aid of periphrastic *do* appeared as a sort of transition between the two stages mentioned above (Jespersen 1940: 428; Ukaji 1992: 454 ff). The general overview of the different systems of negation in the history of the English language can be seen in Table 1:

TABLE 1. THE EVOLUTION OF THE SYSTEM OF NEGATION FOR NONAUXILIARY VERBS IN ENGLISH

OE	ME	eModE	ModE
ne+V	ne+V	V+not	Do+not+V
	ne+V+not	not+V	
		Do+not+V	

IC NE SECGE> I NE SEYE (NOT)> I SAY NOT > (I NOT SAY>) I DO NOT SAY> I DON'T SAY

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[1] For a thorough discussion of the text samples and chronology of *The Helsinki Corpus of English Texts: Diachronic and Dialectal* see Kytö and Rissanen (1992; 1993), Kytö and Rissanen (1992), Nevalainen and Raumolin-Brunberg (1993). For a general introduction to the Early Modern English section of the corpus see the discussion in Nevalainen and Raumolin-Brunberg (1989).

The different researchers have found that the category of yes-no questions (affirmative or negative yes-no questions) led and possibly influenced the course of the spread and regulation of auxiliary *do* in other sentence types such as wh-questions, negatives and affirmatives (Ellegård 1953: 162; Visser 1969-1973: 1529-1553; Kroch et al. 1982: 285). As Tieken suggests:

> That *do* is first widely used in questions seems only natural in view of all this [syntactic fixation of the new word order], for a question transformation disrupts the word order of a sentence more radically than negation does. (Tieken 1988: 19)

Kroch (1994: 191-2) offers statistical data to claim that the rate at which *do* rises is the same in all sentence types. What he calls the "constant rate effect" is explained by the fact that Middle English and Modern English are distinguished by a single syntactic parameter stating that auxiliary verbs (such as *do*) were established to avoid V-to-I movement, which was typical of lexical verbs. Hudson (1997: 80ff) looks for other functional and cognitive explanations for the "constant rate effect" reported by Kroch. According to Hudson, from OE onwards the class of auxiliary verbs not only grew up in numbers (*do* is a case in point) but became a well-developed prototype, distinguished by a large number of features which gradually came to be assumed by all its members. This long-term evolution is not seen in terms of the loss of verb-raising but in terms of the development of a distinctive auxiliary group motivated by cognitive principles:

> Once a change has become associated with members of one or the other of these classes, we should expect it to spread at the same rate because it has the same route to follow: first through the same range of verbs, and second, through the same range of speakers. We can imagine it starting as an idiosyncratic characteristic of a handful of verbs, whcih eventually generalizes to whichever class these verbs belong to. (Hudson 1997: 93)

Auxiliary verbs acquired a special connection with negatives and interrogatives due to multiple reasons, but as Hudson points out, once a change was associated with members of the class of auxiliaries, the change was spread at the same rate to other verbs of the same class such as *do*. Furthermore, because of the type of feedback mechanism mentioned above, "any tendency in one person's speech may influence other people's speech, thereby reinforcing the initial tendency" (Hudson 1997: 93).

The spread and regulation of *do* must be placed in the context of a wide range of contemporaneous changes in the system. Thus, the gradual rise in the use of *do* was triggered by different factors. As different researchers on syntactic change have shown (Rydén 1979: 11; Kroch 1989a: 137), very often a modification in the condition of one structural element in the language triggers an alteration of other components throughout the whole system. Thus, the emergence of a new pattern of auxiliary verbs, the growing analytical tendency present in the language since Middle English and the change in the basic word order (from SOV to SVO) triggered a number of further syntactic processes such as the regulation of *do* support in negative, declarative and interrogative sentences. The emergence of the new variant was then fostered by external pressures working at the same time. Thus, in different types of texts the innovation appeared at different rates and this variation is also related to style, medium, subject matter, etc.

Linguistic pressures on the system of negation were also abundant. First of all, the structure *do+not+V* was similar to that of *Aux+not+V*. As a consequence, *do* and the sentence negator *not* were placed before the base form of the verb by analogy with the structure containing auxiliaries (Kroch 1989b: 217; Frank 1985: 10-11; Görlach 1993: 120). Moreover, as several diachronists have tentatively shown (Baghdikian 1982: 157; Denison 1985: 467) it has always been typical of English to have a high proportion of negative sentences with an auxiliary operator as their tensed verb. In fact, in eModE, as pointed out by Frank in his corpus-based study, what he calls "complex VPs" (VPs containing an auxiliary form) were always the majority, and their syntactic pattern (Aux+finite verb) was influential in exerting pressure on simple VPs in which *not* followed the verb to become assimilated to the new pattern (Frank 1985: 14). This meant that structures such as *He will not study*

or *He may not study* were much more common than older forms such as *He studies not*. In fact, *do* was never used when there was another auxiliary verb present[2].

