

Negation and Pronoun Position as a way of investigating verb movement and the emergence of *do* support during Early Modern English

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Abstract

This paper presents an analysis of the rise of *do* support and the gradual loss of verb movement during the period of Early Modern English. The analysis focuses on studying the structures in which *do* support was first used as an alternative to verb raising to I. It takes into consideration the analysis of the relationship between the position of the negation marker *not* in negative interrogative structures and the position of the subject and the object pronouns in these structures. The analysed structures are negative interrogatives taken from Shakespeare's works in the period of Early Modern English. The results of the data analysis show that in most cases, there is *do* support when the subject pronouns are above negation, while there is no *do* support when object pronouns appear above negation. This suggests that *do* was first inserted here to avoid object raising with the verb to I or to C to avoid putting object and subject pronouns in subsequent positions.

Keywords: *verb raising, do support, negative interrogatives, Early Modern English.*

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العلاقة بين موقع علامة النفي ومواقع الضمائر كوسيلة لدراسة فقدان حركة الفعل

الرئيسي وبدء الاستعانة بالفعل المساعد في بداية فترة الانجليزية الحديثة

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ملخص البحث

تقدم هذه الدراسة تحليلاً لبداية استخدام الفعل (يفعل) كفعل مساعد و الذي تزامن في بداية فترة الانجليزية الحديثة مع فقدان اللغة الانجليزية لخاصية حركة الفعل الرئيسي وارتفاعه لبداية الجملة. الدراسة تركز على البحث في ما اذا كانت بداية استخدام الفعل المساعد نتيجة ام انها كانت احد العوامل المسببة لفقدان خاصية حركة الفعل في اللغة الانجليزية. تركز الدراسة على تحليل بعض التراكيب التي كانت مستخدمة في تلك الفترة التي تزامن فيها استمرار وجود خاصية حركة الفعل الرئيسي مع بداية استخدام الفعل (يفعل) كفعل مساعد بدلا عن ارتفاع الفعل. استندت الدراسة على تحليل نماذج من كتابات شكسبير التي تعود للفترة الزمنية المستهدفة بالدراسة وهي فترة بداية الانجليزية الحديثة. اختيرت الاسئلة المنفية التي استخدمت في مسرحيات شكسبير في تلك الفترة لتكون محور عملية التحليل ثم تم تقليص انواع الجمل المستهدفة لتشمل الاسئلة المنفية التي تحتوى على ضمائر الفاعل او ضمائر المفعول به لان الدراسة تفترض وجود علاقة بين موقع علامة النفي في السؤال وبين الحاجة لبداية استخدام الفعل المساعد وهو ما أثبتته نتائج عملية التحليل. اظهرت النتائج ان الفعل المساعد قد يكون بدئ في استخدامه لتجنب رفع ضمائر المفعول به مع الفعل لبداية الجملة عند تحويلها لسؤال فبهذا تكون في موقع سابق لضمائر الفاعل مما يؤدي الى التباس المعنى في بعض الجمل. هذه النتيجة تدعم فرضية ان بداية استخدام الفعل المساعد كانت احد العوامل المسببة وليست نتيجة لفقدان ارتفاع الفعل في الانجليزية الحديثة.

الكلمات المفتاحية: بداية استخدام الفعل المساعد، موقع النفي، مواقع ضمائر الفاعل والمفعول، بداية الانجليزية الحديثة.

1. Introduction

Languages differ in whether the verb moves from VP (Verb Phrase) to Infl. (Inflectional phrase). In English, which is not a verb raising language, the main verbs remain within the VP while in French main verbs move to Infl. which means that French is a verb raising language. Verb-raising parameter refers to whether a language permits verb movement or not. The property of verb raising parameter in English states that main verbs cannot be raised to inflectional phrase which is in a higher position than the verb phrase. High and low positions here refer to positions in the phrase structure trees which are used in syntax to illustrate the structure of sentences. In other words, this means that English does not allow a main verb to raise or to move to the beginning of sentences to form questions which is known as V to I and to C movement.

