

# The Loss of Negative Concord in Standard English



The Loss of Negative Concord  
in Standard English:  
A Case of Lexical Reanalysis

By

Amel Kallel

**CAMBRIDGE  
SCHOLARS**

---

P U B L I S H I N G

The Loss of Negative Concord in Standard English:  
A Case of Lexical Reanalysis,  
by Amel Kallel

This book first published 2011

Cambridge Scholars Publishing

12 Back Chapman Street, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE6 2XX, UK

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data  
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

Copyright © 2011 by Amel Kallel

All rights for this book reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior permission of the copyright owner.

ISBN (10): 1-4438-2738-X, ISBN (13): 978-1-4438-2738-6

*For Arnaldo and Nadia*



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Figures.....	xiii
List of Tables.....	xv
Abbreviations .....	xvii
Acknowledgements .....	xix
<b>Chapter One.....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Introduction</b>	
1. 1 Overview of the issues .....	3
1.1.1 Negation in Modern Standard English.....	3
1.1.2 The situation in Pre-Modern English.....	5
1.2 The nature of the change.....	6
1.3 Rationale .....	7
1.4 Aims of the study .....	8
1.5 Overview.....	9
<b>Chapter Two .....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>The Linguistic Theoretical Framework</b>	
2.0 Introduction.....	11
2.1 The Theoretical Syntactic Framework .....	12
2.1.1 The Principles and Parameters Theory .....	12
2.1.2 NegP: a separate projection .....	14
2.2 Licensing negative polarity items.....	15
2.3 Negation in Pre-Modern English: previous studies .....	17
2.3.1 The Negative Cycle (Jespersen 1917).....	17
2.3.2 Negative concord (NC).....	19
2.3.3 Negative concord in Middle English .....	21
2.3.4 Ne and the decline of negative concord .....	21
2.3.5 NC in Early Modern English .....	22
2.3.6 English pre-modern and modern systems of negation .....	23

2.4 NC and the use of non-assertive items .....	24
2.5 Negation: cross-linguistic variation.....	26
2.5.1 Negative concord.....	26
2.5.2 The Neg-Criterion: accounting for cross-linguistic variation.....	27
2.6 NPIs versus NQs .....	28
2.7 Verb movement.....	30
2.8 The timing of the change.....	34
2.9 Conclusion .....	35
<b>Chapter Three.....</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>Theories of Variation and Language Change</b>	
3.0 Introduction.....	37
3.1 The spread of syntactic change .....	37
3.2 E-language versus I-language change .....	40
3.3 Language acquisition and language change .....	41
3.4 Grammar competition and language change .....	43
3.5 The Constant Rate Hypothesis (Kroch 1989).....	45
3.6 S-curves .....	46
3.7 Internal mechanisms.....	50
3.7.1 Reanalysis.....	50
3.7.2 Reanalysis: cause versus effect.....	51
3.8 External mechanisms .....	52
3.8.1 Language contact.....	52
3.8.2 The influence of Latin.....	53
3.9 Variationist theories of language change .....	54
3.9.1 Standardization of English.....	55
3.9.2 Chancery English.....	58
3.10 Research hypotheses and questions.....	58
3.10.1 Research hypotheses.....	58
3.10.2 Research questions.....	59
3.11 Conclusion.....	60

<b>Chapter Four .....</b>	<b>61</b>
<b>Research Design and Methodology</b>	
4.0 Introduction .....	61
4.1 Data sources .....	62
4.1.1 Genres .....	64
4.1.2 Private correspondence .....	65
4.1.3 Introduction to data sources .....	66
4.2 Late Middle and Early Modern English .....	68
4.3 Constraints on methodology .....	69
4.4 Data categorization .....	69
4.4.1 Negative concord .....	70
4.4.1.1 Non-coordinate contexts .....	70
4.4.1.2 Coordinate contexts .....	71
4.4.2 Non-assertive forms .....	72
4.4.2.1 Non-coordinate contexts .....	72
4.4.2.2 Coordinate contexts .....	73
4.4.3 Grammatical functions (GFs) .....	73
4.4.3.1 Objects in non-coordinate contexts .....	74
4.4.3.2 Objects in coordinate contexts .....	74
4.4.3.3 Adjuncts in non-coordinate contexts .....	74
4.4.3.4 Adjuncts in coordinate contexts .....	74
4.4.4 Double and mixed cases .....	75
4.4.5 Excluded contexts .....	75
4.5 Quantitative approach .....	76
4.5.1 Statistical analyses .....	76
4.5.2 The logistic regressions .....	77
4.5.3 The Logistic transform .....	78
4.5.4 Rationale .....	79
4.6 Specific Research questions .....	79
4.6.1 S-curves .....	79
4.6.2 The Constant Rate Hypothesis .....	80
4.7 Conclusion .....	80
<b>Chapter Five.....</b>	<b>81</b>
<b>Data Analyses</b>	
5.0 Introduction .....	81
5.1 Data analysis .....	82
5.2 The decline of NC: grammatical constructions .....	82
5.2.1 Non-coordinate contexts .....	82

