The Loss of Negative Concord with Negative PPs

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Introduction

Sentential Negation and Negative Concord

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(5) a. they **no** haveth [**no** joye] (*Alisaunder*, c. 1300)

b. On hyme ȝe ∅ had [**no** mercy] (*Siege of Jerusalem*, c. 1500)

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b. [PP on **no** wise] it ∅ schuld be so in þis caas and in þis werk.
in no wise it should be so in this case and in this work
'In no way should it be so in this case and work'
(*Cloud of Unknowing*, c. 1395)

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2. Special focus on **negative PPs**

The Loss of Negative Concord with Negative PPs

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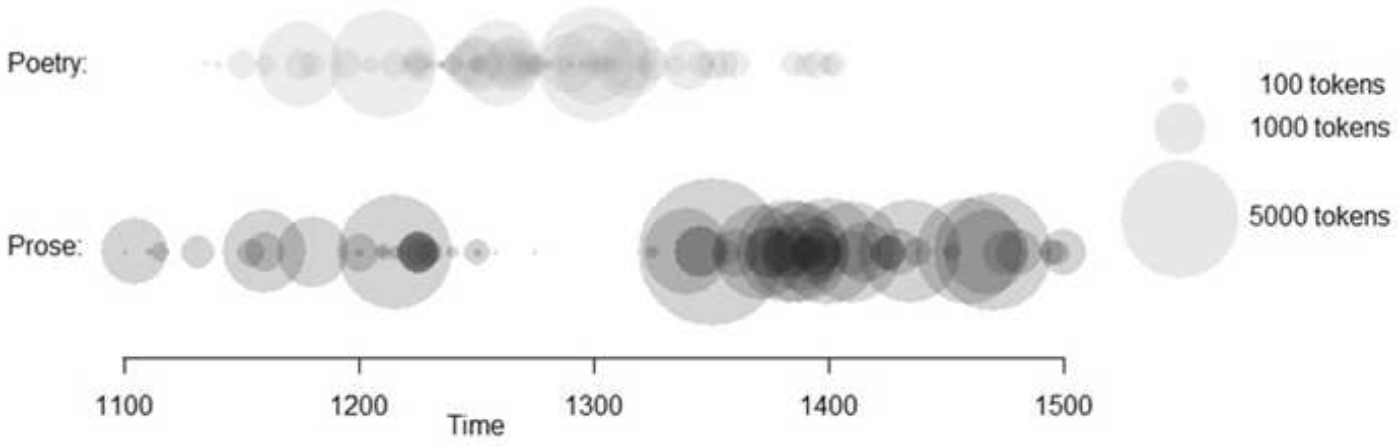
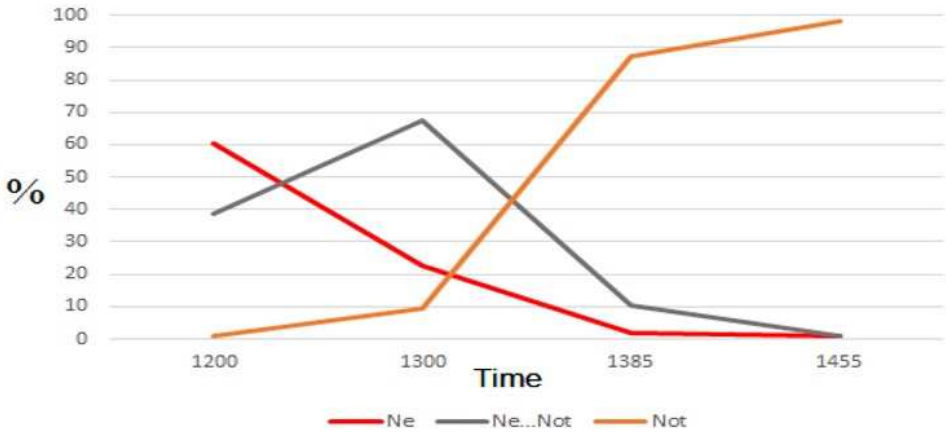
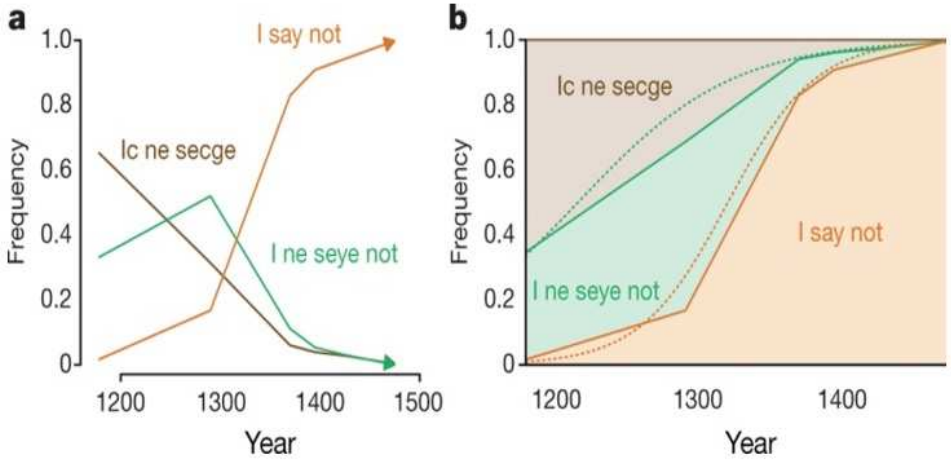


