

A Note on the ‘*I not say*’ Construction

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1. Introduction

In the history of the English language, the construction ‘*I not say*’ was peculiar in that the finite verb was not supported by the auxiliary *do* when preceded by *not*. It is said to be typical of Shakespeare, as in this example:

(1) ... she *not denies* it

(Shakespeare, *Much Ado about Nothing* 1836)

According to Nakao and Koma (1990: 159), this construction appeared characteristically in the period of Early Modern English (c.1500-1700), corresponding to (2d):

- | | | | |
|-----|----|---------------|--|
| (2) | a. | Ic ne secge | OE (c.700-1100) |
| | b. | I ne seye not | EME (c.1100-1300) – 15c |
| | c. | I say not | the end of 14c – EModE |
| | d. | I not say | 15c – EModE |
| | e. | I do not say | 16c – 17c, established at the end of 17c |
| | f. | I don't say | 17c – |

This historical development of English negation has often been captured in Jespersen's (1917) cycle of negation, summarized by Fischer et al. (2000: 305):

- (3) i. Negation is expressed by one negative marker.
- ii. Negation is expressed by a negative marker in combination with a negative adverb or noun phrase.
- iii. The second element in Stage (ii) takes on the function of

expressing negation by itself; the original negative marker becomes optional.

- iv. The original negative marker becomes extinct.

The oldest example (2a) represents Stage (i); when *not* began to appear in addition to *ne* as in (2b), Stage (ii) took place; and after (2b) and (2c) had coexisted in Stage (iii), the original negator *ne* disappeared in Stage (iv) where (2c) completely overwhelmed (2b). The auxiliary *do* started to support tense inflections as in (2e) when the verb itself could no longer do so (while (2c) could) due to the weakness of its verbal features (see Murakami (2003) for a discussion). Later, the contracted form of negation as in (2f) prevailed colloquially.

Strangely, the pattern in (2d), then, is left with no explanation, having no place in the cycle of negation. The purpose of this paper is to consider descriptions about this phenomenon, and attempt to provide a theoretical explanation for it. I will pursue the possibility of deriving this negative structure in terms of general verb movement.

2. A Controversy: Ukaji (1992) vs. Iyeiri (2005)

In his survey of 91 instances of the '*I not say*' construction over the 15th through 18th centuries, Ukaji (1992: 455) observes that it "was rather rare before 1500, ... reached its highest point in the times of Shakespeare and Jonson. But ... in the middle of the 18th century it became virtually obsolete." Further, he admits "no successive transition from any previous construction or to any following construction," saying that (4b) is just coexistent with the two constructions (4a) and (4c):

- (4) a. I say not (= (2c))
- b. I not say (= (2d))
- c. I do not say (= (2e))

Based on his collection of (4b) sentences, Ukaji (1992: 456) draws the

conclusion that (4b) is “a hybrid [of (4a) and (4c)] brought about to serve as a kind of bridge to make the transition [from (4a) to (4c)] easier.” In his terminology, ‘I not say’ is such a bridge phenomenon, ephemeral in syntactic change, becoming “useless once the transition was completed and a new form has evolved.”

Referring to Ukaji (1992), Iyeiri (2005) also discusses this construction, but she would rather not consider ‘I not say’ as a bridge. Instead, Iyeiri (2005: 60) argues “that ‘not + finite verb’ goes back to Old and Middle English,” contending “that it is in constant decline from Old and Middle English and that early Modern English simply displays its remnant stage.” On the basis of her book (2001), she investigates a wide range of negative sentences from Old English to early Modern English, thus empirically confirming the decline of this construction under discussion.

Firstly in Old English, Iyeiri finds in Ælfric’s *Supplementary Homilies* three instances of this construction ‘not ne + finite verb’ (ne always intervening in this period) against two instances of ‘ne + finite verb + not.’ One of the three examples is:

- (5) and Gode *naht ne hearmað* þeah ðe þu hine forgite
(Ælfric, *Supplementary Homilies* 30/47)

Secondly in Middle English, Iyeiri observes that the percentage of this construction usage is the highest in the verse text *The Owl and the Nightingale*, with 14.3% of all negative sentences containing the sentential *not*, still high in *Havelok*, with 10.9% , and the lowest in the prose text Caxton’s *Reynard the Fox*, with 0.2%:

- (6) Vp she stirte and *nouth ne sat* (Havelok, 567)

- (7) that ye *not mysdoo* (Caxton, *Reynard the Fox* 108/19)

Iyeiri’s (2005: 69-70) Tables 2 and 3 (Tables 1 and 2 here respectively) demonstrate the gradual declension of the construction chronologically:

Table 1. 'not + finite verb' (or 'not ne + finite verb') in early English prose texts

