

Variation and Change in the Historical Syntax of English

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1 The history of the verb-second constraint in English.

1.1 The v2 syntax of Old English.

- (1) a. ... *ðeah* hit *ær* upahæfen wære (CP 34.6)
... although it before up-raised was
- b. *Se* manfulla gast *þa* martine gehyrsumode. (AELS 31.1050)
the evil spirit then Martin obeyed
- (2) a. ... *þæt* he ahof upp *þa* earcan (GC(C) 42.6)
... that he lifted up the chest
- b. *þa* sundor-halgan eodun *þa* ut soþlice. (WSCp, Matt. 12.14)
the Pharisees went then out certainly
- (3) a. & of heom twam is eall manncynn cumen (WHom 6.52)
and of them two is all mankind come
- b. *þæt* hus hæfdon Romane to *ðæm* anum tacne geworht (Or 59.3)
that building had R with the one feature constructed
- c. *þær* wearþ se cyning Bagsecg ofslægen (Anglo-Saxon Chronicles, Parker, 871)
there was the king B slain
- (4) a. *Ælc* yfel he mæg don (WHom, 4.62)
each evil he can do
- b. scortlice ic hæbbe nu gesæd ymb *þa þrie* dælas... (Or 9.18)
briefly I have now spoken about the three parts
- c. æfter his gebede he ahof *þæt* cild up... (AEChom. 2.28)
after his prayer he lifted the child up
- (5) a. *þin* agen geleafa *þe* hæfþ gehæledne (BIHom 15)
thine own faith thee has healed
- b. & seofon ærendracan he him hæfde to asend (ASC, Parker, 905)
and seven messengers he him had to sent
- (6) a. hwi sceole we oþres mannes niman? (AELS 24.188)
why should we another man's take
- b. *þa* ge-mette he sceaðan (AELS 31.151)
then met he robbers

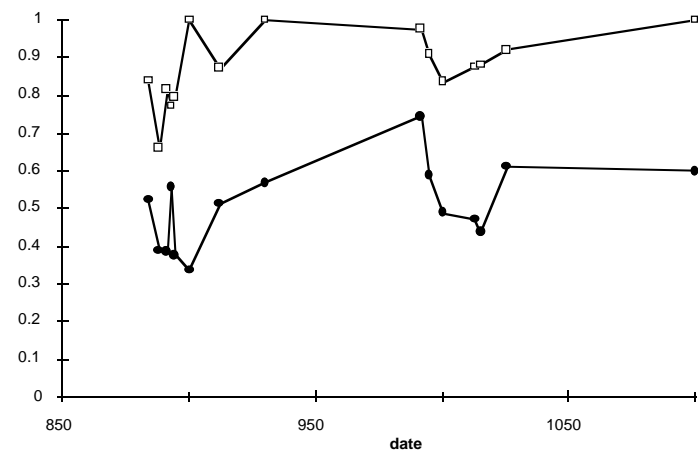


Figure 1: Frequency of INFL-medial phrase structure in Old English (from Pintzuk 1991).

- c. *ne* mihton hi nænigne fultum æt him begitan (Bede 48.9–10)
not could they not-any help from him get
- d. *hæfdon* hi hiora onfangen ær Hæsten to Beamfleote come (ASC, Parker, 894)
had they them received before H to B came
- (7) *Her* Oswald se eadiga arcebisceop forlet *þis* lif. (ASC, Laud, 992)
in-this-year Oswald the blessed archbishop forsook this life
- (8) *Kemenade* 1997:
 - a. *þæt* eallum folce sy gedemed beforan *ðe* (Paris Ps. 9.18)
that all people(dat. sg.) be(sg.) judged before thee
 - b. *þonne* ælce dæge beoð manega acennede þurh hys mihte on world
when each day are(pl.) many(nom. pl.) given birth through his power on world (AEHP.VI.120)

1.2 The V2 syntax of the Middle English dialects.

Preposed element	NP subjects			Pronoun subjects		
	Number inverted	Number uniniv.	% inverted	Number inverted	Number uniniv.	% inverted
NP complements	50	4	93	4	84	05
PP complements	12	4	75	0	11	00
Adjective complements	20	1	95	7	14	33
<i>þa/then</i>	37	2	95	26	10	72
<i>now</i>	12	1	92	8	22	27
PP adjuncts	56	19	75	2	99	02
adverbs	79	59	57	1	181	01

Table 1: V2 in seven early Midlands texts.

