

## ON OLD ENGLISH NEGATIVE MORPHEMES AND ADVERBS

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În articol este abordată problema privind negația în engleza veche. În atenție sunt puse diferite particularități ale acesteia, specificate atât în baza surselor teoretice de specialitate, cât și în baza literaturii artistice (în special, cu referire la poemul „Beowulf”). Importanța studiului rezidă în faptul că, pentru a înțelege starea actuală a limbii, în general, și la nivelul fiecărui compartiment al ei, în particular, este necesar a studia evoluția ei istorică.

A topic as important as multiple negation in the history of English is the development of negative adverbs. The surface structure of several clauses in the Old English poem *Beowulf* reveals negated adverbs or adverbial phrases, which contain the only evidence of negative morphemes on the surface for the entire clause. The adverb *ne* is used alone in the majority of negative sentences in *Beowulf*. The variety in types of the negative morphemes in the old English poem *Beowulf* has been cited by Einkenkel, Klaeber, Mourek, Schuchardt, and Knörk as evidence that the work may have been composed at a time preceding the composition of the Old Saxon *Heliand* and the Old High German *Otfrid*. The language of the manuscript consists of West Saxon forms, predominantly late West Saxon, with a mixture of non-West Saxon forms, notably of Anglian origin.

The manner of negative expression found in the Old English poem *Beowulf* is considered representative of types of negative expression found in Old English at the beginning of the eighth century. The variety in types of negative morphemes in the poem has been cited by Einkenkel as evidence that the work may have been composed at a time preceding the composition of the Old Saxon *Heiland* and the Old High German *Otfrid*. The language of the manuscript consists of West Saxon forms, predominantly late West Saxon, with a mixture of non-West Saxon forms, notably of Anglian origin.

The standard handbooks of Old English, Campbell and Sievers-Brunner offer little information regarding the negative morphemes. Both grammars concentrate on a phonological discussion of Old English forms with no mention of the negative particle OE *ne* 'not'. Campbell does note the graphemic representation of the phonetic forms [æ, e, i] as <e> in unaccented syllables. The morphological segments of both these grammars, as well as that portion found in Wright and Moore and Knott simply list the compound indefinite forms *nāhwæder* / *nōhwæder* 'neither' as neither forms, *nān*, *nāenig* 'none', and *nāwuht* / *nōwuht*, *nān þing* 'nothing'. Wright also lists OE *ne* - *ne* 'neither - nor' as a coordinating conjunction. Quirk and Wrenn discuss the syntactic position of adverbs in Old English; adverbs precede the items which they modify. The negative particle functioning as an adverb so regularly precedes the item that it modifies, that it is frequently fused proclitically to that morpheme. Mätzner's grammar of Modern English, based on historical principles, provides syntactic information concerning the negative particle OE *ne* 'not'. The negative particle *ne* used in Old English for sentential negation, was always placed before the finite verb. Mätzner also calls attention to the similarity in form between OE *ne* and the French negative particle *ne*.

Individual treatment of the syntactic problems of negative expression is found in Andres. The verb in any clause may be negated by placing the negative particle *ne* 'not' immediately in front of it. Another syntactic function of *ne* is that of a conjunction to introduce a coordinate clause; the negative particle *ne* 'not' may be repeated before the finite verb form of this second clause. In those instances in which a negated coordinate clause follows an affirmative clause, the negated clause is most often introduced with *ond ne* 'and not', the *ne* being the negative particle, not the conjunction. The use of the adverb *nō* 'not at all, in no way' in poetry to negate a sentence or clause is exclusive in that form of writing. The stressed form of the disjunctive negative in verse is *nalas* 'not at all'. The phrase *nō þy ær* 'yet - not' has the force of an adversative conjunction. With respect to the word order in Old English, Andrew cites certain adverbs, notably those negative morphemes *nalas* 'not at all', *nāefre* 'never' *nō þy ær* 'none the sooner', and *nō* 'not', which may assume initial position in the clause or sentence. Delbrück's discussion of the negative in Germanic provides syntactic information regarding the morpheme *ne* when it is not used as the adverbial particle before the finite verb. The negative