1.1 Research problem

As a result of the fact that English does not allow main verbs to rise to the beginning of sentences to make questions, there is the need in English grammar to insert the dummy auxiliary *do* wherever there is no auxiliary verb in the sentence. During previous eras of the history, English main verbs exhibited verb raising and it was grammatical to put main verbs in the beginning of sentences to form questions as can be seen in the written records of English scripts that go back to the era of Middle English from 1150 to 1500. Later, several syntactic changes happened which led to the loss of verb raising at the beginning of Early Modern English.

Kroch (1989: 15) describes the emergence of *do* support as “one of the most studied syntactic changes”. He explains the historical development of this change by illustrating that “in Middle English, questions were formed by inverting the tensed verb [the main verb] with the subject and negative sentences by placing the negative marker *not* immediately after the tensed verb”. He considers the “rise of periphrastic *do* in late middle English” as a “reflex of the loss of V to I movement for main verbs”.

Macleod (2020: 670) argues that the “decline of postverbal negation in early Modern English was part of a broader series of changes affecting verbal Syntax”. He describes this spread of *do* as the “most prominent manifestation of these changes”. He says that “most syntactic analyses agree in interpreting the rise of *do* support as related to the loss of verb movement parameter”. Roberts (1985) takes a similar point of view as many other researchers when he argues that English lost V to I movement for lexical verbs in the middle of the 16th century and he considers the emergence of *do* support as a reflex of losing V to I movement.

1.2 Research questions

This study aims to shed light on a number of issues related to the loss of verb raising parameter in English and the emergence of *do* support in English negative interrogative sentences. The main question that this study tries to answer is whether the emergence of *do* support was a reason more than it was a result of losing the properties of verb raising parameter during the history of English language.

The second question is about the relationship between the position of negation and that of subject pronouns and/or object pronouns in English negative interrogative sentences. It tries to investigate whether the results of studying this relationship can be taken as evidence for any answer found for the first research question about the sequence of losing verb raising parameter and the emergence of do support in the period of Early Modern English.

1.3 Research hypotheses and objectives

The first hypothesis of this study is primarily focused on the assumption that the emergence of do support is a reason more than it is a result of losing verb raising parameter in English language. This hypothesis claims that do was used in Early Modern English before losing verb raising parameter so that it cannot be considered as a response of losing verb raising parameter.

Secondly, the study hypothesizes that considering the position of negation in negative interrogative sentences with that of subject pronouns and/or object pronouns can give some evidence on the connection and the relationship between losing verb raising and the emergence of *do* support in the English language.

1.4 Previous studies

Han and Kroch (2000: 311) present “an account of the statistical patterns in the development of do forms in various sentence types in English”. In their analysis, they distinguish between two types of verb movement which are “movement over the low negation and movement over the higher negation”. Goodhue (2019: 469) explains

the difference between high and low negation in questions by explaining that high negation questions are “questions in which negation is proposed with the auxiliary like *Isn’t Moira home?*”. Low negation questions, on the other hand, can be seen in structures like *‘Is Moira not home?’*.

In Han and Kroch’s study, (2000: 311) , they show that the “development of *do* support in imperatives as well as in questions and negative declaratives can be explained if the loss of verb movement occurs in two steps in the history of English with the loss of higher movement preceding the loss of lower movement”. The data that they used to study the development of *do* forms were taken from Ellegard’s (1953) collection of clauses. The other source of data was the Pen-Helsinki parsed corpus of Middle English.

They analysed various kinds of English sentences and their findings showed that *do* support was much more frequent in questions than in negative declaratives. They explain this difference in frequency by hypothesizing that the loss of verb movement was gradual and it did not happen in the same way in the different kinds of structures. Concerning interrogative structures, Han and Kroch (2000: 324) give an account of the development of *do* support in questions by explaining that “even though the loss of M-T [V to I and then to C] movement has gone to completion at 1575, affirmative questions do not reach 100 % *do* support because the grammar with direct ASP-C movement [to form questions] is active at this period”.

Han and Kroch (2000: 325) present a scenario for negative questions to explain “the fact that *do* support in negative questions is

always higher than in affirmative questions, but still does not reach 100 % until after 1575”. This scenario states that “the direct ASP-C movement option is not available in negative questions formed with higher negation, since feature movement would be blocked by higher negation”. They add that “because only negative questions with lower negation can exhibit direct Asp-C movement, negative questions show a relatively high frequency of do support, reaching 90% by 1575”.