Preposed element	NP subjects			Pronoun subjects		
	Number inverted	Number uniniv.	% inverted	Number inverted	Number uniniv.	% inverted
NP complements	7	0	100	58	3	95
PP complements	18	0	100	10	0	100
Adjective complements	1	0	100	4	2	67
<i>then</i> (no <i>þa</i> in text)	15	0	100	28	1	97
<i>now</i>	no data			2	0	100
PP adjuncts	42	5	89	73	7	91
all other adverbs	25	1	96	51	5	91

Table 2: V2 in the Northern Prose Rule of Saint Benet.

1.3 The mixed language of later texts and the loss of V2.

Preposed element	NP subjects			Pronoun subjects		
	Number inverted	Number uniniv.	% inverted	Number inverted	Number uniniv.	% inverted
NP complements	8	0	100	16	9	64
PP complements/adjuncts	21	3	88	48	21	70
Adjective complements	10	0	100	2	6	25
<i>then</i> (no <i>þa</i> in text)	6	1	86	24	23	51
<i>now</i>	4	0	100	14	3	82
adverbs	20	5	80	35	26	57

Table 3: V2 in the Northern ms. (Thornton) of the Mirror of St. Edmund.

Preposed element	NP subjects			Pronoun subjects		
	Number inverted	Number uniniv.	% inverted	Number inverted	Number uniniv.	% inverted
NP complements	12	1	92	5	13	28
PP complements/adjuncts	24	5	83	9	41	18
Adjective complements	14	0	100	0	1	00
<i>then</i> (no <i>þa</i> in text)	6	2	75	13	13	50
<i>now</i>	3	0	100	5	9	36
adverbs	20	5	80	4	41	09

Table 4: V2 in the southern ms. (Vernon) of the Mirror of St. Edmund.

1.4 Dating the CP-V2 grammar.

- (9) a. (pronoun) It was MAYN [my] daughter's house.
 b. (complementizer) ...there wasn't an item VOS [that] we didn't have.
 c. (preposition) ...we go MIT [with] the bus ...
 d. (article) ...DER [the] operation came out wonderful.
- (10) Ulf let aræran cyrice for hanum and for Gunware saula.
 Ulf let build church for him and for Gunware's soul
- (11) LATIN: dominum deum tuum adorabis
 LINDISFARNE: drihten god *ðin worða ðu*
 RUSHWORTH: drihten god *ðinne wearða ðu*
 WEST SAXON: drihten *þinne god ðu geead-metst.*
 'You will worship the Lord your God.' (Luke 4.8)
- (12) LATIN: oculos habentes non uidetis
 LINDISFARNE: ego *habbað gie* ... hæbbende ne geseað gie
 RUSHWORTH: ego *habbas ge* ne gi-seas ge
 WEST SAXON: Eagan *ge habbað & ne ge-seoð.*
 'Having eyes, do you not see?' (Mark 8.18)
- (13) LATIN: et aures habentes non auditis nec recordamini
 LINDISFARNE: & earo *gie habbað* ne geherað gie ne eft *ðohto gie*
 RUSHWORTH: earu *habbas ge* ne gi-heras ne eft *ðohtun ge*
 WEST SAXON: & earan. & ne gehyrað. ne ge ne *þencaþ*
 'and having ears, do you not hear? And do you not remember?' (Mark 8.18)

	Topic appears in both Northumbrian and West Saxon texts	Topic appears in Northumbrian only
Inversions in Northumbrian	5 out of 58	14 out of 82
Inversions in West Saxon	0 out of 58	–

Table 5: Pronoun subject inversions in the Northumbrian glosses and West Saxon gospels.