Figure 1: Representation of the temporal distribution of ME texts

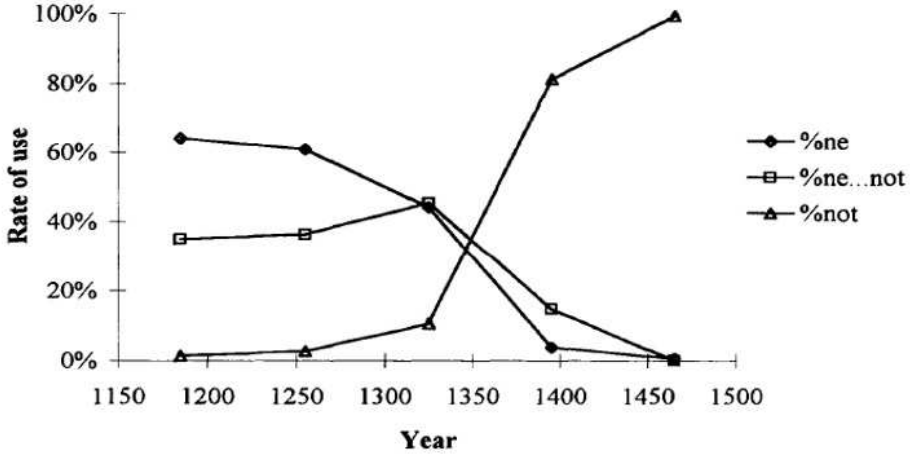
Previous Measurements of *Ne* in Sentential Negation



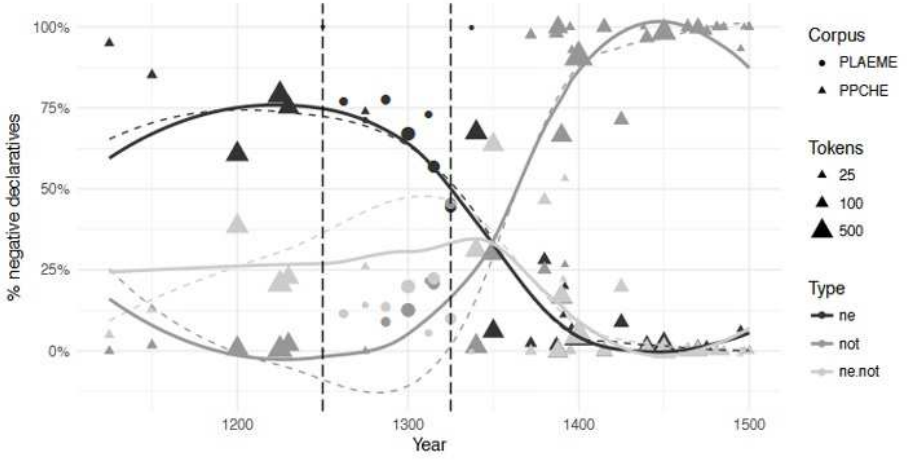
Based on Wallage 2008: 645, Table 1, N=5,556



Newberry et al. 2017: 225, N=5,475



Frisch 1997: 33, N=1,929



Truswell et al. 2018: 19 (N not reported)

Figure 2: Representations of the loss of *ne* based on four studies

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  - Includes expletive negation (e.g. after *doubt*, *unless*)
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  - ...
- Exclusion of examples with other negative items.