Text	'not + V' ('not ne + V')	Proportion to the total of not
<i>Ælfric's Supplementary Homilies</i>	3	60.0%
<i>Peterborough Chronicle 1070-1154</i>	2	18.2%
<i>Ayenbite of Inwyt</i> (pp. 5-101)	13	8.5%
<i>Northern Prose Version of the Rule of St. Benet</i>	1	0.7%
<i>Canterbury Tales</i> (Prose)	1	0.3%
Caxton's <i>Reynard the Fox</i>	1	0.2%

(Iyeiri's Table 2 (all))

Table 2. 'not + finite verb' (or 'not ne + finite verb') in Middle English verse texts

Text	'not + V' ('not ne + V')	Proportion to the total of not
<i>The Owl and the Nightingale</i>	5	14.3%
<i>King Horn</i>	2	12.5%
<i>Havelok</i>	6	10.9%
<i>The South English Legendary</i> (vol.1)	3	0.7%
<i>English Metrical Homilies</i>	2	1.8%
<i>The Poems of William of Shoreham</i>	6	3.7%
<i>Canterbury Tales</i> (Verse)	18	2.5%

(Iyeiri's Table 3 (part))

Additionally in the ME period, this form of negation involves the loss of *ne* as seen from (6) to (7), leading Iyeiri (2005: 68) to infer that "'not ne + finite verb' as evidenced in Old English develops into 'not + finite verb' when the adverb *ne* disappears in the course of the Middle English period."

Finally in Early Modern English, where this construction is supposed to be characteristic, reaching its culmination in Shakespeare (Ukaji (1992); cf. "pretty frequent in Shakespeare" Jespersen (1917:13)), Iyeiri (2005: 64-65) discovers the scarcity of 'not + finite verb' even in Shakespeare and Jonson. The highest proportions of 'not + finite verb' to the total number of relevant examples are seen in Shakespeare's *Much Ado about Nothing* and Jonson's

Sejanus: with only 1.05% and the exceptionally high percentage of 6.01% respectively.

(8) *We not endure* these flatteries (Jonson, *Sejanus* 1605)

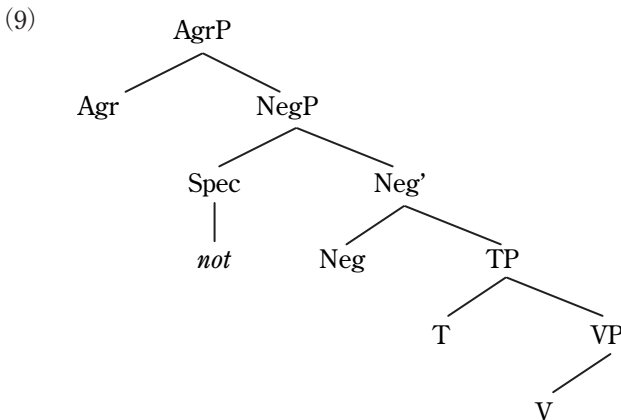
Regrettably the OE examples are very few, but Iyeiri's (2005: 77) argument is still sufficiently convincing: "It arises from 'not ne + finite verb' with the obliteration of the adverb *ne*. The process is the same as the occurrence of 'finite verb + not' from '*ne* + finite verb + not'."

3. Theoretical Explanations

Putting aside its historical origin, we have to derive '*I not say*' sentences theoretically. Two questions immediately arise as to where *not* is located and how a lexical verb moves in this construction.

3.1. Previous Studies

Roberts (1993: 279) proposed the following clause structure with *not* in the Spec of NegP:



Assuming that V raised to T, Neg, up to Agr in the 15th century, Roberts

(1993: 304) suggested ‘Stylistic-Fronting of *not*’ in the ‘*I not say*’ order. This is because in his observation, all occurrences of this order have either subject gaps or pronominal subjects, in which case, subject pronouns could cliticize to C in syntax, inducing Stylistic-Fronting of *not* (perhaps onto AgrP, which he never specified). Under his analysis, *not* was an XP at that time, since only XPs undergo Stylistic-Fronting.

Ishikawa (1995) followed exactly the same clause structure as in (9), and even his analysis of *not* was identical in that it was an XP occupying the Spec of NegP (which, later in the 16th century, became an X shifting into the head of NegP in his argumentation). The difference between derivations of (10a) and (10b) are explained in terms of strong/weak Agr (*cf.* Pollock (1989)):

- (10) a. I say not (= (4a))
 b. I not say (= (4b))

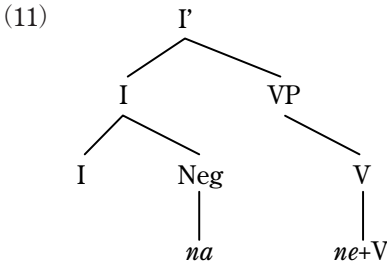
According to Ishikawa (1995: 209), (10a) is derived by overt V-to-Agr movement due to its strong Agr, while overt Agr-to-V lowering and LF raising of the complex [_V [_T Agr]] are applied in (10b) since its weak Agr cannot attract a main V. This was possible because, in the period when (10a) and (10b) types of negation coexisted, either strong or weak Agr was available in its transience from strong to weak features.