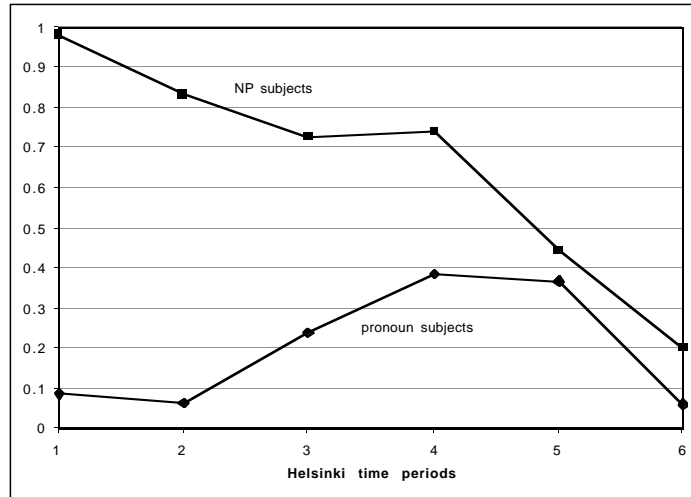


Figure 2: Frequency of subject-verb inversion in the PPCME2 and PCCEModE – full noun phrase versus pronoun subjects (from Johnson and Whitton 2002).

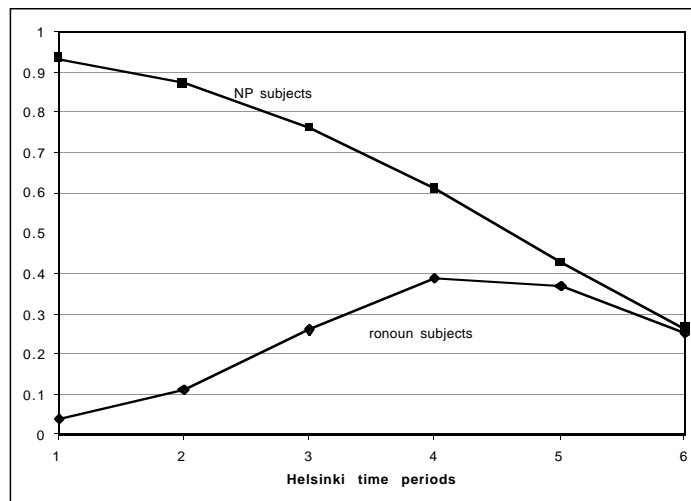
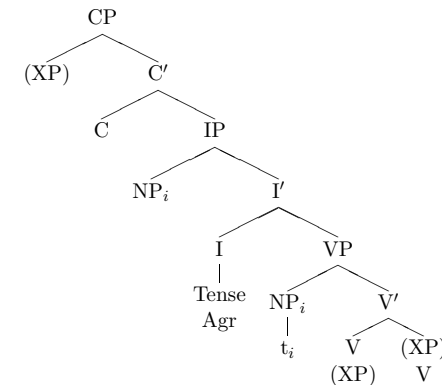


Figure 3: Model of the frequency of subject-verb inversion in the PPCME2 as three-way logistic competition between Northern V2, Southern V2 and Modern English grammars.

2 The loss of OV word order in English.

(14)



(15) ... XP_1 ... I^0 ... XP_2 ... V^0 ... XP_3 ...