Result: The Loss of *ne* as a Sentential Negator

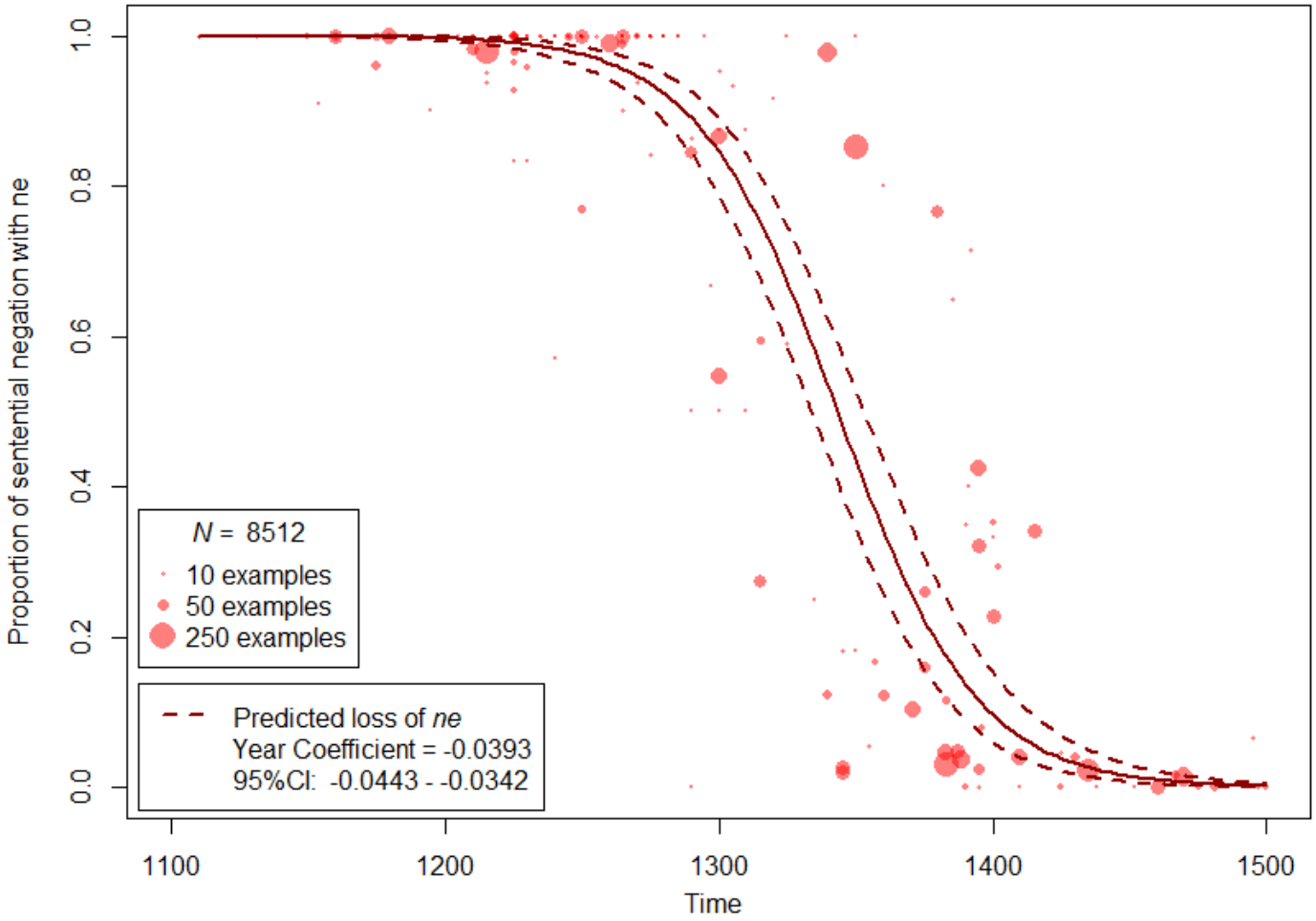

Figure 3: Logistic regression model predicting the occurrence of *ne* as a sentential negator ((*ne* + *ne* ... *not*) vs. *not*) from time, random text intercepts, NC excluded, including ne-clitics, data points represent texts

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An Open Question

I have not systematically examined the data for all negative concord constructions, but my impression is that the decline in the use of *ne* is concurrent with a decline in the use of negative concord in general. [...] I return to this point in the conclusion as an open problem for future research. (Frisch 1997: 33)

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  - Negative adverbs: **ne** + **neuere** vs. $\emptyset$ + **neuere** (n=1,715)
    (*never, nowhere, no more, no longer, nevermore, nevereft, ...*)

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    (*never, nowhere, no more, no longer, nevermore, nevereft, ...*)
  - Multiple NC: **ne** + **multiple neg** vs. $\emptyset$ + **multiple neg** (n=387)
  - Negative PPs: **ne** + **in no X** vs. $\emptyset$ + **in no X** (n=437)

Example of Multiple Negative Concord

(8) **Ne** Marien besceawunge, **ne** hire hlystinge to Godes worden,
Nor Mary's be-show-ing, nor her listening to God's words,
næs **næfre** on **nanre** oðre swa fullice geforðed
not-was never in no other so fully accomplished
'Nor was Mary's contemplation not her listening to God's words ever in any other person so fully accomplished' (CMKENTHO,136.74)

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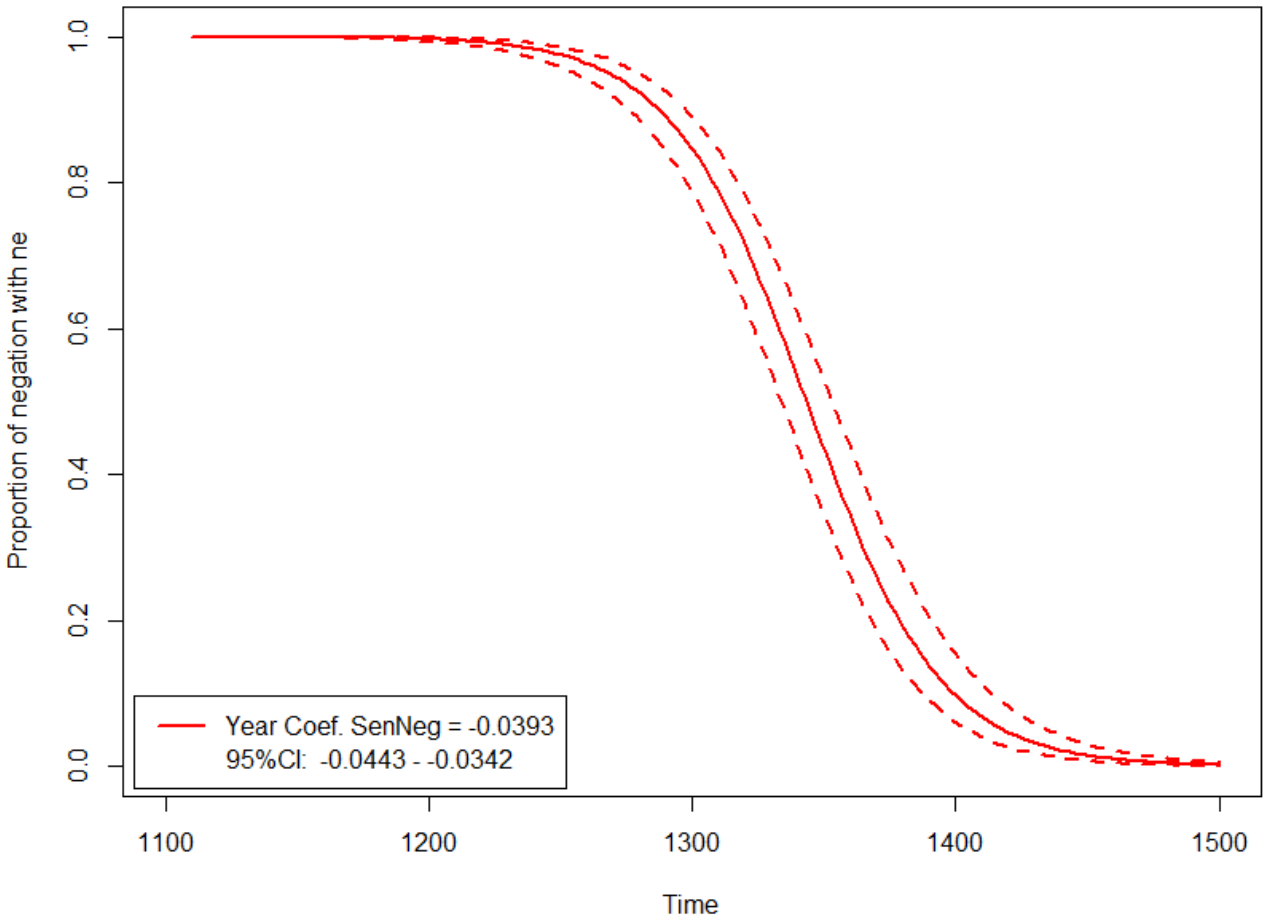