5.2.2 Coordinate contexts .....	85
5.3 The Decline of NC: GFs .....	87
5.3.1 Objects in grammatical constructions .....	87
5.3.2 Adjuncts in grammatical constructions .....	91
5.4 The Constant Rate Effect .....	95
5.4.1 Macro contexts: grammatical constructions .....	95
5.4.2 Micro contexts: GFs .....	98
5.5 An alternative model .....	105
5.6 Conclusion .....	112
<b>Chapter Six.....</b>	<b>121</b>
<b>Change at the Level of Individual Speakers</b>	
6.0 Introduction .....	121
6.1 Data categorization .....	122
6.2 Data selection .....	122
6.3 Qualitative analysis .....	123
6.4 Results .....	124
6.5 Concluding Remarks .....	126
<b>Chapter Seven.....</b>	<b>127</b>
<b>Hypotheses on External Factors</b>	
7.0 Introduction .....	127
7.1 The timing of the change .....	127
7.2 External mechanisms .....	129
7.2.1 Prescriptive views .....	129
7.2.2 Normative influence .....	132
7.3 Concluding remarks .....	136
<b>Chapter Eight.....</b>	<b>139</b>
<b>The Nature of the Change: Internal Mechanisms</b>	
8.0 Introduction .....	139
8.1 The nature of the change .....	139
8.2 The Context Constancy Effect (CCE) .....	141
8.3 Grammar competition .....	142

8.4 Grammar change .....	144
8.5 Parameter change .....	145
8.5.1 Lexical ambiguity .....	147
8.5.2 Lexical reanalysis .....	148
8.6 Natural NC varieties.....	155
8.7 The functional spread of any .....	156
8.8 Conclusion .....	158
<b>Chapter Nine.....</b>	<b>159</b>
<b>Summary and Conclusion</b>	
9.0 Introduction.....	159
9.1 Summary of the main findings .....	159
9.2 Implications for future research .....	161
<b>Appendix</b> Data sources within the corresponding stages.....	165
Primary Sources.....	167
References .....	169



## LIST OF FIGURES

<b>3.1</b>	The rise of periphrastic <i>do</i> (Adapted from Kroch)	45
<b>3.2</b>	S-curves (Adapted from Lightfoot)	47
<b>5.1</b>	The observed n-word frequencies for non-coordinate contexts	83
<b>5.2</b>	The observed data for non-coordinate contexts plotted against the fitted logistic regression	84
<b>5.3</b>	The observed n-word frequencies for coordinate contexts	86
<b>5.4</b>	The observed data for coordinate contexts plotted against the fitted logistic regression	86
<b>5.5</b>	The observed n-word frequencies for objects in non-coordinate contexts	88
<b>5.6</b>	The observed data for objects in non-coordinate contexts plotted against the fitted logistic regression	89
<b>5.7</b>	The observed n-word frequencies for objects in coordinate contexts	90
<b>5.8</b>	The observed data for objects in coordinate contexts plotted against the fitted logistic regression	91
<b>5.9</b>	The observed n-word frequencies for adjuncts in non-coordinate contexts	92
<b>5.10</b>	The observed data for adjuncts in non-coordinate contexts plotted against the fitted logistic regression	93
<b>5.11</b>	The observed n-word frequencies for adjuncts in coordinate contexts	94
<b>5.12</b>	The observed data for adjuncts in coordinate contexts plotted against the fitted logistic regression	95
<b>5.13</b>	The plot of data for non-coordinate contexts with the fitted logistic regression line superimposed	97
<b>5.14</b>	The plot of data for coordinate contexts with the fitted logistic regression line superimposed	98
<b>5.15</b>	The plot of data for objects in non-coordinate contexts with the fitted logistic regression line superimposed	99
<b>5.16</b>	The plot of data for objects in coordinate contexts with the fitted logistic regression line superimposed	100
<b>5.17</b>	The plot of data for adjuncts in non-coordinate contexts with the fitted logistic regression line superimposed	101
<b>5.18</b>	The plot of data for adjuncts in coordinate contexts with the fitted logistic regression line superimposed	101