Macleod (2020: 670) studied the postverbal negation in Early Modern English as he was interested in examining structures in which negation after main verbs without do support was still permitted in Modern English. In his analysis, he used data from the “Hansard Corpus, which includes the full text of the published proceedings of the British Parliament from 1803 to 2005”. While investigating this data, he was interested in studying postverbal negation as his analysis included lexical verbs modified by a following not as “the approach adopted was to search for all occurrences in which a lexical verb was followed by the lexeme not”. Macleod (2020: 683) comes to the conclusion that “postverbal negation without do support, enjoys a real, and limited, productivity within present-Day English”.

2. Methodology

The study adopts the content based approach to analyse Shakespeare’s negative interrogative structures in order to investigate the syntactic changes that happened in this kind of structures at the period of Early Modern English. Hsieh and Shannon (2005: 1277) explain that this research tool is used to determine the presence of

certain words or concepts or structures within some given qualitative data like certain texts.

2.1 Data Used in the Study

The data used in the study are negative interrogative sentences taken from 30 plays written by Shakespeare in the period of Early Modern English. These plays were approximately written between 1589 and 1634. There are a number of different works by different writers that belong to the target period in the history of English language, but Shakespeare was chosen because his works contain very variable and rich examples of the syntactic structures in question. Aitchison (2001: 99) explains that “Shakespeare’s characters vary between using questions in which the main verb and the pronoun switch places [in which V raises to I and to C] and those in which *do* is inserted”.

The source from which the research data is taken is the online search engine of the University of Virginia Modern English Corpus. The search process using this engine was by looking for negative interrogative sentences written by Shakespeare and this was done by limiting dates to 1550-1650, and text type to drama. After that, there was a limitation process followed to choose only negative interrogative sentences in which the verb raises to I (Inflection) and/or C (Complementiser) or those in which *do* is inserted instead of verb raising. The third stage of choosing research data was by limiting the chosen sentences to those in which the subject is a pronoun and/ or

which have pronoun objects to investigate whether these pronouns appear above or below the negator *not*.

2.2 Data Analysis

As mentioned earlier, the data analysis process focused on choosing negative interrogative structures used by Shakespeare and neglected the other kinds of structures. The chosen structures were narrowed further to include just sentences which contain subject and object pronouns. The analysis focused on investigating the relationship between the position of subject and object pronouns and the negator *not*.

2.2.1. Subject pronouns and position of *not*

1) *not* is **below** the position of the **subject pronoun**:

It was found that in 89 sentences, the subject pronouns appear above (before) negation as *not* is below (after) the position of the subject pronoun. Among these sentences, there were 38 cases (42.69% of the total number) in which V raises to I without *do* support. These sentences are the following:

- That they wait not here? The first part of King Henry VI (1589-1590)
- speak'st thou not?
- Why come you not? The Third Part of King Henry VI (1590-1591)
- Saw'st thou not signs of fear lurk in mine eye?
 Venus and Adonis (1592-1593)
- Grew I not faint?
- Fell I not downright?
- that I slew them not? The Tragedy of King Richard III (1592-1593)

- of you trembles not that looks on me?
 -thou help'st me not?
 -Says he it not?
 -and came I not at last to comfort you?
 -Why know you not? The Life and Death of King John (1594-1596)
 -Smacks it not something of the policy?
 -She not hear of it?
 -Why comes he not himself? The First Part of King Henry IV (1596-1597)
 -Looks he not for supply?
 -I know not what? The Second Part of King Henry IV (1598)
 -Know you not Pampey? Julius Caesar (1599)
 -Then saw you not his face? Hamlet, Prince of Denmark (1600-1601)
 -Looks it not like the king?
 -You spoke not with her since?
 King Lear (1605)
 -you heard not?
 -Note it not you, Thaisa? Pericles (1607-1608)
 -reflect I not on thy baseness court contempt?
 The Winter's Tale (1610-1611)
 -Comes it not something near?
 -that he helps not to take away?
 Romeo and Juliet (1623)
 -That I yet know not?
 -you not see moure him? Twelfth Night (1623)
 -Why went you not with Mr. Doctor?
 The Merry Wives of Windsor (1623)

-Hath he not reason to turnebacke an hour in a day?