Furthermore, the use of *do* was favoured on the grounds that, especially in interrogatives, it maintained the rigidity of the sequence SVO, the new word order pattern emerging in ME (Tieken 1988: 19; Traugott 1972: 176; Ukaji 1992: 456). Moreover, as Görlach points out, another advantage of *do*-support was that "it unambiguously indicated sentence negation (rather that object negation" (Görlach 1993: 120). An example of object negation with *not* taken from the Helsinki corpus can be seen below:

> (1) But she spoke *not of a lover only, but of a prince dear to him to whom she spoke;* and of the praises of a man who, till now, fill'd the old man's soul with joy at every recital of his bravery, or even his name (E3, CEFICT3B, FICTION, SAMPLE 1).

The emergence of *do*-support was also due to the new placement of adverbs of indefinite time and modality (never, ever, always …), which had occupied a postverbal position before the 15th and were now placed pre-verbally (Kroch 1989a: 142). However, as Kroch explains, *not* had an enclitic status and so there was less pressure to insert periphrastic *do* and place *not* before the main lexical verb.

Syntactic change proceeds gradually from the lexicon and thus it is not surprising that some verbs resisted the *do* construction more than others. Verbs such as *know, doubt, care, mistake, speak* continued to adopt forms such as *If I mistake not* until as late as the 19th century (Barber 1976: 267; Tieken 1985: 135).

Some of these and other phonotactic, stylistic and syntactic factors[3] have been found to correlate with the rise of *do* support in affirmatives and interrogatives. However, few studies have focused on the more specific determining factors affecting negative constructions during the period, or they tend to analyse the fictionalised language of one or more individual writers. Salmon (1966), for example, focuses on a synchronic analysis of Shakespeare's spoken language (drama). Baghdikian (1982, 1985) deals with negatives in different writers' literary productions and discusses some stylistic and social factors, but disregards syntactic ones. Frank (1985) offers statistical data taken from prose and dramatic works throughout the period but does not discuss the relevant figures for negatives. Below we shall offer some preliminary data which might be relevant for an explanation of the emergence of the new form with auxiliary *do* in negatives.

2. Chronological distribution

There are diverging views in the literature about the exact dates when *do* became categorial in negatives. Ellegård's (1953) was the first serious study using empirical data and a variationist approach in investigating a large number of texts in Early Modern English. For his diachronic analysis of the structure in question he used a series of linguistic factors such as word order, the position of adverbs and the availability of the Aux+Verb structure. The chronological divisions in his corpus are small enough to draw finer distinctions among the different periods of Early Modern English, but he pays little attention to the spoken language and thus underestimates the importance of this genre in the consolidation of the new pattern. For him the rise in the use of *do* in all sentence types was gradual and took place at different rates. It rose more rapidly in interrogative sentences (affirmatives and negatives) and much more slowly in negative and affirmative declaratives. In the

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[2] As Hudson (1997: 94) points out *do*-support was not required by auxiliaries on several grounds. Firstly, auxiliary verbs are typically intransitive, so language processing pressures on transitive verbs do not apply here; secondly, auxiliaries were already linked to negation through both morphology (by analogy with OE clitizised forms such as *nis* instead of *ne is* and ME *not* clitisized after some forms of the verb), syntax (the statistical link noticed by Denison (1993: 467) between auxiliary verrbs and *not*) and semantics.

[3] See among others Kroch et al. (1982), Kroch (1989a, 1989b), Rissanen (1985, 1986, 1991, 1994), Tieken-Boon van Ostade (1985, 1987), Curry (1992), Nevalainen (1991).

last decades of the 16th century, however, the frequency of *do* in negative declaratives declines for a time before rising again, and periphrastic *do* practically disappears in affirmatives.

For negatives, we have adapted Ellegård's results, which can be seen in Table 2, in order to conform to the three subperiods represented in the *Helsinki Corpus*, so that they can be compared to our own results for the eModE period. Moreover, for comparability reasons, we have not included in our analysis texts taken from the Bible, because they are represented in the first two subperiods of the Early Modern English sample, but not in the third.