<b>5.19</b>	The plot of data for objects in non-coordinate contexts with the fitted logistic regression line superimposed	102
<b>5.20</b>	The plot of data for adjuncts in non-coordinate contexts with the fitted logistic regression line superimposed	103
<b>5.21</b>	The plot of data for objects in coordinate contexts with the fitted logistic regression line superimposed	104
<b>5.22</b>	The plot of data for adjuncts in coordinate contexts with the fitted logistic regression line superimposed	104
<b>5.23</b>	The observed data for non-coordinate contexts plotted against the fitted logistic regression	108
<b>5.24</b>	The observed data for coordinate contexts plotted against the fitted logistic regression	109
<b>5.25</b>	The plot of data for objects in non-coordinate with the fitted logistic regression line superimposed	110
<b>5.26</b>	The plot of data for objects in coordinate with the fitted logistic regression line superimposed	111
<b>5.27</b>	The plot of data for adjuncts in non-coordinate with the fitted logistic regression line superimposed	112
<b>5.28</b>	The plot of data for adjuncts in coordinate with the fitted logistic regression line superimposed	113
<b>5.29</b>	The plot of data for non-coordinate and coordinate contexts	114
<b>5.30</b>	The plot of data for objects (function 1) in non-coordinate and coordinate contexts	115
<b>5.31</b>	The plot of data for adjuncts (function 2) in non-coordinate and coordinate contexts	116
<b>5.32</b>	The plot of data for objects and adjuncts in non-coordinate contexts (Type 1)	117
<b>5.33</b>	The plot of data for objects and adjuncts in coordinate contexts (Type 2)	118

## LIST OF TABLES

<b>2.1</b>	Forms of negation from Old English to Early Modern English	18
<b>5.1</b>	The frequency of n-words and any-words in non-coordinate constructions by stage	83
<b>5.2</b>	The frequency of n-words and any-words in coordinate constructions by stage	85
<b>5.3</b>	The frequency of n-words and any-words in objects in non-coordinate constructions by stage	88
<b>5.4</b>	The frequency of n-words and any-words in objects in coordinate constructions by stage	89
<b>5.5</b>	The frequency of n-words and any-words in adjuncts in non-coordinate constructions by stage	91
<b>5.6</b>	The frequency of n-words and any-words in adjuncts in coordinate constructions by stage	93
<b>6.1</b>	Data sources and correspondents within stages	123
<b>6.2</b>	Cases of NC and any-words based on stage, correspondent and construction type	124
<b>7.1</b>	The frequency of n-words and any-words in Chancery texts	133
<b>7.2</b>	Cases of n-words/ any-words in Chancery texts in non-coordinate contexts	134
<b>7.3</b>	Cases of n-words/ any-words in Chancery texts in coordinate contexts	134
<b>8.1</b>	Summary of the changes from $Time_0$ to $Time_2$	151



## ABBREVIATIONS

<b>Aux</b>	Auxiliary
<b>CRE</b>	Constant Rate Effect
<b>CRH</b>	Constant Rate Hypothesis
<b>DN</b>	Double negation
<b>GFs</b>	Grammatical functions
<b>HMC</b>	Head Movement Constraint
<b>IP</b>	Inflection phrase
<b>EME</b>	Early Middle English
<b>ENE</b>	Early Modern English
<b>LME</b>	Late Middle English
<b>MME</b>	Middle Middle English
<b>ME</b>	Middle English
<b>MSE</b>	Modern Standard English
<b>MN</b>	Multiple negation
<b>NC</b>	Negative concord
<b>NPI</b>	Negative polarity item
<b>Any- words</b>	Negative polarity items
<b>NQs</b>	Negative quantifiers
<b>NSE</b>	Non-standard English
<b>OE</b>	Old English
<b>PDE</b>	Present-day English
<b>PIs</b>	Polarity items
<b>PLD</b>	Primary linguistic data
<b>PME</b>	Pre-modern English
<b>VP</b>	Verb phrase



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am thankful to my family for their love and endless encouragement. I am particularly indebted to my husband, Arnaldo, for his patience and endless support over this period of research. I would also like to thank Dr Richard Ingham, who supervised this work, for his guidance, support and dedication. Last but not least, I am, and will always be, grateful to my brother, Lassaad, without whom my dream would never have come true.



# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

While Modern Standard English (henceforth MSE) is not characterized by the operation of negative concord (henceforth NC), i.e. the use of two or more negative elements that do not cancel each other out, in some dialects of English<sup>1</sup> and in certain older forms of the language the operation of negative concord is much stronger, as illustrated by the following examples belonging to Middle, Early Modern, and Modern English, respectively.

1. "my Cosen Sidly **could not** be with vs **no more** could Mr Paston"  
"ther is **no possibilitie** which I am much perplexed for being **no less**"  
(The Paston Letters, 53 & 54)
2. "They have **not** as yet proceeded **no** further"  
"I **never** saw people so far out in the way in **no** disease"  
(Letters of Royal and Illustrious Ladies of GB Vol. II, 13 & 30)
3. "Elena did **not** see **anything**"  
"She **never** mentioned it to **anyone**"

Modern Standard English exhibits a virtually uniform [-NC] system<sup>2</sup>, while earlier forms of English are characterized by the phenomenon of multiple negation (henceforth MN)<sup>3</sup>. References to this effect may be found in most general studies of Old English (henceforth OE) and Middle English (henceforth ME), as well as in those of Early Modern English (henceforth ENE) (Burnley 1983: 61; Barber 1997: 283). ME and ENE

- 
- 1 NC has survived in some English dialects, such as the African-American Vernacular English (Labov 1972: 785), as the following example illustrates:  
*Ain't nobody* ever thought about pickin' up *nothin'*.
  - 2 This study excludes the non-standard varieties of English which exhibit an NC system.
  - 3 This study sets no distinction between NC and multiple negation; they are both used interchangeably to refer to the phenomenon of Negative Concord.

exhibited variable use of [+NC] and [-NC] systems, i.e. speakers belonging to these two periods used both single and double/ multiple negation to express the negative meaning. Several studies have addressed issues related to negation, in terms of both the generative framework and in terms of language change theories. However, very few have addressed the loss of NC as an independent issue. Furthermore, these studies were generally centered on the early Middle English (henceforth EME) period and middle Middle English period (henceforth MME). There is to my knowledge no detailed study of multiple negation in Late Middle and Early Modern English. This has already been pointed out by Tieken-Boon van Ostade (1995). Jack (1978a and 1978b) deals with multiple negation in early Middle English and in another study (1978c) in what he refers to as “later Middle English”. This third study does not go beyond the first half of the fifteenth century. The system of negation, precisely the variety of NC that existed in Late Middle English (henceforth LME) and continued through the sixteenth century, has not yet been fully studied. An analysis of multiple negation in a corpus of private correspondence belonging to a later period than that studied by Jack (1978c) will thus usefully supplement Jack’s studies of negation in Middle English.

It has also been largely assumed that the loss of NC was the outcome of prescriptive views on language use, and of taking Latin, a [-NC] language, as a model for the English grammar. Because of these assumptions, the issue of *why* NC was lost in Modern Standard English was not given enough attention. In fact, even questions

such as *when* and *how* NC was lost have not been fully addressed yet. In this thesis, these issues will be re-addressed within the framework of a detailed study of the process of decline of NC, based on theories of language change, namely Kroch’s (1989) Constant Rate Hypothesis (henceforth CRH) and Lightfoot’s (1991) theory of catastrophic change. The study of the process of the decline of NC will reveal the nature of the change and solve the inconsistencies in the claims made in the literature about *when* and *why* NC was lost in Modern Standard English.

The observed decline and ultimate loss of NC has generally been attributed to external factors. This study presents good evidence that the decline of NC lies outside the scope of external factors. Accordingly, some plausible internally-driven motivations for the change based on Ladusaw (1992) and Ingham (submitted) are provided and explained in terms of language change and acquisition theories. The nature of the change is addressed through a detailed study of the process of the decline of NC and

its gradual loss which took place in the Early Modern English period, focusing on the E-language changes in the primary linguistic data (henceforth PLD) that must have paved the way for the parameter change, i.e. the replacement of n-words by any-words in negative polarity contexts that took place in the I-language.