Figure 4: Logistic regression models of finding *ne* over time in six contexts; parallel lines indicate identical rates of change

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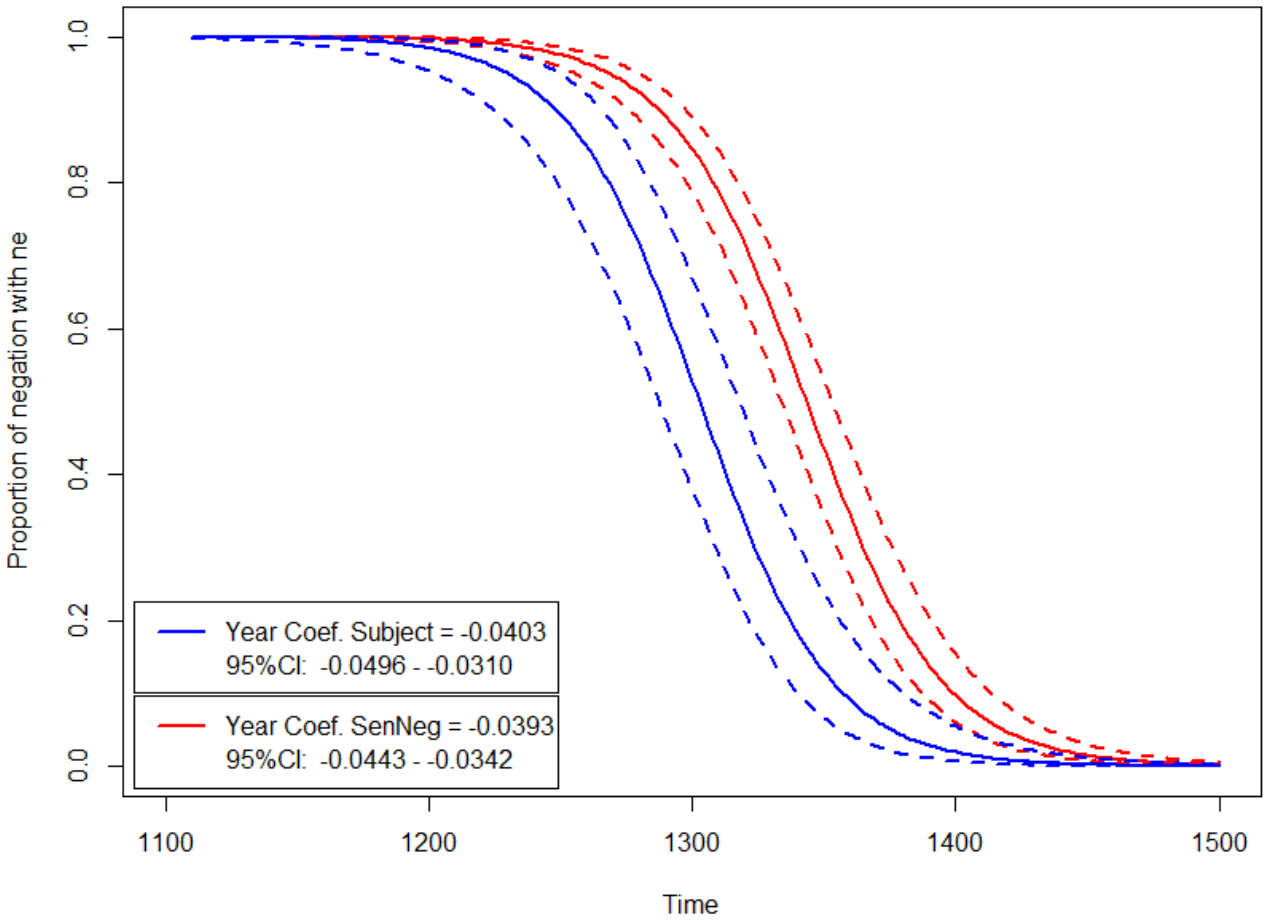