TABLE 2. THE FREQUENCY OF DO-SUPPORT VS. V+NOT FOR NEGATIVE DECLARATIVES IN ELLEGÅRD'S (1953: 166) CORPUS-BASED STUDY

Period	1500-1575	1575-1650	1650-1700
Do-support	20.1%	30.7%	46%

From these figures we can see that for Ellegård and for other authors after him (Traugott 1972: 199; Rydén 1979: 31) *do*-support was not obligatory yet at the end of the eModE period. Table 3 below plots the course of this change in the Helsinki corpus.

TABLE 3. THE FREQUENCY OF *DO*-SUPPORT VS. *THE V+NOT* CONSTRUCTION FOR NEGATIVE DECLARATIVES IN THE THREE SUBPERIODS OF THE HELSINKI CORPUS (1500-1710).

Period	EModE1 (1500-1570)	EModE2 (1570-1640)	EModE3 (1640-1710
Vb+not	197 (81,4%)	219 (77.4%)	141 (44.8%)
Do-support	45 (18.6%)	67 (22.6%)	174 (55.2%)
Total	242	283	315

Both the data found in the Helsinki Corpus and the data supplied by Ellegård coincide in the fundamental fact that *do*-support for negative declaratives apparently rises more or less steadily, especially from the third subperiod onwards. Ellegård's work has the advantage that the relevant parts of his corpus are smaller (Table 2 shows a conflation of his results in three subperiods like those of the Helsinki corpus). This allows him to conclude that the use of *do* in negative statements drops during the period 1575-1600 only to rise sharply after the second part of the 17th century[4]. The picture is, for this reason, more complex than the figures of the Helsinki corpus, with its coarser chronological periodization, appear to show.

Our results and Ellegård's do, however, coincide in the fact that it is only by the end of the Early Modern English period that the periphrasis started to be the unmarked form, at least, as can be seen in Table 4, for trials. But there is one important difference between our results and Ellegård's; it is possible that because of the slightly more colloquial nature of the Helsinki corpus, auxiliary do is already predominant in the third subperiod: by 1700 55.2% of all negative clauses not containing another auxiliary verb show *do*-support. The last decades of the 17th century and two textual categories in special, scripts taken from trials and drama, must have been decisive for the regularization of *do*. It would be a matter of further study to follow its evolution across the same text types in a similar corpus during the 18th and the 19th centuries.

3. TEXTUAL DISTRIBUTION

Rissanen (1985: 225; 1986: 103) was the first author to stress the importance of spoken language in the regularization of the new construction. Although Ellegård (1953: 164-69) had advanced that this pattern was a feature of literary language and formal styles, at least in affirmative declaratives, other diachronists have suggested that there were two different continua for the spoken and written language during the period under study. For Tieken-Boon van Ostade (1985: 145) Lady Mary's

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[4] The stabilization of *do* during this period (from the second part of the 16th century to the beginning of the 17th century) might be explained by the emergence of the transitional pattern *not+V*, which can be found, for instance, in Shakespeare. For a discussion see Ukaji (1992).

eighteenth century writings show that the use of *do* for affirmatives was more regularized both in the more literate styles and in the speech of the lower classes in the writer's plays.

Baghdikian, while recognizing that the do-periphrasis in negatives was "first a spoken form before becoming the standard norm of the written language" (1985: 244-45), also demonstrates that in negatives the new periphrastic structure was widely used by both the "old-fashioned upper class "as well as by "the lower class people", at least in dialogue passages taken from different authors (Baghdikian 1985: 246).

Rissanen's (1991) corpus-based study focuses on the distribution of *do* in affirmative sentences in the Helsinki Corpus; his findings are that in the first subperiod of the corpus the pattern is more common in trials and in both scientific and educational treatises. On the other hand, in other speech-based genres such as the literary representation of dialogue (plays, fiction …) "do-periphrasis is not remarkably more common than in other types of writing" (Rissanen 1991: 322). This is in tune with the results we have found for negatives in the corpus. Table 4 gives an overview of the frequency of the periphrasis as compared to the use of *V+not* in different types of texts. As can be inferred from the data, the use of *do* is always high for trials, which are the prototype of texts recording actual speech in the corpus.

TABLE 4. THE FREQUENCY OF *DO*-SUPPORT VS. *V+NOT* FOR NEGATIVE DECLARATIVES IN THE *HELSINKI CORPUS* ACCORDING TO TEXT TYPE.