- (16) a. Halie alde ancren **hit** maȝe don summes weis (CMANCRIW,II.58.565)
 holy old anchoresses it may do some ways
 ‘Holy old anchoresses may do it in a certain way’
- b. Sara þu hauest **me** ouercumen (CMANCRIW,II.173.2409)
 Sarah thou hast me overcome
 ‘Sarah, thou has overcome me’
- c. oðet he habbe izetted **ou** al þet ȝe wulle (CMANCRIW,I.68.229)
 until he has granted you all that you desire
 ‘until he has granted you all that you desire’

2.1 Structural VO word order begins in Old English (Pintzuk 1997).

- (17) he wold adraefan ut anne æþeling (ChronB(T) 82.18-19)
 he would drive out a prince

Clause type	Frequency after main verb
INFL-final	0/90 = 0.0%
INFL-initial	15/275 = 5.5%

Table 6: Frequency of post-verbal particles by clause type in Old English.

Clause structure and type	N	Frequency postverbal
I-initial main clause	68	.22
I-initial subordinate clause	32	.09
I-final main clause	38	.40
I-final subordinate clause	72	.25
Total	210	.24

Table 7: Frequency of postverbal DPs in *Beowulf* by clause type.

Clause structure and type	N	Frequency postverbal
I-initial main clause	245	.43
I-initial subordinate clause	230	.23
I-final main clause	40	.08
I-final subordinate clause	140	.12
Total	655	.27

Table 8: Frequency of postverbal DPs in later Old English by clause type.

2.2 The loss of OV word order in Middle English

- (18) a. ear he hefde his ranceun fülleliche ipaiȝet. (CMANCRIW,II.101.1218)
before he had his ransom fully paid
‘before he had fully paid his ransom’
- b. for þat hie nedden here synnes er bet. (CMTRINIT,69.950)
for that they NEG-had their sins before atoned-for
‘because they had not atoned for their sins before’
- c. ðanne hie willeð here ibede to godde bidden, (CMVICES1,143.1773)
when they will their prayer to God pray
‘when they will pray their prayer to God’
- (19) a. þeos ne schulen neuer song singen in heouene. (CMHALI,142.222)
these NEG shall never song sing in heaven
‘These shall never sing songs in heaven’
- b. þat ne haue noht here sinnes forleten. (CMTRINIT,67.934)
who NEG have not their sins forsake
‘who have not forsaken their sins’
- c. and makede him fleme þere he hadde er louerd iben. (CMTRINIT,61.822)
and made him outcast where he had before lord ben
‘and made him an outcast where he had earlier been a lord’
- (20) Ðv qð ha keiser nauest nawt þis strif rihtwisliche ideaet (CMKATHE,30.184)
thou said she emperor NEG-have not this strife rightly settled
‘“Thou, Emperor,” she said, “hast not rightly settled this dispute” ’

	NP-V-pro	V-pro-NP
West Midlands		
Ancrene Riwe	5	9
Katherine Group	3	13
Total WM	8	22
Lambeth Homilies (E)	0	1
Southeast Midlands		
Trinity Homilies	0	4
Vices and Virtues	0	2
Total SEM	0	6
All texts	8	29

Table 9: Position of the remaining object in double-object clauses with a postverbal pronoun object.

- (21) For alle þeo þe habbeð ani good idon me (CMANCRIW,I.64.212)
for all those that have any good done me
‘For everyone who has done me any good’
- (22) a. Jón hefur fáar bækur lesið.
John has few books read
‘John has read few books.’
[van der Wurff 1999: example (7), p. 5]
- b. he haþ on vs mercy, for he may al þynge do (Barlam 2740)
‘He has mercy on us, for he can do everything’
[van der Wurff 1999: example (19), p. 8]

	NP-V-pro		V-pro-NP	
	quant. NP	non-quant. NP	quant. NP	non-quant. NP
West Midlands				
Ancrene Riwe	2	1	2	7
Katherine Group	2	0	4	8
Total WM	4	1	6	15
Lambeth H. (E)	0	0	1	0
Southeast Midlands				
Trinity Homilies	0	0	1	3
Vices and Virtues	0	0	1	1
Total SEM	0	0	2	4
All texts	4	1	9	19

Table 10: Position of quantified and non-quantified NP objects in clauses with a postverbal pronoun object.