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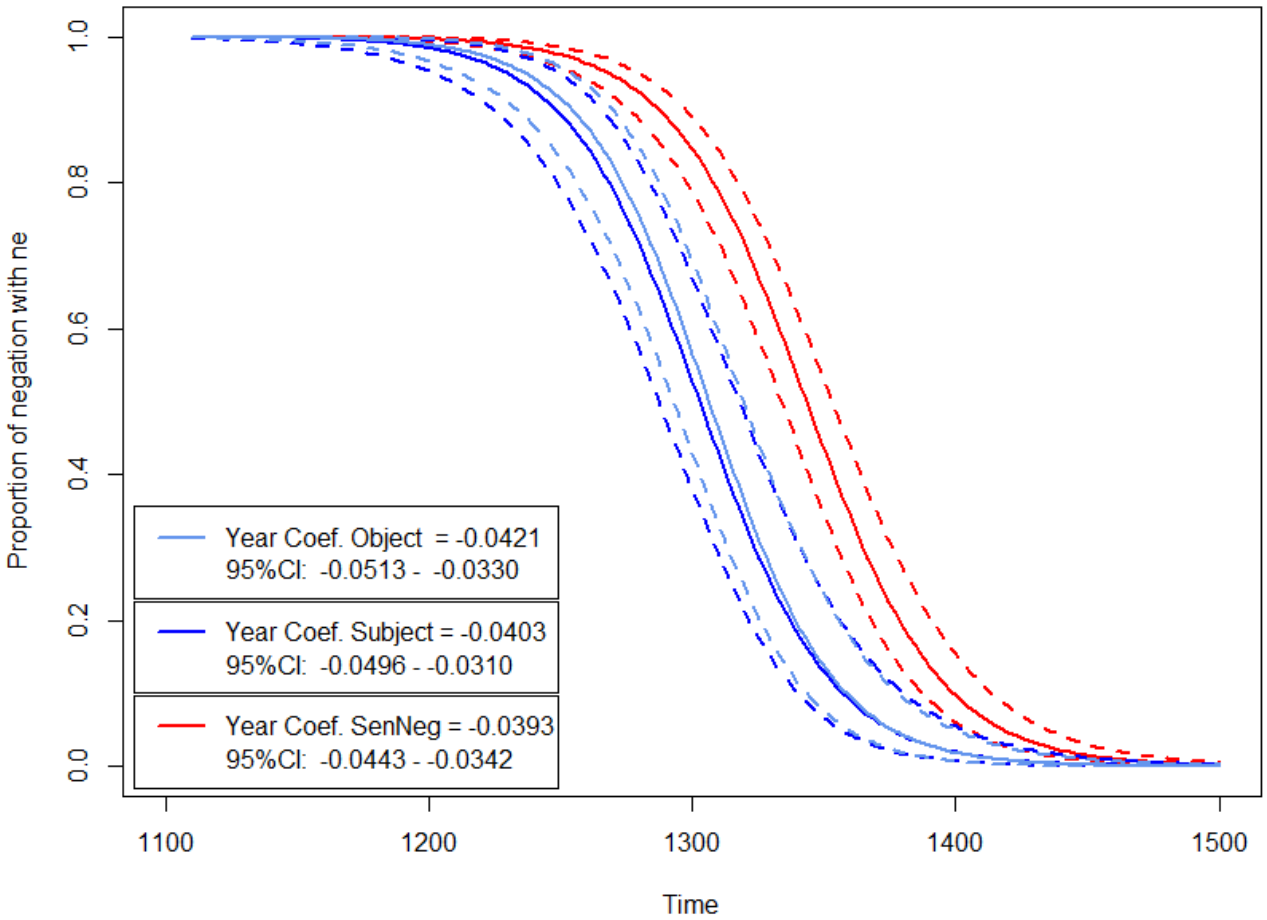

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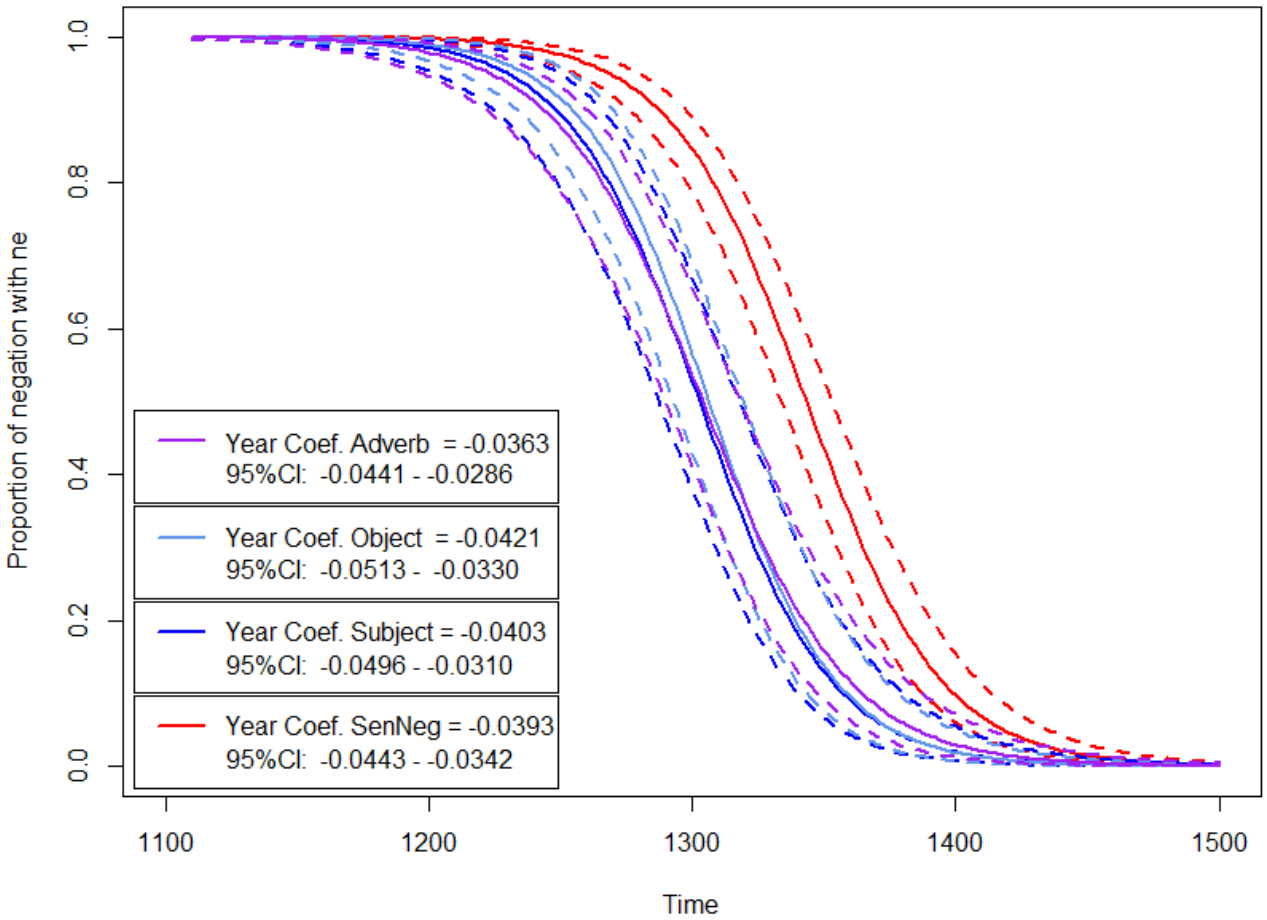