ne may also be used as a conjunction to add to an already negated clause, additional information which is also stated negatively. The conjunction ne 'and not' also introduces an entire coordinate clause, which usually does not repeat the negative morpheme before the finite verb of this second clause, as in ne his myne wisse 'and not know his love'. The particle ne as conjunction also functions to establish a contrast in two concepts and is positioned between the two concepts as in þætne sūð nē norð 'that neither south nor north'. This correlative function of ne occurs most often simultaneously with another negative morpheme. The phrasing ne - ne is also used to negatively join two paired concepts as in ne leof ne lað 'neither dear nor loathsome'. Delbrück also discusses the origin of the ne-ne phrasing, comparing it to Gothic (Go.) nih - nih, which is cognate with Latin neque - neque 'and not - and not'. The problem in achieving a satisfactory solution for the interpretation of ne - ne in Old English is caused by the homophony in the forms of the negative particle ne and the conjunction ne. Although the Go. nih - nih type does not occur outside of Gothic, according to Delbrück, he accepts this interpretation for the Old English evidence as one of low functional load. Nader (1889) touches briefly on negation only as it relates to the aspects of tense and mood in the conditional clause found in the poem.

The surface structure of several clauses in *Beowulf* reveals negated adverbs or adverbial phrases, which contain the only evidence of negative morphemes on the surface for the entire clause. The finite verb is not preceded by the negative particle. Semantically these adverbial phrases establish the degree or temporal limits towards which the verbal action proceeds. Examples of manner limitations are found in the following examples: (1) nalles *hi hine læssan lācum tēodan / þēodgestrēonum* 'not at all did they provide him with less booty' nalles *for ealdre mearn* 'not at all did he mourn for life'. In both citations the affirmative concept is invalidated, because the adverbs establish a limit and provide no context for the verbal action to take place. The adverb phrase with nalles 'not at all' is inserted parenthetically into the complement clause introduced by þæt to set up a contrast. (6) *Wēn ic ðæt gē for wlenco, nalles for wræcsīðum / ac for higeþrymmum Hrōðgār sōhton.* 'I expect that you seek Hrōðgār for pride, not at all because of exile, but for goodness of heart'.

The presence of the negated adverbial phrase reinforces the positive adverbial phrases for wlenco and for higeþrymmum. The rhetorical device asserts the positive values; schematically this use of contrasting phrases to emphasize the positive concept may be represented as 'Y not X' or in the three-level pattern as:

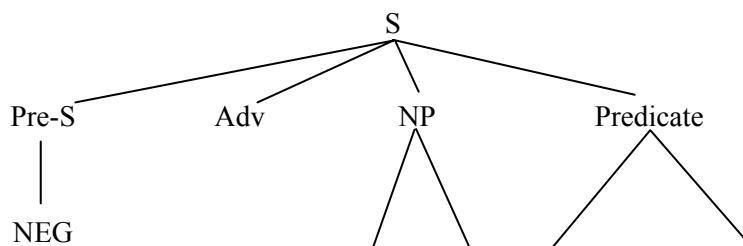
C	+	^	-	=	+
B	+	I	+		
A	+	II	-		
		<i>for wlenco</i>			<i>nalles</i>

The surface semantic interpretation of the two alternatives is expressed in the A level, formally with the 'or' relation. At the B level, the positive indicator for the negative nalles expresses the semantic contribution which the adverbial phrase makes to the total positive concept.

The adverb OE æfre 'ever' in its negated form, næfre 'never', establishes temporal limitations for the verbal action, instating that at no time can the verbal action take place: þæt næfre Grendel swā fela gryra gefremede 'that Grendel never did so much terror' nafre on ðre læg / wīdcūþes wīg 'never on the front did the war-skill of the famous one fail'. The positive form of the adverb æfre 'ever' also establishes temporal limitations on the verbal action, but its simultaneous occurrence with a negative particle before the finite verb assigns to it the function of reinforcing morpheme for the negative.