A Comedy of Errors (1623)

-Why see you not?

Macbeth (1623)

-Know you not, he ha's?

-Came they not by you?

-it not say he lyes?

The Tempest (1623)

-that thou feelst not?

Two Noble Kinsmen (1634)

-You care not for a Grand guard?

On the other hand, there is *do* support in the rest of the sentences in which *not* is below the position of the subject pronoun. It was found that in 51 sentences (57, 30% of the total number), *do* is inserted where *not* is below subject pronouns. These sentences are:

-do I not breathe a man? The Third Part of King Henry VI (1590-1591)

-Didst thou not hear me swear?

-Didst thou not mark my face?

-Didst thou not kill this king? The Tragedy of King Richard III (1592-1593)

Did they not sometime cry? The Tragedy of King Richard II (1593-1594)

-did he not?

-Did you not use his daughter?

Titus Andronicus (1593-1594)

- Why didst thou not come from heaven?

-Doe you not read some tokens of my sonne?

The Life and Death of King John (1594-1596)

-Wy did you not provoke me?

- Do we not likewise see our learning there?
Love's Labour's Lost (1594-1597)
- Did he not send you twain?
- Didst thou not swear, to give me what I would?
Edward the Third (1596-1599)
- did he not?
- Do you not love me? The First Part of King Henry IV (1596-1597)
- do you not, indeed?
- dost thou not hear them call?
- do I not bate? do I not dwindle?
- What! He did not?
- Did you not tell me this...?
- Doth it not show vilely in me to desire?
The Second Part of King Henry IV (1598)
- Did I not meet thy friends? Julius Caesar (1599)
- Didst thou not hear their shouts?
- Did you not speak to it? Hamlet, Prince of Denmark (1600-1601)
- Does he not? Troilus and Cressida (1601-1602)
- do you not hear the people cry 'Troilus'?
- do you not? Servant
- Why do you not speak to her?
- Do you not love my sister? King Lear (1605)
- Did I not, fellow?
- Didst thou not say? Pericles (1607-1608)
- did you not name a tempest?
- Doest thou not laugh? Romeo and Juliet (1623)

- Do you not see that I am out of breath?
- doth she not give us thanks?
- doth she not count her blest?
- Dost thou not bring me letters from the frier?
- Why do you not know him? All's Well That Ends Well (1623)
- doe you not like it? Two Gentlemen of Verona (1623)
- Dost thou not know? A Comedy of Errors (1623)
- dost thou not know my voice?
- Do you not hope your children shall be kings?
Macbeth (1623)
- Didst thou not heare a noyse?
- Did he not straight in...?
- Do you not heare him? The Tempest (1623)
- Doth it not then our eye-lids sinke?
- Do you not heare me speake?
- Didst thou not say he lyed?
- Lyons, did't not wake you?
- Doe you not feele it thaw you? Two Noble Kinsmen (1634)

2) *not* is **above** the position of the **subject pronoun**:

Not appears above the subject pronouns in only 16 negative interrogative sentences. Except in one example out of 16 (6,25% of the total number), *do* support can be noticed clearly in this kind of sentences. In one sentence which is

- Say not I that I am old? The Passionate Pilgrim (1599)

It can be noticed that the verb rises to I (Inflection) with no *do* support while *not* is above the position of the subject pronoun.

On the other hand, *do* is inserted by Shakespeare where the subject pronoun appears below negation in the other 15 sentences (in 93, 75% of the total number). It can also be noticed in these sentences that *do+ not* rise to C to form negative interrogative clauses. These sentences are the following:

- Do not I know thou wouldst? The Life and Death of King John
(1594-1596)
- Did not I dance with you in Brabant once?
Love's Labour's Lost (1594-1597)
- and did not they put on my brows? Julius Caesar (1599)
- do not you follow the young Lord Paris?
Troilus and Cressida (1601-1602)
- Did not I tell you?
- Did not you hear a cry? Othello, the Moor of Venice
(1604)
- did not you chiefly belong to my heart?
Timon of Athens (1607-1608)
- Doe not you loue him Madam? All's Well That Ends Well(1623)
- did not I tell you? Twelfth Night (1623)
- Didst not thou share? The Merry Wives of Windsor
(1623)
- Did not I tell you how you should?
- And did not she herself reuile me there?
A Comedy of Errors (1623)
- And did not I in rage depart from thence?