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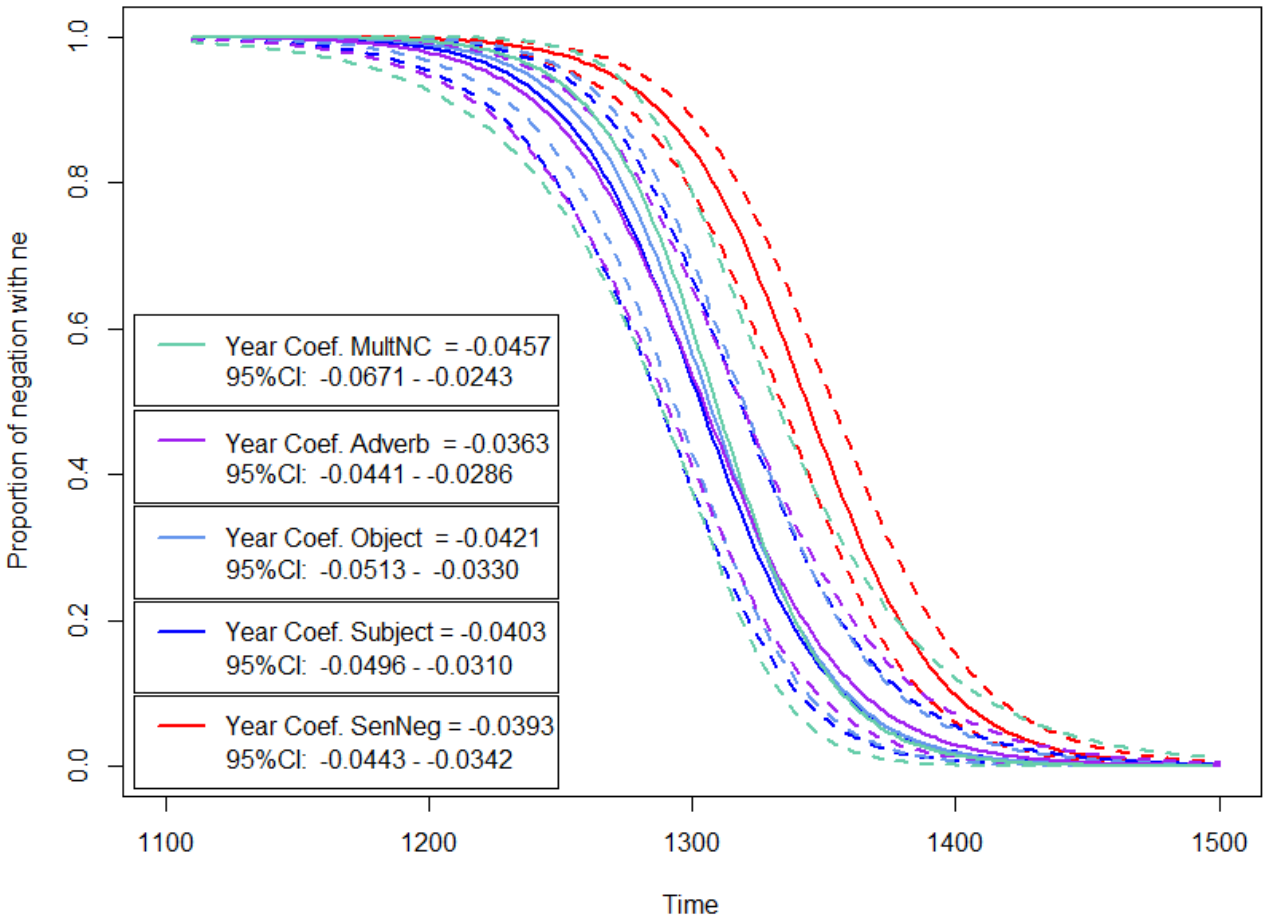

