Bipartite Negation in 18th and Early 19th Century Southern Dutch: Sociolinguistic Aspects of Norms and Variation

Abstract
This contribution focuses on the use, change and spread of the two main negation variants in Southern Dutch. Whereas bipartite negation disappeared from the emergent standard language of the North around the seventeenth century, we show, using a corpus of prescriptive linguistic texts, that it was still frequently used and prescribed in the early-eighteenth-century South, disappearing from normative writings only from the 1750s onwards. Using a corpus of early-nineteenth-century witness depositions, interrogation reports and high court indictments, we furthermore argue that negation with *en* was still a common variant in handwritten texts from the South as late as 1829. Nonetheless, we observe a rapid spread of single negation in the 1820s, causing its bipartite counterpart to become increasingly restricted to less formal text types from smaller towns in the southwest of the language area.

1. Introduction[1]

Clause negation has been expressed in different ways throughout the history of Dutch. The earliest forms of the language still featured single preverbal negation, as in this Old Lower Franconian psalm translation dating back to the tenth century:

(1) *Ne   sint   spraken   noh   woorth, thero   ne   werthin*
     NEG are   languages NEG word   there   NEG are

     gihorda   stemmen   iro.
     heard   voices   their.

     'There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard.'
     (*Wachtendonckse Psalmen*, Ps. 18, l. 3)[2]

Later, the preverbal negator *ne* (*en/n*) also appeared alongside negative polar adverbials such as *niet,* which were placed after the finite verb. The postverbal negator gradually became compulsory. We can observe this form of bipartite negation in a fragment of the 1548 Leuven Bible:

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[1] This article is a reworked and highly condensed version of a chapter of the lead author's doctoral dissertation. For more elaborate discussions and additional factors in the linguistic and sociolinguistic analyses, see Vosters (2011).
[2] Text edition by Gysseling (1977–1981, II/1: 63). All non-literal English translations are taken from the King James Bible (1611).

(2)   *Mijn   kinderkens   en   laet ons niet   lief   hebben   metten*
      my   children   NEG   let us   NEG   love   have   with the

      woerde, noch metter   tonghen, maer metten   werken, ende   waerheyt.
      word   NEG   with the tongue   but   with the works   and   truth

      'My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and
      in truth.'
      (*Leuvense Bijbel* 1548, 1 Jn. 3: 18)

Bipartite negation still appeared in the seventeenth century, but already the preverbal
element started to be lost in certain positions, as is clear in an example from the
1637 Bible translation:

(3)   *Iesus an   seyde tot haer, Kinderkens, hebt ghy niet eenige toespijse?*
      Jesus then said   to   them children   have you NEG *some food?*

      'Then Jesus saith unto them, Children, have ye any meat?'
      (*Statenbijbel* 1637, Jn. 21: 5)

Modern Standard Dutch does not allow bipartite negation anymore, and clause
negation is solely marked by a postverbal element, most usually *niet* or *geen.* The
historical evolution from preverbal single via bipartite to postverbal single negation
in Dutch has often been called a classic example of Jespersen's cycle, and can be
summarized schematically as follows:[3]

(1)   *ne/en/n*   +   Vf
(2)   *ne/en/n*   +   Vf   (+   *niet/geen/…*)
(3)   *ne/en/n*   +   Vf   +   *niet/geen/…*
(4)   (*ne/en/n* +)   Vf   +   *niet/geen/…*
(5)   Vf   +   *niet/geen/…*

2. Research directions

Negation has been a well-researched topic in Dutch linguistics, especially since
the late 1970s and early 1980s. However, while a lot is known about the history of
negation in general, we do feel that certain aspects of the topic have not received
sufficient attention in past studies.

First of all, there is the – unfortunately all too common – issue of selective
attention in previous research as far as time period, geographical area of interest

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[3] Stages 2 and 4 represent transitional stages marked by competition between single and
bipartite forms of negation (cf. van der Auwera 2009: 37-39).

and text types are concerned. A lot is known about the rise of bipartite negation in Middle Dutch, and its subsequent gradual disappearance from seventeenth-century Hollandic varieties of the language (van der Horst and van der Wal 1979; de Meersman 1980; Bossuyt 1982; Burridge 1982, 1993; Hoeksema 1997; Rutten, van der Wal, Nobels and Simons, this volume). Also the forms of negation in the present-day dialects are fairly well-described (cf. the second volume of the *Syntactische Atlas van de Nederlandse Dialecten* by Barbiers, van der Auwera, Bennis, Boef, de Vogelaer and van der Ham 2009, but also Koelmans 1967; Barbiers 2003; Neuckermans 2004; van der Auwera and Neuckermans 2004).