Mizoguchi (2007: 63) also assumed the identical clause structure diagramed in (9), and argued for two positions of *not* in Old and early Middle English: Agr’ for the ‘*not ne* + finite verb’ order and T’ for the ‘*ne* + finite verb + *not*’ order. According to her discussion, this is the reason why *not* was above V in ‘*not ne* + finite verb’ and below V in ‘*ne* + finite verb + *not*’ after V raised invariably in those periods. Incidentally, *ne* is base-generated in Neg to be picked up by V on the path of its raising up to Agr. In the same way as Ishikawa (1995) and Fischer et al. (2000), Mizoguchi (2007: 65-67) argued that, due to the loss of *ne* around 1400, Neg became empty, so that, although originally placed in the Spec of NegP, *not* began to occupy Neg after *ne*. She further insisted that, when ‘*I not say*’ sentences were used, *not* was still located in the Spec of NegP, and Affix lowering and LF raising applied in that order.

To summarize, in the 'I not say' construction, all the three researchers mentioned above placed *not* in the same Spec of NegP of the identical clause structure. This placement resulted even though their methods of deriving that order by way of moving either a main V or affix, and/or *not* are different from each other.

3.2. The Present Analysis

In Murakami (1992; 1995; 1998; 2002; 2007), I have never admitted any clause structure with multiple functional heads, so I have to yield a solution for 'I not say' without using them, even without a NegP. Let us assume the following clause structure:



I suggested the historical change of *not* as follows (Murakami (2007: 120)):

“*ne* is base-generated under V, on which it is proclitic from the beginning (Stage (i)). Therefore it always raises together with V. Next, the location in which *na* arises as negative reinforcement is the ... post-position of I (Stage (ii)). Both *na* (or any variant of *na*) and *ne* remained in the same positions respectively throughout OE and ME, until *ne* became optional (Stage (iii)), and eventually obsolete (Stage (iv)).”

However, this does not explain the archaic sentences below, in which *na* (or any variant, eventually *not*) precedes the (*ne*+) finite verb. These examples are borrowed from Iyeiri (2005):

- OE: (12) ... and he wurde gesælig gif he *na ne syngode*
 (Ælfric, *Supplementary Homilies* 11/94)
- ME: (13) a. Vp she stirte and *nouth ne sat* (Havelok 567)
 b. that ye *not mysdoo* (Caxton, *Reynard the Fox* 108/19)
 c. I may nocht wel ne *noght ne schal*
 Of veine gloire excuse me
 (Gower, *Confessio Amantis* 110/2722-3)
 d. And if that he *noght may*, par aventure
 (Chaucer, “The Shipman’s Tale” in *The Canterbury Tales*, 15)
 e. Whan Troyens dede this trespass, Menelaus at home *not was*
 (ca. 1400, *Laud Troy Book* 3092)
- EModE: (14) ... she *not denies* it
 (Shakespeare, *Much Ado about Nothing* 1836)

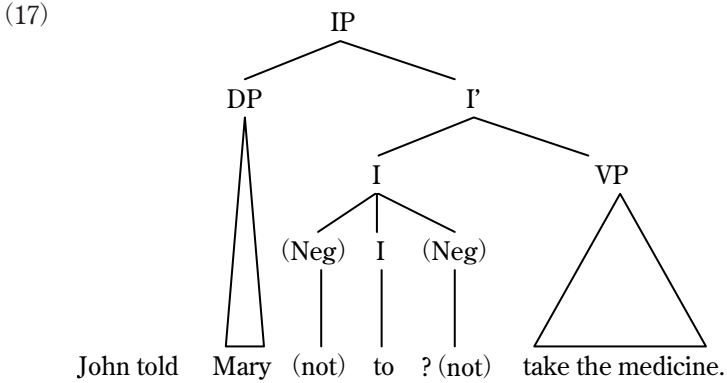
Note also that this form was (infrequently) employed with modal auxiliary verbs as in (13c) and (13d), and *be* as in (13e).

I assume that finite verbs must have raised in these sentences due to the strong I, in the periods when the verbs invariably raised from V to I. Otherwise, the auxiliary *do* should have been base-generated in the weak I, so that the verbs could no longer have moved into the I position filled by *do* (see Murakami (1993) for details). The problem is, then, how *not* (or any precursor) can be situated in front of a finite verb.