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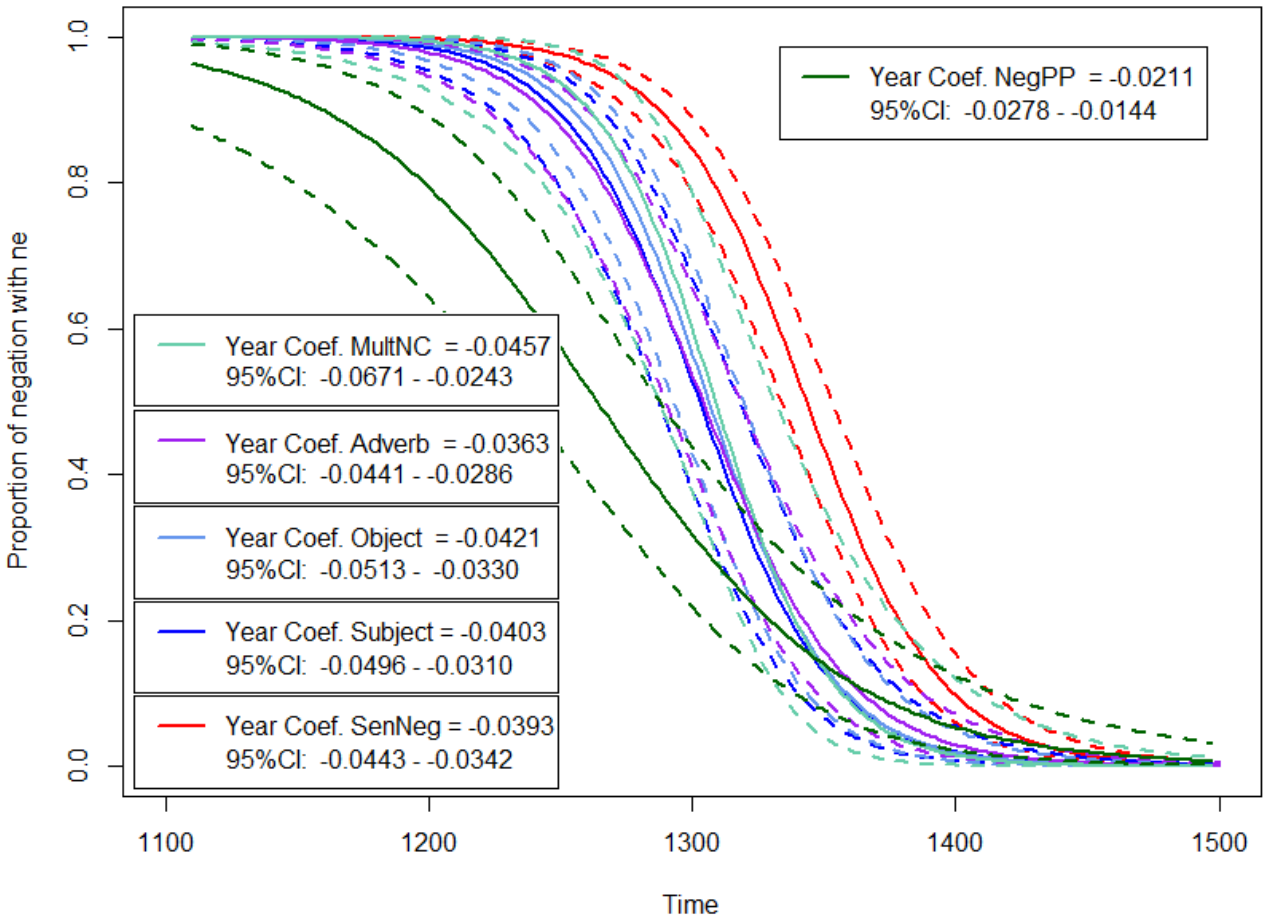

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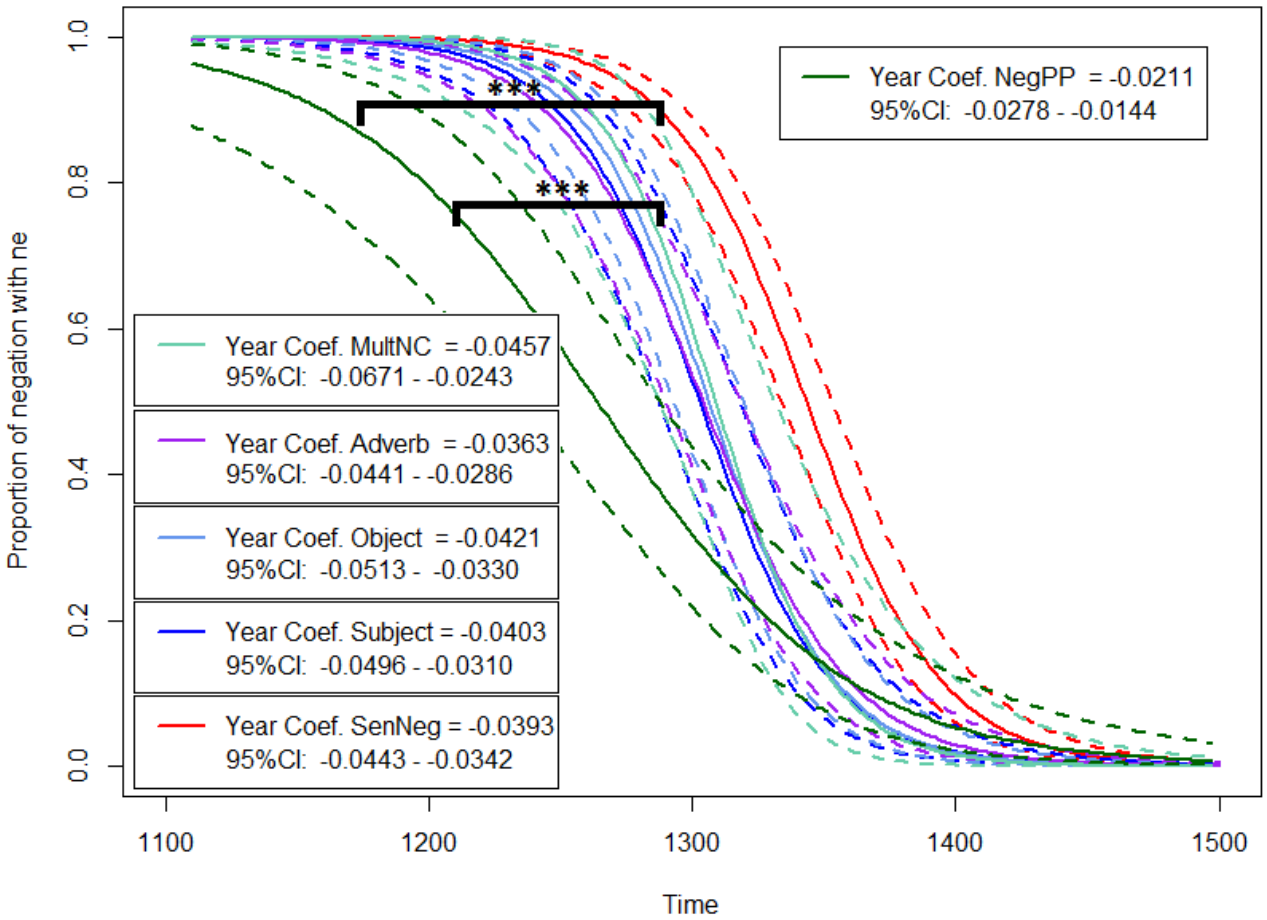

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- What might be the reason for this divergence?