Much less, however, is known about the remnants of bipartite negation in the eighteenth and nineteenth century, let alone in Southern varieties of Dutch. Whereas postverbal negation established itself as the standard variety in the written language, a fair number of Southern dialects and informal spoken varieties still allow for bipartite negation with *en*. It is not clear when this feature disappeared from Southern writings. Furthermore, our knowledge of the history of negation is largely based on literary sources. Although it has been pointed out on several occasions that the use of literary texts – and especially poetry – may be highly problematic for syntactic research, few studies about Dutch negation draw on non-literary material (cf. de Meersman 1980 and Burridge 1982: 40). Additionally, the overrepresentation of highly formal sources in general might have led to the impression that bipartite negation had completely given way to the postverbal variant by the end of the seventeenth century. Less formal text types may alter this judgment, as has been argued in the past by Goss (2002). Dutch negation research thus shows a clear lacuna in non-literary and less formal Southern Dutch from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and it is precisely this void that the present study aims to fill.

The lack of focus on external and sociolinguistic aspects of language variation is a second remarkable blind spot in the Dutch negation literature. Whereas negation has received ample attention in generative linguistics (e.g. Haegeman 1995; Hoeksema 1997; Barbiers 2003), typology (e.g. Zeijlstra 2004; van der Auwera and Neuckermans 2004; van der Auwera 2009) and other formal disciplines of linguistics interested in the course of Jespersen's cycle in Dutch, the topic has hardly attracted the attention of sociolinguists, especially not from a historical point of view.[4] The seminal article by van der Horst and van der Wal (1979) does, however already hint at a some sociolinguistic factors which might have influenced the rise and disappearance of bipartite negation, and pointed out the tension between language norms and actual usage (cf. also van der Sijs 2004: 534–537).

This case study aims to build on those suggestions and give some initial impulses to fill this sociolinguistic gap, at least as far as eighteenth and nineteenth-century

[4] Van der Horst (2000), Goss (2002) and Rutten, van der Wal, Nobels and Simons (this volume) are most welcome exceptions.

Dutch in Flanders is concerned. Our primary aim is empirical: we wish to offer a data-driven overview of negation in early-nineteenth-century non-literary language. Language external variation will be at the forefront of our descriptive efforts: who still used bipartite negation, where, when and in what sorts of texts? However, language internal variation will not be overlooked. The role of factors such as word order has been at the center of various previous studies, but has never been attested for non-literary Southern Dutch in the eighteenth and nineteenth century. The sociolinguistic dimension of our research will further be complemented by exploring the relationship between prescriptive norms about negation, and variation in actual usage. We will investigate to what extent bipartite negation was on the radar of – and possibly rejected by – normative grammarians, and how that could relate to actual language use. This opens up the question whether the predicted decline of this variant can be seen as a case of language change from above or from below.

3. Linguistic aspects of negation

Previous research has yielded two important linguistic factors governing the use negation: word order and the haplological avoidance of repeated *en*.[5]

3.1 Word order

Van der Horst and van der Wal (1979) were among the first to show that bipartite negation appeared more often in certain syntactic contexts than in others. They roughly distinguish four environments in which negation can occur:

– SVO:
mostly main clauses, where the finite verb (Vf) directly follows the subject (S) in V2 position;

– SOV:
mostly subordinate clauses, where the Vf is placed towards the end of the clause;

– XVS:
sentences with an – often topicalized – element preceding the Vf, which is in turn followed by the S ('inversion');

– V1:
Verb initial clauses, often closed-ended question, commands, conditionals with *al* 'even if', and similar constructions.

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[5] A whole range of other linguistic factors apply, but cannot be taken into account here for limitations of space: see especially Hoeksema (1997: 6-7) for lexical effects, Burridge (1982: 43-44) and de Meersman (1980) for the form of the postverbal negator, and Neuckermans (2004: 334-335) for the form of the subject (clitics versus full pronouns). All of these factors are discussed in more detail in Vosters (2011).