- (23) <Me schal> leoue sustren þeose storien tellen eft ou. (CMANCRIW,II.122.1552)
‘One shall, dear sisters, these stories tell afterwards/after to you’

3 The loss of verb-to-INFL raising in English.

		Post-I	Post-V	% Post-I QNP	% Post-I non-QNP
West Midlands					
Ancrene Riwe	main	2	10	17	19
	subordinate	6	12	33	24
	total	8	22	27	22
Katherine Group	main	5	8	38	23
	subordinate	4	6	40	34
	total	9	14	39	29
Total WM	main	10	27	28	21
	subordinate	18	26	36	28
	total	28	53	32	25
Lambeth Homilies (L)	main	0	1	0	13
	subordinate	1	1	50	73
	total	1	2	33	50
Lambeth Homilies (E)	main	3	8	25	18
	subordinate	7	7	50	24
	total	10	15	40	22
Southeast Midlands					
Trinity Homilies	main	4	10	29	27
	subordinate	10	5	67	56
	total	14	15	48	43
Vices and Virtues	main	9	10	47	20
	subordinate	9	7	56	41
	total	18	17	51	33
Total SEM	main	13	20	39	24
	subordinate	19	12	61	48
	total	32	32	50	38
All Texts	total	60	85	41	30

Table 11: The distribution of quantified and non-quantified noun phrases in clauses with an auxiliary verb.

	Post-INFL		Post-VERB		% Post-INFL	
	QNP	non-QNP	QNP	non-QNP	QNP	non-QNP
main	28	13	289	1694	9	1
subordinate	42	34	305	2367	12	1
total	70	47	594	4061	11	1

Table 12: The distribution of quantified and non-quantified noun phrases in clauses with an auxiliary verb in Late Middle English

Date	Negative declarative		Negative question		Affirmative question	
	% do	N	% do	N	% do	N
1400-1425	0	177	11.7	17	0	1
1426-1475	1.2	903	8.0	25	2.6	38
1476-1500	4.8	693	11.1	27	12.5	40
1501-1525	7.8	605	59.0	78	25.5	55
1526-1535	13.7	651	60.7	56	46.2	26
1536-1550	27.9	735	75.0	84	47.6	84
1551-1575	38.0	313	85.4	48	73.1	67
1576-1600	23.8	629	64.8	128	76.7	202
1601-1625	36.7	278	93.7	95	86.4	381
1626-1650	31.7	344	84.2	38	88.8	89
1651-1700	46.0	274	92.3	52	89.3	122
1700-1750	87.1	70	100.0	16	100.0	37

Table 13: Frequency of periphrastic *do* by context (all data from Ellegård 1953).

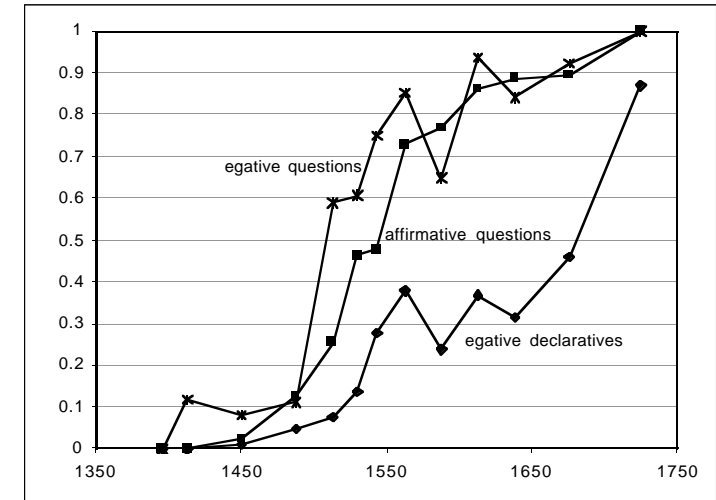


Figure 4: Frequency of periphrastic *do* by context.