The adverb nō/nā may be interpreted as a temporal or manner-degree adverb: na ymb his lif cearað 'never did he care about life!' 'not at all did he care about life' nō ymbe ðā fæhðe spræc 'never did he speak of battle!' 'not at all did he speak of battle'. The temporal interpretation derives from the etymology of the ne 'not' ā 'ever'. The forms are generally cited as emphatic adverbs. The adverb nā or nō is preceded by the appropriate mark of punctuation, which may be a comma, a semicolon, or a full stop. The adverbial phrase nō þy ær 'none the sooner' indicates reference time in its literal glossing. nō þy ær fram meahte 'none the sooner was he able to go forth'.

Syntactically the negated adverbs are preposed to initial position in the clauses in which they occur. It is in this position that they absorb the NEG marker entirely, which is stated in Klima's sequence of rules for Modern English. The negative which is incorporated into the adverbs is the realization of the terminal marker Neg:



The negated adverb may be reinforced by morphemes attached to other constituents in the same way that the finite verb, when negated, is reinforced. The reinforcing morpheme appears as the subject of the clause in the form of the indefinite pronoun man 'anyone': (24) *swā hy næfre man lyhð*. 'so never does anyone blame them.'

Reinforcement in the oblique cases takes the form of the indefinite quantifier ænegum 'any', used pronominally with a following partitive genitive in (14); in (37) with the substantive āht 'anything': (14) *Næfre ic ænegum men ær ālyfde* 'never have I granted to any men before' (37) *nō ðær āht cwices/ lāð lyffloga læfan wolde* 'the loathsome airflier did not want to leave anything living'.

The adverbial accusative wiht 'at all' reinforces the degree adverb no in (11): (11) *Nō ic wiht fram þē/ swylcra searonīða secgan hyrde,/ billa brōgan* 'not at all did I hear tell from you such battle, terror of swords'.

The negated adverbs occurring in Beowulf are represented in Table 14. The semantic information is presented in terms of grammatical, syntactic, and semantic features. The striking feature of grammatically positive verb, GR POS. VB., points to the negated adverb as the only sentence constituent bearing a negative morpheme. The syntactic position of the negated adverbs is indicated by CLAUSE INITIAL. Reinforcing morphemes and their syntactic position relative to the negated adverbs are indicated by the markers REINFORCING MORPHEME and SAME CLAUSE respectively. POSITIVE EMPHASIS captures the semantically positive interpretation, in which the negated adverb establishes a contrast and thereby reinforces the positive concept as in (1).

Table

Old English Negated Adverbs

	TIME	DEGREE	CLAUSE INITIAL	GR. POS. VB.	REINFORCING MORPHEME	SAME CLAUSE	POSITIVE EMPHASIS
nalæs (1)		+	+	+			
nalles (6)		+		+			+
næfre (12)	+		+	+			
na (31)	+	+	+	+			
no þyær (17)	+		+	+			
næfre (24)	+			+	+	+	
næfre (14)	+		+	+	+	+	
no (37)		+	+	+	+	+	

Hereby, the temporal adverbs æfre and ā 'ever' also reinforce the verbal action in their positive forms as well as being capable of bearing the negation alone in the clause in the forms næfre and nō 'never'. The surface form æfre in (44) poses a problem to the NEG-incorporation rule, because of its surface position before the finite verb. A suggested solution takes the alliterative considerations into account. Other temporal adverbial reinforcers are the comparative forms leng and māra 'any longer', which place well-defined restrictions on the negated verbal concepts.

The substantive form wiht 'at all' functions as a manner adverb. Syntactically it appears on the surface in the oblique cases generally associated with substantives. The variability in form seems to indicate that the morpheme is in the process of changing its grammatical class membership. Negated temporal and manner-degree adverbs as the only negative morpheme in the clause will accept reinforcers of the type discussed above. The negative indefinite quantifiers nænig and nān 'none' as single negative morphemes do not permit additional reinforcing morphemes in the same clause in this corpus.

Thus, the analysis of the negative morphemes in Beowulf proceeds from the initial parameter of grammatical categories which include verbals, adverbs, and substantives. Although the focus on the grammatical categories is the semantic feature [neg], it is possible that syntagmatic constructions showing the negative present in the deep structure and at the surface do not have a negative correlation, that is, on the semantic level no negative operation occurs.

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