Van der Horst and van der Wal (1979) showed how, in a collection of literary texts, V1 constructions were most favorable to single postverbal negation, as this context had already lost bipartite negation during the Middle Dutch period. After V1, postverbal negation also reached XVS, especially during the sixteenth and seventeenth century. SVO and finally SOV clauses were the last structures to adopt the change.

Later research by Burridge (1982, 1993) and others (Beheydt 1998; Paardekooper 2006; Hoeksema 1997) confirmed the general V1 > XVS > SVO > SOV pathway, and a look at the present-day dialect landscape also provides clues in the same direction. The *Syntactische atlas van de Nederlandse dialecten* (Barbiers et al. 2009) shows us how the area where bipartite negation still appears varies by word order:

- – SOV: 66 local attestations (Barbiers et al. 2009: map 50b);
- – SVO: 33 local attestations (Barbiers et al. 2009: map 48b);
- – XVS: 14 local attestations (Barbiers et al. 2009: map 49b);
- – V1: 10 local attestations (Barbiers et al. 2009: map 49a).[6]

Possible explanations for the syntactically motivated disappearance of bipartite negation have been sought, among other things, in the drift from SOV to SVO patterns in the Germanic languages (Vennemann 1974; van der Horst and van der Wal 1979) and the intensifying V2 constraint in Dutch (Burridge 1982, 1993). Others stress the semantic rather than morphosyntactic features of Jespersen's cycle, emphasizing the loss of the original negator due to semantic bleaching of originally strengthening elements such as *niet* (cf. van der Auwera and Neuckermans 2004: 458–460).

3.2 Phonological context and haplology

Several critiques of the syntactic conditioning of negation focus on phonological environments as an alternative explanation (de Haan and Weerman 1984; Goss 2002). The role of this factor was already recognized by Burridge (1982), who showed how haplological deletion of the negator *en* often occurred after the conjunction *en* 'and', after nouns and verbs in *-en*, and directly following the pronoun *men* 'one' (Burridge 1982: 45–47). Hoeksema (1997: 4) also observes functional pressure to drop the *en* particle directly following *men*, but interprets this as a phonological contraction of *men + en > men*, with an underlying *en* particle still present.[7] Beheydt (1998: 185–195) indicates that both preceding *-en* morphemes and, more generally, an /n/ phoneme preceding the place of a possible preverbal negator favor postverbal rather than bipartite negation.

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[6] This distribution has been investigated and confirmed in more detail by Neuckermans (2004). Cf. also Koelmans (1967) and Jongen (1972).

[7] We do not share the generative assumption that zero realizations can still exist at a deeper yet invisible structural level, and for the purposes of our study, all zero realizations of *en* will be treated as cases of postverbal negation.

4. Extralinguistic and sociolinguistic aspects of negation

Negation does not solely vary along linguistic lines: several extralinguistic factors also need to be taken into account. We will first discuss variation over time and region (section 4.1), and then move on to the question whether there is any evidence for the disappearance of bipartite negation as a change from below (section 4.2).

4.1 Negation in time and space

Bipartite negation has been on the decline ever since the Late Middle Dutch period, and the seventeenth century is usually mentioned as a crucial time for the breakthrough of the postverbal variant. Van der Horst (2008: 1298, 1573, 1941), for instance, mentions how negation without *en* had become the most common form after 1600, making bipartite negation a clear minority variant after 1700, which almost never appeared anymore in conventional written texts after 1800.

Nonetheless, this general trajectory does not hold true for all regional varieties of Dutch. Burridge (1982, 1993) has shown that bipartite negation was preserved longer in sixteenth and seventeenth-century Brabant than it was in Holland, and Beheydt (1998) suggests that the shift towards postverbal negation in writing was still not completed in many Southern regions by the nineteenth century. In other parts of the South, such as Antwerp, we know that bipartite negation was already on the decline in the literary language of the seventeenth century: Stoops (1971) has shown how *en* appears much less in the later works of playwright Willem Ogier (ca. 1618–1689) than it does in his early pieces.[8]

Modern-day dialectological data indicate that bipartite negation has been better preserved in the Southern provinces of East and West Flanders. We already cited the SAND data in section 3.1 before, and while we can still see bipartite negation appearing in each of the Flemish provinces depending on the syntactic environment, the heartland of *en* negation is clearly the southwest of the language area: in many localities in this region, the *en* variant even appears in more restrictive syntactic contexts such as V1 and inversion (Koelmans 1967; Neuckermans 2004).