Dates	% do	N (estimated)
1400-1425	0.23	4,324
1426-1475	0.27	42,770
1476-1500	1.78	56,024
1501-1525	1.37	26,884
1526-1535	2.27	17,672
1536-1550	7.05	18,048
1551-1575	8.13	13,724
1576-1600	4.59	16,920
1601-1625	2.07	7,426
1626-1650	1.43	6,768
1651-1700	0.92	7,426

Table 14: Frequency of *do* in affirmative declaratives.

Dates	% never-V	N
1426-1475	23.5	154
1476-1500	34.7	186
1501-1525	69.4	109
1526-1535	88.8	170
1536-1550	89.8	152
1551-1575	89.2	88

Table 15: Frequency of *never-V* word order in sentences with tensed main verbs.

- (24) a. Naske ye of counseil.
not-ask you of counsel
(Ancrene Riwe 58.569)
- b. Helpe thou me.
help you me
(The Earliest Prose Psalter 150.2290)
- (25) a. but I will be your good lord, do you not doubt. (361 O:4-2-39)
b. Do you and your fellows attend them in. (361 M:5-1-106)
- (26) a. And feare ye nott them which kylle the body (310 mt10-28)
b. Forbid ye hym not (310 lk9-50)
- (27) a. Don't you worry.
b. Don't anybody move.

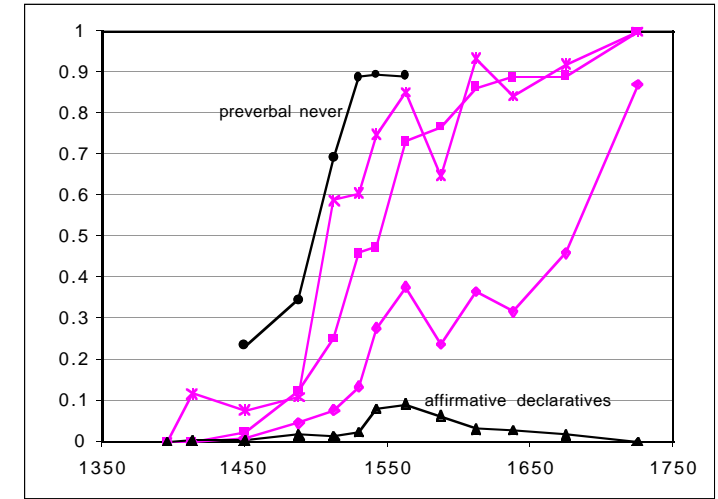


Figure 5: Frequency of preverbal *never* and affirmative declarative *do* compared to *do* in questions and negative declaratives.

Dates	% do	N
1400-1425	0	52
1426-1475	1.06	282
1476-1500	0	129
1501-1525	1.20	166
1526-1535	0	101
1536-1550	0	72
1551-1575	9.30	43
1576-1600	6.40	125
1601-1625	35.33	184
1626-1650	23.81	21
1651-1700	51.52	33
1701-1710	100.00	28

Table 16: Frequency of *do* in negative imperatives.

- (28) *not-to-verb*
- a. that sche wuld vwche-save nowth to laboure agens yw in this matere tyl ye
that she would promise not to labour against you in this matter until you
kom hom
come home (Paston Letters 221.310)
- b. that they that ben sike of hir body ben worthy to ben hated but rather worthy of
that they that are sick of their body are worthy to be hated but rather worthy of
pite wel more worthy nat to ben hated
pity even more worthy not to be hated (Chaucer's Boethius 449.C2.379)

(29) *to-verb-not*

- a. to sorow noght for hys syn as he sulde do
to sorrow not for his sin as he should do (Rolle's Form of Living 99.260)
- b. And herfore monye men vson wel to come not in bedde with schetis, but be
and therefore many men are-used well to come not in bed with sheets but be
hulude about the bed
covered above the bed (Wycliffite Sermons I,479.641)

Dates	not-to-verb	to-verb-not
1150-1250	0	0
1250-1350	0	0
1350-1420	10	4
1420-1500	4	10

Table 17: *not-to-verb* and *to-verb-not* order in negative infinitivals.