In order to overcome this problem, let us turn to some infinitival sentences and the structure for them:

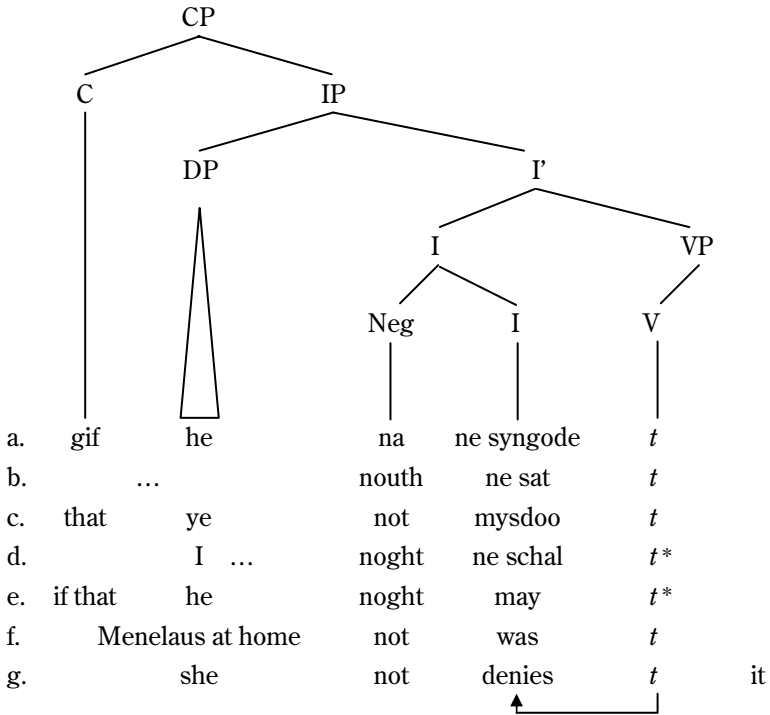
- (15) a. John told Mary not to take the medicine.
 b. ?John told Mary to not take the medicine.
- (16) a. John told Mary not to be lenient.
 b. ?John told Mary to not be lenient.

In the case of *to*-infinitive clauses, the position of *not* before *to* is considered standard, while the position of *not* after *to* cannot be excluded at all. Therefore, I concluded in Murakami (1995; 2007) that sentential *not* may either pre- or post-modify the I category in nonfinite clauses. Thus, the structure for (15), where there is no movement involved, should be as follows:



The suggestion here is that we apply this pre-I placement of *not* for the 'I not say' construction, so that the sentences in (12) through (14) had most likely been derived in the following way.

(18)

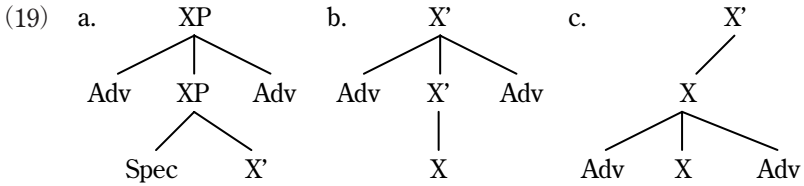


* In (18d) and (18e), whether modal auxiliaries moved from V to I or they arose originally in I is an issue beyond the scope of this article.

By placing *not* (or any precursor) in front of I at its X^0 level, finite verbs (with or without *ne*) raised from V to I without skipping *not*, due to the strong I in these periods of English history.

4. Concluding Remarks

The conclusion that I drew in Murakami (2007) has been reached here again. From a general point of view, adverbials may adjoin to all three levels of categorical projections – either XP, single-bar X, or X^0 . And indeed, they may do so from either left or right:



I have been arguing for (19c) here, but for (19a) and (19b), there are examples of the following sort, respectively:

- (20) a. *Hopefully* I'll attend the party.
 b. I'll attend the party *hopefully*.

- (21) a. I *always* love you.
 b. I love you *always*.

The difficult question that immediately arises should be answered briefly here. The question is two-fold:

- (i) In the case of *to*-infinitive clauses, why are the orders *not to* and *to not* both allowed (, though the former is unmarked and the latter marked)?
 (ii) In the case of finite clauses, why is the order **not do* absolutely ruled out (, the strict order being *do not*)?

For (i), according to Nomura and Smith (2007), there is a slight difference in meaning between *not to* and *to not*. Put simply, *not to V* conveys 'action,' while *to not V* refers to 'state.' The positions of *not* might be selected semantically. As for (ii), following Murakami (1993), the auxiliary *do* is a tense supporter which should be base-generated under I when the I is too weak to attract V. Following Murakami (1995) further, the finite *do/does/did* very locally selects *not* within I, from left to right, just as a head selects a complement from left to right in English. Hence the word order is restricted to *do not*.

Recall that in the 'I not say' structure, its I is strong enough to raise V.

There is therefore no possibility for the auxiliary *do* to be employed. In this construction, *not* was situated in front of *I* for some reason – semantically or ‘stylistically fronted’ in Roberts’ (1993) terminology.

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