It is, however, dangerous to assume that these or similar dialectal patterns will be directly reflected in written documents of the past. Bipartite negation is, after all, still very much present in spoken varieties of Southern Dutch today, but it hardly ever appears on paper. Van der Horst and van der Wal (1979: 19) suggest that North-South differences need to be seen within the framework of an increasing divergence between the spoken vernacular in the South and the emergent written standard coming from the North. We thus need to find out to which extent bipartite negation was accepted as part of the written language of the South: are tokens with *en* to be seen as influence from the local dialects, or was bipartite negation an integral part of the Southern writing tradition at the time?

[8] In main clauses, *en* use drops from 63% to 36%. In subordinate clauses, there is a decline from 73% to 54%.

4.2 Change from above or from below?

This also raises all sorts of related issues of formality, medium and stylistic variation. The decline of bipartite negation is a curious case of language change, as the feature was originally associated with literary and formal language. Bossuyt (1982: 295) points out how negation with *en* initially appeared more often in literary than in administrative writings, and van der Horst (2000) draws on normative works to argue that the variant was still seen as an example of formal language use in seventeenth-century Holland – formal to the extent that it was being rejected as too formal. This evaluation seems to have changed in the North: from the eighteenth century onwards, bipartite negation developed into a marker of vulgar, informal and dialectal usage that was even used to stigmatize the spoken language of local characters in plays (van der Horst 2000: 148–149). Bipartite negation became a clear marker of orality, and as the chasm between the emergent Dutch written standard and the spoken vernaculars grew, the variant was increasingly seen as inappropriate for written language use (cf. also van der Horst and van der Wal 1979: 7 and Rutten, van der Wal, Nobels and Simons, this volume). It has been suggested that this should be seen as a change originating from the higher social classes. Bossuyt (1982: 295) even claims that the sociolinguistic devaluation and subsequent disappearance of bipartite negation was a result of a negative appreciation by authors in "influential circles" (in Dutch: "de spraakmakende gemeente").

To test the extent to which this may hold true for Dutch in Flanders, we will attempt to establish what influential figures such as grammarians, school teachers and language specialists wrote about bipartite negation, and how the feature occurred in actual writing. If bipartite negation was still present in eighteenth and nineteenth-century Southern Dutch, did it occur more in informal varieties of the language, and to what extent had it become a marker or stereotype of local or Southern usage? Whereas it is almost impossible to prove top-down influence from language norms on actual writing practices, looking at metalinguistic comments about a specific feature and at its frequency in every-day written language use is interesting because it helps us to contextualize the feature: was variation on the radar of language professionals, and if so, could this have been based on variation in actual writing practices?

In the next sections, we will show how we implemented this double approach dealing with prescription and usage. First, we will give an overview of normative injunctions concerning negation (section 5.1), after which we will test how often bipartite negation still occurred in the works of the eighteenth and early-nineteenth-century codifiers (section 5.2). We will include full grammars, schoolbooks, spelling guides and other sorts of linguistic guidebooks into our analyses. Next, we will investigate the workings of negation in our corpus of judicial and administrative texts (section 6). In the final discussion, we will attempt to tie these perspectives together and offer a few concluding remarks (section 7).

5. The normative tradition

5.1 Prescriptions

We know from several previous studies that bipartite negation starts to be explicitly rejected from the middle of the seventeenth century onwards in the normative tradition from the North.[9] This often occurs on so-called logical grounds: two negative elements add up to one affirmative statement (Leupenius 1653: 70). As mentioned already, during the seventeenth century, it is sometimes branded as overly formal. Vollenhove ([1678]: 568) states that *en* is never to be found in "common talk", but is abundant in more "dignified works".[10] Not all grammarians agree, however, and pleas in favor of bipartite negation can be encountered as late as the early eighteenth century (Verwer 1708: 541–542).