-Did not you speake? Macbeth (1623)

-Doe not you know me? Two Noble Kinsmen (1634)

2.2.2. Object pronouns and position of *not*

The second part of the used research data contains negative interrogatives with object pronouns and this part is divided into two groups concerning the position of *not*.

1) *not* is **below** the position of the **object pronoun**:

In the 30 plays written by Shakespeare that are included in the study, it was noticed that there are only eight examples in which the object pronoun appears above negation that *not* appears below object pronouns in phrase structure tree diagrams. These examples are:

-And love them not? Venus and Adonis (1592-1593)

-that I slew them not? The Tragedy of King Richard III
(1592-1593)

-thou help'st me not?

-and love them not?

-Awaked you not with this sore agony?

-Says he it not?

-Know me not Galloway nags? The Second Part of King Henry IV
(1598)

-I serve thee not? The Historie of Troylus and Cresseida
(1609)

It can be noticed in the previous examples in which *not* appears below the position of object pronouns that there is no *do*-support in

any of them (in 0% of the total number). Instead, there is (100%) V-to-I raising or V-to-I-to-C raising in the structure of these negative interrogatives. In these examples, it seems that the object pronoun rises with the verb to Inflection and sometimes to Complementizer position to form these negative interrogatives. If we compare this result with what was noticed where *not* appears below subject pronouns, it can be noticed that the case is just the opposite that in most sentences there was *do* support when subject pronouns appear above negation.

2) *not* is above the position of the *object pronoun*

It seems that among the 25 examples that can be found in the included plays, there are only two examples (8% of the total number) where *not* appears above the object pronouns while there is no *do* support. These examples are:

- | | | |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|-------------|
| -Note it not you, Thaisa? | Pericles | (1607-1608) |
| -spare not me? | All's Well That Ends Well | (1623) |

However, *do* support can be noticed clearly in the other 23 examples (in 92% of the total number) in which the object pronoun is below the position of negation. These examples are:

- | | | |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------|
| -Didst thou not hear me swear? | The Third Part of King Henry VI | (1590-1591) |
| -Why did you not provoke me? | The Life and Death of King John | (1594-1596) |
| -Doe not I know thou wouldst? | | |

-Did he not send you twain?	Love's Labour's Lost	(1594-1597)
-Do you not love me?	The First Part of King Henry IV	(1596-1597)
-dost thou not hear them call?		
-Did you not tell me this?		
- dost not know me?	The Second Part of King Henry IV	(1598)
-Did not I tell you?	Troilus and Cressida	(1601-1602)
-doth she not give us thanks?	Romeo and Juliet	(1623)
-Dost thou not bring me letters from the frier?		
-Doe not you loue him Madam?	All's Well That Ends Well	(1623)
-Why do you not know him?		
-did not I tell you?	Twelfth Night	(1623)
-doe you not like it?	Two Gentlemen of Verona	(1623)
-Why didst not tell me sooner?		
-Did not I tell you how you should?	The Merry Wives of Windsor	(1623)
-And did not she herself reuile me there?		
	A Comedy of Errors	(1623)
-Do you not heare him?	The Tempest	(1623)
-Do you not heare me speake?		
-Lyons, did't not wake you?		
-Doe not you know me?	Two Noble Kinsmen	(1634)
-Doe you not feele it thaw you?		

It might be said then that V to I raising was used in sentences where not is below object pronouns and *do* support was used when not

is above object pronouns. Moreover, it is noticed in these examples that the subject is also a pronoun. So, it might be that *do* is inserted here to avoid object raising with verb to I or to C to avoid putting object and subject pronouns in subsequent positions. This result is very similar to what was noticed with subject pronouns below negation where *do* support was used in most sentences (15 out of 16).