Period	EmodE1 (1500-1570)		EModE2 (1570-1640)		EModE3 (1640-1710)	
Text Type	V+not	*Do*-support	V+not	*Do*-support	V+not	*Do*-support
Law	14	0	0	2	0	7
Handbooks	19	5	19	11	12	1
Science	7	2	7	3	14	10
Education	13	4	3	2	14	5
Philosophy	13	5	15	1	17	12
Sermons	11	4	28	12	12	13
Trials	25	15	36	10	7	48
History	7	0	1	0	13	15
Travelogue	3	0	10	0	6	0
Diaries	0	0	14	0	5	10
Biography	9	4	7	3	8	11
Fiction	18	0	23	2	14	8
Drama	29	4	27	5	7	19
Private Letters	22	2	18	10	20	15
Official Letters	6	0	10	3	2	0

As confirmed by Rissanen (1991) for affirmatives, the percentages for negatives are high in trials, a speech-based, highly interactive genre. For other text types which have traditionally been considered to represent "informal" or "colloquial" styles, such as fiction or drama, the percentages are low. Fiction and drama are two genres in which speech is imitated, but they are not actual realizations of speech. As can be seen for fiction for the whole period and for drama dialogues until the third subperiod, it is possible that *do* was not yet felt to be an innovation which might give a flavour of informality to literary texts. On the other hand, the low percentages of *do* found for private letters in the first subperiod might be attributed to their non-interactive nature and to the idiosyncratic type of language used by their authors, often coming from different social classes and addressing different sorts of people.

On the other hand, there is a relatively high number of constructions showing *do*-support in formal non-imaginative textual categories such as handbooks, philosophic and educational treatises in eModE1, but especially in eModE2, when *do* had not been firmly established yet. There must exist, then, other textual and stylistic factors behind the scene which still need to be accounted for.

4. Linguistic conditioning factors

4.1. The strength of collocations

Table 5 shows that the new variant form was hardly ever used with a restricted set of verbs (*have*, *need*, *doubt*, *know*, *wit*, *care*, *dare*, *mean*). The high frequency of these verbs and the strength of the collocational links established between the verb and *not* explain their being retained in Early Modern English and as late as the 20th century in some dialects (Curry 1992: 708). In fact, the hypothesis might be put forward that some of these verbs acted more or less like auxiliary operators. Verbs such as *know* or *think* not only tend to resist co-ocurrence with *do* but also with other auxiliaries. Their status as fixed expressions prevented them from adopting the new type of negation:

> (2) I *know not* whether stale Newes may offend his eares being so long a drawing towards him. (E2,CEPRIV2,LET PRIV,SAMPLE 7)

> (3) (^Miss.^) What care I who's come; I *care not* a Fig who comes, nor who goes, as long as I must be lock'd up like the Ale-Cellar (E3,CEPLAY3A, DRAMA COMEDY, SAMPLE 2)

The change from V-not to do-negatives in the Early Modern period has affected different types of verbs, i.e. there has been lexical diffusion. As can be seen from Table 5, the percentage of the *V+not* structure accompanying this reduced group of verbs is still high in the third subperiod, which is a clear symptom of the lexicalisation of these collocations:

Table 5. The frequency of *do*-support vs. *V+not* for negative declaratives in the *Helsinki Corpus* in the set of the following verbs: *have, need, doubt, know, wit, care, dare, mean, think*:

Period	V+not	*Do*-support
EModE1 (1500-1570)	66/197 (33.5%)	1/45 (2.2%)
EModE2 (1570-1640)	113/219 (51.6%)	11/64 (17.2%)
EModE3 (1640-1710)	64/141 (45.3%)	44/174 (25.2%)

4.2. The fixation of a new word order (SVO)

Another strong agent in the process was the fixation of the word order SVO. This brought forward a number of other minor changes. The hypothesis states that intervening elements between the verb and its complements were becoming more and more disallowed in Early Modern English. However, as stated above, because *not* was a clitic form not usually accented there was less pressure to insert it before the base form of the verb. Table 6 shows, nevertheless, some significant results according to the type of verb complementation being used:

Table 6. The frequency of *do*-support vs. *V+not* for negative declaratives in the *Helsinki Corpus* according to the type of verb complement:

V complementation	V+not	*Do*-support
NP+ (Other)	180 (32.3%)	79 (27.9%)
Personal Pronoun	57 (10.2%)	43 (15.2%)
Other pronouns+ (Other)	27 (4.8%)	17 (6%)
Sentence Complement+ (Other)	193 (34.5%)	67 (23.7%)
Adjunct+ (Other)	28 (5%)	14 (4.9%)
Intransitive Verb+Other	38 (6.8%)	33 (11.7%)
Clause-Final Intransitive Verb	34 (6.1%)	7 (2.5%)
Ellipted complement+ (Other)	2 (0.3%)	23 (8.1%)
Total	557	283