(30) *to-verb-not-participle*

- a. and said mayster parson, I praye you to be not displeasyd ...
and said master parson I pray you to be not displeased ...
(Caxton's Prologues and Epilogues 88.176)
- b. Ha! What it es mykell to be worthi lovyng and be noght loved!
ha what it is much to be worth loving and be not loved
(Rolle's Form of Living 88.52)

(31) *to-verb-not-direct object*

- a. to conforme noght his will to Gods will, to gyf noght entent till hes prayers
to conform not his will to God's will, to give not heed to his prayers
(Rolle's Form of Living 99.263)
- b. and to spille not oure tyme, be it short be it long at Goddis ordynance.
and to waste not our time, be it short be it long at God's ordinance
(Purvey's Prologue to the Bible I,56.73)

(32)

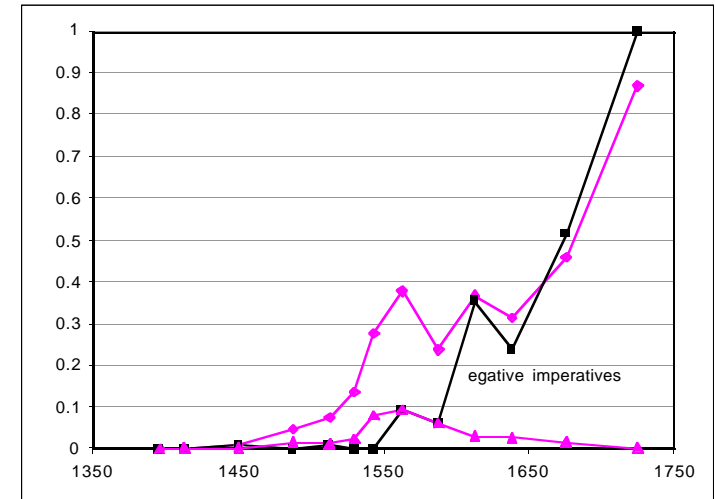
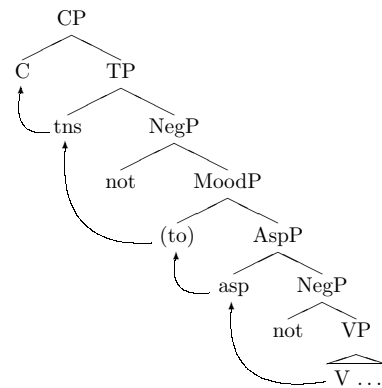


Figure 6: Frequency of *do* in negative imperatives compared to negative and affirmative declaratives.

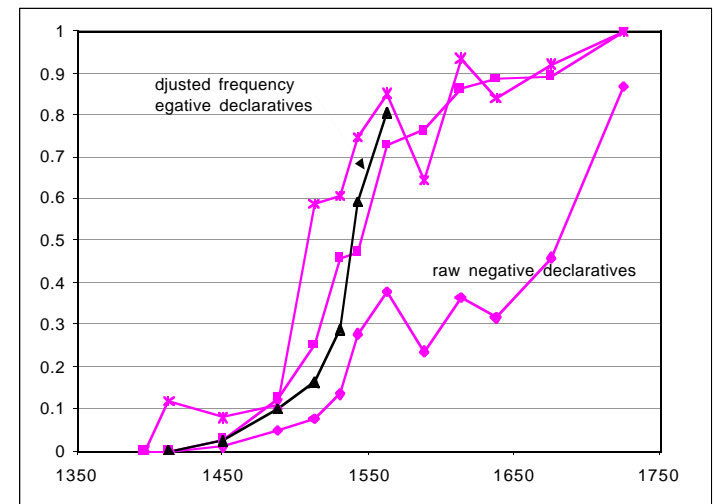


Figure 7: Adjusted frequency of *do* in negative declaratives compared to questions.

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