## 1. 1 Overview of the issues

The aim of this section is to provide an overall picture of the way negation is expressed in Present-day English (henceforth PDE) (section 1.1.1), to form a background against which the ways in which negation was expressed in Pre-Modern English (henceforth PME) will be studied (section 1.1.2)

### 1.1.1 Negation in Modern Standard English

This section describes the means of expressing negation in Modern Standard English based on work by Quirk et al. (1985), the purpose of which is to provide a general background we can refer to for cross-linguistic comparative purposes. Quirk et al. (1985) distinguish three types of negation: (1) clause negation (through which the whole clause is syntactically treated as negative), (2) local negation (in which one constituent -not necessarily a clause element- is negated), and (3) phrasal negation (which is a minor type applying only after certain auxiliaries, in which the predication is negated). These three types of negation are illustrated below:

#### **Type 1: clause negation**

A simple positive sentence is negated by inserting the clause negator *not* between the operator -the first auxiliary verb of a complex verb phrase, *Be*, or *Have*- as in (4) below, or the auxiliary *Do*, as in (5) below, and the predication.

4. I have not finished yet
5. I did not pay my bill

#### **Type 2: local negation**

Local negation (Quirk et al., 1985: 791) negates a word or phrase, without making the clause negative as the following examples indicate;

*not* in the first example modifies “inconsiderable amount of work’ and in the second one “unpleasant customer”.

6. They are doing a *not inconsiderable amount of work*
7. She is a *not unpleasant customer*

### **Type 3: phrasal negation**

This type of negation differs from local negation in that it can extend over several clause elements beginning with the main verb, as in the following examples:

8. You can simply *not accept the offer*
9. I can’t *not admire him*

Unlike in earlier stages of the development of the English language, in Modern Standard English the use of the *any*-series in polarity contexts is categorical in almost all environments. Only in some spoken English dialects, such as Black English vernacular (Labov 1972), does the old form, i.e. NC, remain productive, an issue this study is not concerned with. Present-day English clausal negation is frequently followed by one or more nonassertive items, which consist of *any* or any of its compound pronouns such as *anybody*, *anyone*, and *anything*, etc., and *either* (Quirk et al., 1985). Nonassertive items are normally inserted after the negative element where any assertive item would have occurred in the corresponding positive clause, as in (10) and (11):

10. He did **not** go **anywhere**
11. She did **not** play outside at **anytime**

In most cases, the combination of *not* with a nonassertive form can be replaced by a negative word. Consequently, we can provide two negative equivalents to each positive sentence. So that, examples (10) and (11) have the following corresponding structures, respectively in (12) and (13):

12. He went **nowhere**
13. She played outside at **no time**

Besides *not*, the negative forms whose scope favours nonassertive forms include the following: (a) words that are morphologically negative, i.e. negative in form and meaning, such as *no*, *none/no one*, *nobody*, *nothing*, or *never* and which are referred to in this study as *n*-words. The following are examples illustrating these expressions:

14. The cat **never** caught **any** mouse  
 15. **Nobody** managed to understand **anything**

(b) Words that are negative in meaning but not in form. Adverbs and determiners like *seldom*, *hardly*, *few*, and *little* are usually followed by nonassertive items. Quirk et al. (1985) also identify another category of words called “implied negatives” and which have the potential of negating a sentence. Nonassertive items may also follow verbs, adjectives, and prepositions with negative meaning, such as *prevent*, *unaware*, *fail* and *without*. For the purpose of this study, cases where negation is expressed through other means apart from the sentential negator *not*, and any of its earlier forms, and words that are negative in both meaning and form, are excluded.

### 1.1.2 The situation in Pre-Modern English

In Old and Early Middle English, negation was mainly expressed by means of the primary negator *ne*. At a later stage *ne* was phonologically weakened (Jespersen’s Negative Cycle, 1917) and the sentential negator *not* was introduced to reinforce the negative meaning, as the following example illustrates (bold added):

16. “that he **ne** mowe **nought** selle his fish”  
 that he may not sell his fish

(Ingham 2003: 146)

After the loss of the primary negator *ne*, *not* became the main sentential negator, and in the later Middle English period, came to be used together with another negative element, hence the name NC.