3. Results

In general, and as can be noticed in tables 1 and 2, there is no *do* support when subject and/or object pronouns appear below negation. There is also no *do* support when object pronouns appear above negation. As a result, it can be said that there is no *do* support in sentences with object pronouns whether they appear above or below negation. These results are summarized in the following tables:

Not is below subject and/ or object pronouns		
	Subject pronouns	Object pronouns
Results	-In 89 sentences the subject pronouns appear above negation. -38 sentences (42.69%) has verb raising with no <i>do</i> support. -51 sentences (57.30%) has <i>do</i> support.	-Object pronouns appear above negation just in 8 examples and in all of them (100%), there is no <i>do</i> support. Instead V raises to and to C.
Conclusion	In most cases, there is <i>do</i> support when subject pronouns are above negation.	No <i>do</i> support where object pronouns appear above negation.

Table 1: Results of investigating pronouns above negation

Not is above subject and/ or object pronouns		
	Subject pronouns	Object pronouns
Results	-Not appears above subject pronouns in only 16 sentences. - One of them (6.25%) has no <i>do</i> support but verb raising. -15 sentences (93.75%) has <i>do</i> support	- Not is found above the position of object pronouns in 25 sentences. -2 sentences (8%) has no <i>do</i> support but verb raising. -23 sentences (92%) has <i>do</i> support.
Conclusion	In most cases, there is <i>do</i> support when pronouns appear below negation.	

Table2 : Results of investigating pronouns below negation

4. Discussion

The analysed data provide evidence for the hypothesis that emergence of *do* support can be considered as one of the factors which led to losing verb raising parameter in the period of Early Modern English. The results suggest that verb raising parameter was available in English at the same time as *do* support was used. For example, it was noticed that sentences in which subject pronouns appeared above negation are almost divided in half between cases where the verb raises to I and other cases in which *do* is inserted instead. This suggests that the two methods (verb raising and *do* support) were used at the same period of time by Shakespeare which denies the claim that *do* support was emerged as a result of losing V to I raising in English

language and which consequently indicates that *do* started to be used in a later period than the time when English had the property of Verb raising parameter.

Therefore, the results present evidence against the claims that *do* was emerged as a result of losing verb raising in English which suggests that when V to I raising was no more available in English, *do* was inserted as an alternative method which is not true. Ellegard (1953) explains that each insertion of a periphrastic *do* as inflectional markers “represents a case where V-to-I operation has not applied, so a steady increase in the distribution of *do* entails fewer and fewer instances of V-to-I, the two operations are mutually incompatible” (quoted in Lightfoot 1993: 207). Lightfoot, (1993: 208-209) has one of the points of view which says that the use of the dummy *do* instead of V raising was the reason that English lost this property of verb raising parameter. He explains that “...there was in addition an element *do* which could be analysed as a ‘dummy’ tense carrier generated in I and come to be used more and more frequently. As a result, V-to-I ceased to be triggered”.

It appears from the result that the two methods were used together at the same time in sentences with similar structures (i.e. negative interrogative sentences in which subject pronouns appear above negation). This phenomenon that the old method (verb raising) and the new method (*do* support) co-exist at the same time is described by Aitchison (2001: 98) who refers to it as a natural phenomenon in syntactic change. She says, “All syntactic change involves variation. As in case of sound change, the old and the new co-exist”. Aitchison

(ibid: 110) explains that this phenomenon is an example of the “Constant Rate Hypothesis which was first proposed by Anthony Kroch, who as explained by Aitchison, argued that “the insertion of *do* in English negatives ...and also in questions.... happened in parallel, not one context after another”.

5. Conclusion

At earlier stages of its history, the English language was a verb raising language similar to other languages which still have this property at the present time such as French. A number of changes happened which led to the fact that English main verbs do not have this movement property in Modern English. This change happened as a result of a number of internal syntactic factors such as the relationship between the position of the negator *not* and the subject and object pronouns which led to the necessity of inserting the dummy verb *do*. The results of this study suggest that *do* was inserted to avoid object raising with verb to I or to C to avoid putting object and subject pronouns in subsequent positions. As a result, the insertion of *do* gradually replaced verb movement which gives proof against arguments which consider the emergence of *do* as a result of losing Verb movement during the history of English Language.

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