First of all, when the verb was followed by an accumulation of clitic forms (the particle *not* and other unstressed object pronouns) recourse to *do*-support was comparatively preferred (57 cases out of 557 for V-not vs. 42 cases out of 283 for *do*-support). In patterns such as "I know it not" there was an awkward piling up of unaccented syllables, despite the fact that the verb has been kept adjacent to its object through a change in the word order. Thus, even in such cases as these, a structure such as "I do not know it" became with time more and more common than "I know it not" (10.2% vs. 15.2%):

(4) (^Diccon^) No by my fathers skin, my hand downe I lay it? Loke as I haue promised, I wil not denay it, But Hodge take good heede now, thou *do not beshite me.* (E1, CEPLAY1B, DRAMA COMEDY, SAMPLE 2)

Secondly, intransitive (especially clause-final) verbs made more and more use of the *V+not* pattern due to stylistic reasons (6.1% vs. 2.5%); this is in accordance with Kroch's (1989a: 143) results for interrogatives in the same period, perhaps because in this syntactic context the pressure of the new word order to keep the verb and its complements together was not felt at all.

Thirdly, the *V+not* pattern was also preferred when the verb was followed by a long syntactic constituent, as was the case with sentential complements. The unstressed negative particle *not* was no doubt a less salient intervening element in cases such as these, where the principle of end-weight was in operation:

(5) Thus I **speake not that I would haue it so,** but to your shame. (E1,CESERM1B, SERMON, SAMPLE 1)

Finally, *do*-support in negatives (as in affirmatives and interrogatives) acted as a pro-form by analogy with other auxiliaries. The main verb and all its complements were substituted by *do*, which also carried the morphological features of the verb (tense, person). The contexts which favoured the recourse to the new operator were the quick question and answer exchanges in trials, as can be seen especially in the third subperiod:

(6) (^L. C. J.^) Did you make (^Dunne^) drink?

Mr. (^Carpenter.^) No, I *did not.* (E3, CETRI3B, PROC TRIAL, SAMPLE 2)

4.3. THE PLACEMENT OF ADVERBIAL MODIFIERS

The last hypothesis to be checked on the corpus data was one advanced by Ellegård (1953: 181) and corroborated by other researchers (Rissanen 1986: 104-5; Kroch 1994). According to these studies, the presence of an adverbial modifier before the main verb tended to favour *do*-support in negatives and i other sentence types:

(7) And men **do not usually arrive** to this degree of wickedness at first, but they come to it by several steps. (E3,CESERM3A,SERMON,SAMPLE 1)

(8) I **do not yet hear** of anny other thing mentioned, but I suppose this was not all. (E3,CEPRIV3,LET PRIV,SAMPLE 4)

This was indeed connected with the strengthening prohibition on the intervention of any element between the verb and its complements due to the growing tendency to place adverbs of time and mood (always, ever, never, probably …) before the verb. The results for the Helsinki corpus appear in Table 7.

TABLE 7. THE FREQUENCY OF *DO*-SUPPORT VS. *V+NOT* FOR NEGATIVE DECLARATIVES IN THE HELSINKI CORPUS WHEN AN ADVERBIAL MODIFIER PRECEDES THE VERB.

Period	V+not	*Do*-support
Early Modern English	1	26

5. CONCLUDING REMARKS

In conclusion, while *do*-support coexisted with the simple *V+not* pattern in negative declaratives, it was becoming increasingly obligatory by the end of the 17th century. Each functional or external pressure on the system could have reinforced the emerging new pattern. Certain lexicalised phrases

such as "I think not" or "he doubted not what he said" helped in the process of fossilizing the older usage, especially in the written language. This regularization was, however, slower than in the case of interrogatives, because of the lesser pressure on the older pattern to conform to the new word order sequence. More attention in future research should be paid to genres reflecting speech, because the growing clitisization of *do/does/did*+*not* in speech (noticed by Rissanen 1994: 345-346) might have acted as a sort of catalyst for the rapid rise of the periphrastic form from around 1640 onwards. Moreover, a more thorough analysis of a wide range of lME and eighteenth and nineteenth century texts might throw more light on the constraints on the use of *do*-support. Finally, researchers should aldo pay closer attention to other stylistic (euphony, balanced structures …), semantic and pragmatic factors that might account for the slow process of regularization in negative declaratives per se, and not only in affirmative declaratives.

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