Table 1. Prescriptions and use of negation variants in the Southern normative tradition[11]

AUTHOR	YEAR	PLACE	PRESCRIBED	EMPHASIS	% EMBRACING
Van Geesdalle	1700	Gent	Embracing	Explicit	100%
E.C.P.	1713	Meenen	Embracing	Explicit	40%
Stéven	1714 [1784]	Ieper	NA	NA	70%
Bouvaert	[1722]	Hemiksem	Embracing	Implicit	90%
Bouvaert	1742	Antwerpen	NA	NA	70%
[Snoeijmes - Anon.]	[±1750]	[Southwest]	NA	NA	90%
Verpoorten	1752	Antwerpen	NA	NA	80%
P.B.	1757	Antwerpen	NA	NA	40%
Verpoorten	1759	Antwerpen	NA	NA	10%
Des Roches	[1761]	Antwerpen	Postverbal	Implicit	0%
[Gent - Anon.]	1770	Gent	NA	NA	0%
Ballieu	1771 [1792]	Antwerpen	Postverbal	Implicit	0%
Van Belleghem and W.	[1773]	Brugge	NA	NA	60%
[Lier - Anon.]	[1774]	Lier	NA	NA	30%
Van Boterdael	±1774 [1785]	Brugge	Postverbal	Implicit	0%
Janssens	[1775]	Brugge	Postverbal	Implicit	0%

[9] Cf. for instance the recent work by van der Horst (2000) and Paardekooper (2006).

[10] In the original: "Dus vint men *en* in geen gemene praat, / Maar deftig werk, daar 't lam en ledig staat".

[11] All linguistic works investigated are listed on the left, including their approximate publication date and place. Column 4 indicates the prescribed negation variant, and column 5 explains to which degree this prescription is made explicit. Column 6 shows the percentage to which bipartite negation is used in the work itself, as discussed in section 5.2.

[Dendermonde - Anon.]	1785	Dendermonde	NA	NA	10%
[Lier - Anon.]	[1792]	Lier	NA	NA	NA
Van Daele	1805-1806	Ieper	Embracing	Explicit	40%
De Bast and De Laval	1805	Gent	Embracing	Explicit	80%
De Bast and De Laval	1806	Gent	NA	NA	90%
Van Aerschot	1807	Turnhout	NA	NA	0%
Henckel	1815	Gent	Postverbal	Implicit	0%
De Neckere	1815	Ieper	NA	NA	0%
Ter Bruggen	1815 [1818]	Antwerpen	NA	NA	0%
Behaegel	1817	Brugge	Postverbal	Implicit	0%
[Mechelen - Anon.]	1817	Mechelen	NA	NA	NA
[Rousselaere - Anon.]	1818	Roeselare	NA	NA	0%
Laukens	1818 [1819]	Maaseik	NA	NA	0%
Gyselynck	1819	Gent	Postverbal	Implicit	0%
Ter Bruggen	1819	Antwerpen	Postverbal	Implicit	0%
De Ré	1820	Roeselare	NA	NA	0%
Van Genabeth	1820	Brugge	Postverbal	Implicit	0%
De Mol	1820 [1827]	Kortrijk	Postverbal	Implicit	0%
Cannaert	1823	Gent	Postverbal	Explicit	0%
De Foere	1823	Brugge	Postverbal	Explicit	0%
Moke	1823	Gent	Postverbal	Implicit	0%
W.D.T.	1823	Brussel	Postverbal	Implicit	0%
Willems	1824	Antwerpen	NA	NA	0%
Behaegel	[±1825]	Brugge	NA	NA	0%
[Eecloo - Anon.]	[1825]	Eeklo	NA	NA	0%
De Simpel	[1827]	Ieper	Postverbal	Explicit	0%
Vander Maas	1827	Brugge	NA	NA	0%
Behaegel	[±1829]	Brugge	Postverbal	Implicit	0%

In the South, as shown in Table 1, most grammarians still prescribed bipartite negation at the start of the eighteenth century. Van Geesdalle (1700) and E.C.P. (1713) especially elaborate on the subject, and E.C.P. frames it specifically as a Southern (Brabantic) feature. This last author gives examples of phrases without the *en* particle, thus hoping to convince his audience of the ungrammaticality of single postverbal negation. While this must mean that E.C.P. was counting on negation with *en* still being deeply entrenched in the linguistic system of his readers, the fact that these authors feel the need to explicitly defend bipartite negation against the postverbal variant in itself also indicates that there must have been a change going on – at least in the written language –, which caught their attention in the first place.