17. “I would **not** for **no** good...”  
 18. “I am **not** able to deserve with **no** power”

(*The Lisle Letters*, Vol. V: 305 & 196)

Another common way of expressing negation made use of two n-items yielding NC between the subject and the direct object of a clause, or between the direct object and another phrase, e.g. an adjunct as in the following examples.

19. “**no** privie seale shold go against **no** man”  
 20. “yet they can get **no** money for **nothing**”

(*The Plumpton Letters*: 114 & 199)

21. “for I can gitt **noo** cariage for the stone for **noo** money”  
 22. “can gyffe **noo** direct answer to **noo** suche mater witehout some good advisement.”

*(The Clifford Letters: 8 & 3)*

By the Late Middle and Early Modern English periods, speakers had an alternative option, which now made use of any-items in contexts where n-items occurred (section 1.1.1); competition between these two variants arose.

This situation continued to exist until the early stages of the Early Modern English period where competition between the use of n-words and any-words<sup>1</sup> in negative contexts as illustrated in the following examples, respectively, has finally settled and the use of non-assertive items has been grammaticalized.

23. “my Cosen Sidly could not be with vs no more could Mr Paston.”  
 (L18: 53)  
 24. “Newes of the Country I cannot possesse you with any but of the death” (L11: 47)

## 1.2 The nature of the change

Despite the fact that NC is a central issue in the history of English, among other issues related to negation; and despite the fact that it has been frequently referred to in the literature, no fully-developed and focused study has addressed the nature of the change and the real factors behind the observed development. This has certainly brought about an inconsistency in the claims made in the literature. It has largely been assumed that the loss of NC was due to Latin, prescriptive, and normative influences. There was, however, no serious attempt to take the investigation further and to address the loss of NC in a self-contained, independent study that revealed the factors at play in this observed change. The observed changes in the history of negation, and in particular the loss of NC, need to be satisfactorily treated by considering more relevant grounds and the possibility of an internally driven explanation for the decline and disappearance of NC from Modern Standard English. Explanations for the different changes observed in negation throughout the history of English, however, might not have been structurally motivated.

---

1 Any-words are also found in conditional and interrogative clauses alongside negative ones.

Some external factors might have influenced the rise and/or fall of certain linguistic options in expressing negation. Accordingly, and based on claims and the general assumptions made in the literature, we readdress the *how* and *why* aspects of the change and account for the loss of NC in terms of theory-internal factors based on Ladusaw (1992) and Ingham (submitted).

### 1.3 Rationale

In the Late Middle and Early Modern English periods, negative utterances varied between *I hear no reason*, a grammatical option in PDE but rather restricted to formal contexts; *I did hear no reason*, which is ungrammatical in PDE; *I did not hear no reason/I hear not no reason*, which is also ungrammatical in PDE; and *I did not hear any reason*, a grammatical variant in Modern Standard English according to some grammatical rules. These variants coexisted, though at different frequencies in our studied periods, namely Late Middle English and Early Modern English. Taking into consideration the fact that these variants are semantically equivalent, the following issue arises: why did English negation develop into the last option? In other words, why did we have a move towards option four throughout this diachronic development of the English system of negation?

Different studies of negative concord have, in general, shown a tendency to focus on the type of negative concord involving the co-occurrence of *ne* together with the sentential negator *not*, what den Besten (1986) refers to as Negative Doubling. This means that the focus in general was mainly centered on Early and Middle Middle English (Frisch 1997; Iyeiri 2001; Jack 1978). The first type of NC, where *ne* and *not* co-occurred, was no longer productive in Late Middle and Early Modern English. This study takes into consideration another aspect of NC, one that persisted longer in the history of English. Besides dealing with the type of NC where two or more n-words co-occur (Negative Spread, in den Besten's terms) in the later Middle English period, this study focuses on an NC-type which involves the co-occurrence of *not* together with a n-word, an NC-type that has not been given enough attention and was not accounted for in terms of den Besten's (1986) classification of NC-types (we return to this issue in Chapter 8). This study seeks to redress this gap in the literature not only by looking at other aspects of NC that were not adequately dealt with, but also by investigating the nature and the timing of the change.