Exploring the Differential Behavior of Negative PPs

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→ avoid *ne*
(ii) it is not the case that ... something - Not ... ∃

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(CMKEMPE,129.3021)

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(15) *Italian*

a. Ha creato la terra dal nulla. → creation out of nothing, one negation

b. ≠ Non ha creato la terra dal nulla. → from **something**, double negtion

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a. She saw nothing. → She saw blackness in front of her eyes.

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(14) *Middle English*

a. We wolde **not** suffir so meche [$_{PP}$ for **no** good in erthe].
'I would not suffer as much [as you are] for any good in this world'
(CMKEMPE,129.3021)

b. ... dieuel ∅ rixi on ðe [$_{PP}$ for **none** senne]
'... devils rule inside of you despite [the fact that you have] no sin'
(CMVICES1,39.454)

(15) *Italian*

a. Ha creato la terra dal nulla. → creation out of nothing, one negation

b. ≠ Non ha creato la terra dal nulla. → from **something**, double negtion

(16) *French*

a. Il est venu avec rien. → came empty-handed, one negation

b. * Il n'est venu avec rien. (needs *pas*, then double negation)

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  - Example with *ne* (different construction?):

(25) he **ne** bouȝe [$_{PP}$ to **nonen**].
'he doesn't bow down to anyone' (CMAYENBI,68.1281)

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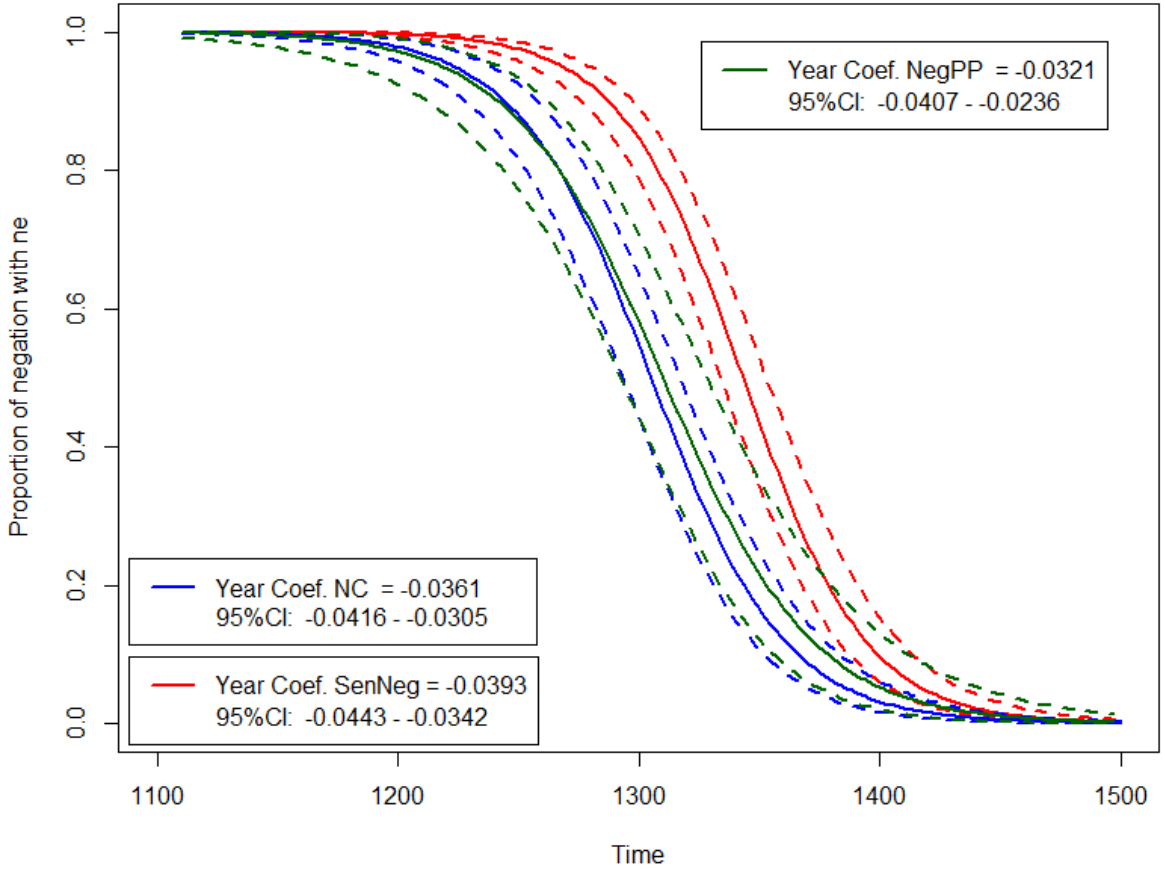

Figure 5: Sent. Neg., NC, and negative PPs with bare Qs removed

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→ formulaic 'to naught' construction, bare quantifier

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  - Probably the most important morpho-syntactic change of the fourteenth century.

Thank you very much for your attention!

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