A central issue in this study is modelling the decline of negative concord over a period of one and a half centuries starting in the Late Middle English period until the end of the sixteenth century; a time when NC has virtually disappeared in the texts looked at. This study presents evidence that this is a case of a natural change, a change that took place beyond the level of consciousness of speakers. It suggests that the reason for this decline and ultimate disappearance of NC is internally driven, rather than the outcome of prescriptive views.

### **1.4 Aims of the study**

Having presented negative concord as the object of our study, we now turn to the aims of this study. These may be stated as, firstly, to seek to establish or to place on a firmer footing the identification of when NC disappeared from the English language, and second, to re-address the reasons that played a role in the disappearance of NC. The first aim, that of establishing a clearer time reference for the disappearance of NC, has continuously been a controversial issue in previous studies, and the second aim, that of identifying the reasons behind the observed change, is necessarily linked to the first one. It has long been assumed that NC disappeared as a result of prescriptive views on language use. It is believed that grammar schools, which thrived in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, have influenced the grammar of English in the sense that NC was now banned from the language. This has generally led people to assume that the ultimate loss of NC took place sometime in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (Baugh and Cable, 1978; Fischer, 1992). Under these assumptions, it has been generally believed that (1) NC was lost under the influence of purists who banned it, and (2) the loss could only have taken place at a time when these grammar schools existed. The disagreement in the claims made about the timing of the change and the reasons behind it has potentially serious consequences which mean that there is a need to establish a proper timing of the change, which in turn leads to considering the real factors that have played a role in the loss of NC. There is therefore scope to develop and refine our understanding of the phenomenon of the loss of NC in Standard English and the rise of negative polarity items in contexts that were strictly confined to n-words.

To summarize, the basic aims of this study are twofold: firstly to seek to establish or to place on a firmer footing the identification of when NC disappeared, and secondly to make further progress in identifying the nature of the change and the reasons behind it. We recognize that it is

necessary to study and identify the nature of the change, mainly when dealing with diachronic phenomena. The present research attempts to do so by employing a quantificational analysis of well-defined contexts. Previous studies have not addressed the issue of the nature of this observed change. The present study investigates how quantitative analysis and statistical logistics support an analysis in which the rate of the decline of NC and the corresponding rate of increase in the frequency of use of any-words become crucial for the interpretation of the disappearance of NC as a case of a natural change.

This thesis deals with a case of language change; therefore, including a theory of language change is indispensable. We review Lightfoot (1991, 1999) and his theory of gradual versus catastrophic change, and Kroch's (1989, 1994) theory of competing grammars, and the Constant Rate Hypothesis. The friction that exists between those two theories of language change, or in other words, the idea of the abruptness of language change on the one hand and its gradualness observed in the linguistic speech community on the other hand, raises some fundamental issues we would like to consider in our study. What is the nature of the change we are considering? Will the change in negation fit in the abrupt model of language change or the gradual one? And what implications will this have for the present research study?

## 1.5 Overview

Chapters 2 and 3 present an overview of the general theories which have addressed issues related to the changes in negation, in particular NC. Chapter 2 will be devoted to theory-based approaches to negation. We introduce the general syntactic framework we assume and the basic assumptions and terminology we adopt in our study. We also review previous studies of negation in Middle and Early Modern English and raise issues against the background of the theoretical framework discussed in the previous sections. Chapter 3 will, on the other hand, tackle theories of language change, based on both quantitative and qualitative approaches and offer a pre-theoretic claim as to the nature of the change, which contradicts the standard view. We also make some theoretical assumptions concerning the more detailed structural and quantitative analysis, and at the end of Chapter 3, present our research hypotheses and questions which will be addressed in subsequent chapters. Chapter 4 introduces the methodology and research design issues. Categories of analysis and the chosen methodology in treating these categories are discussed. Chapter 5

deals with the statistical analysis and details the quantitative results of the study of the decline of NC over a period of 1500 years based on Kroch's (1989) Constant Rate Hypothesis. Chapter 6 presents a small-scale study of data by individual correspondents in an attempt to address claims made by Lightfoot (1991). The analysis of these data is mainly qualitative in nature. Chapter 7 discusses these findings with reference to the research hypotheses and questions presented at the end of Chapter 3. We criticise the claims made in the literature about the role of external factors in the loss of NC and provide an alternative analysis in Chapter 8; this chapter investigates the driving force behind the loss of NC and offers an explanation for its mechanisms which are mainly internally-driven based on Ladusaw (1992) and Ingham (submitted).