After this initial attention for the topic, negation seems to drop off the radar for some time: none of the new works in the 1740s and 1750s make any mention of it, although many of these are mainly preoccupied with spelling. Des Roches ([1761]) changes this, and is the first author to sum up *niet* and other postverbal negators in a list of 'negative adverbs', without mentioning preverbal *en* as a negator at all. In the following decades, many others will follow this 'implicit' way of prescribing single postverbal negation (Ballieu 1771, van Boterdael 1774, Janssens 1775), although the mainly orthographical works based directly on Verpoorten (1752) and P.B. (1757) still steer away from the topic altogether (the anonymous prints from Gent 1770 and Lier [1774, 1792]). By the end of the eighteenth century, postverbal negation seems to have quietly become the sole acceptable norm for clause negation, without any grammarian explicitly prescribing it, or without negation with *en* ever being rejected as incorrect.

In the early years of the nineteenth century, two more regionally oriented Flemish grammars go back to prescribing bipartite negation. However, de Bast and de Laval (1805: 60, 88) translated their paragraph on negation directly from a French original (Restaut 1730: 153, 202), and van Daele (1806, 38: 6) somewhat unconvincingly prescribes the *optional* use of *en* for metric purposes. From then onwards, bipartite negation is no longer favored by any grammarian. Even authors such as Henckel (1815), Behaegel (1817) and de Foere (1823), who were strong advocates of regional Flemish features in other cases, accept postverbal negation as the norm. Negation is clearly not a central issue anymore in Southern grammaticography, and in most cases, a normative preference for postverbal negation can only be deducted from the absence of *en* in a list of negative lexemes, as in des Roches ([1761]).

Only a handful of works actually elaborate on their normative prescription. Cannaert (1823) is the first to frame the use of negation as a difference between North and South, and carefully expresses his preference for the supposedly Northern variant without *en*. He does not explicitly reject bipartite negation, but aims to add it to the list of 'Southernisms' that were oft-debated at the time when the Northern and Southern part of the language area were united under the Dutch crown (Vosters 2012, forthcoming; Vosters and Rutten 2011). Both the more Southern-oriented de Foere and the more Northern-oriented de Simpel refuse to accept Cannaert's geographical schematization. De Foere (1823: 334) rejects bipartite negation as "common talk" ("straetpraet"), and states that all "learned men" ("de geleerde") in North *and* South drop the *en* particle in writing – exactly the opposite of Vollenhove's claim nearly 150 years earlier. De Simpel ([1827]: 150), however, rejects bipartite negation as being archaic ("verouderd en bij geen goede schrijvers meer te vinden"). In spite of his own West Flemish origins, he does not mention any local uses of bipartite negation in contemporary informal or spoken language use.

Comparing the normative tradition in Northern and Southern Netherlands, the last injunctions defending bipartite negation from the South outdate those from the North by nearly a century (van Daele 1806 as opposed to Verwer 1708). In

both cases, however, postverbal negation must have been the dominant variant in the written language at that time already. Northern 'logical' arguments against bipartite negation did not make it to the South, where the issue in general was hardly noticed by the linguistic community. Whereas the period of the United Kingdom of the Netherlands (1815–1830) saw a great deal of public attention for language variation, including fierce spelling polemics in newspapers, negation did not enter the metalinguistic arena of Northern versus Southern usage. We found only one newspaper article touching upon the subject, and remarkably, it confirms de Simpel's claim that bipartite negation was somewhat outdated in writing. In 1826, the anonymous publicist O.B. dedicates an article in the Southern weekly *De Argus* (1826: 144) to what he considers to be the old-fashioned, overly stuffy and heavily frenchified style of notaries. One of his prime examples – construed phrases to illustrate the inanity of the described phenomena – uses precisely bipartite negation.

All of these metalinguistic testimonies indicate that bipartite negation was probably still commonly used in spoken local dialects in several regions of the South, but that it was at the same time often associated with an older and perhaps overly formal style in writing.

5.2 Leading by example: a normative grammar corpus
5.2.1 Investigating codifiers' usage
Apart from knowing what grammarians, school teachers and other linguistic authorities wrote *about* negation, we are also interested in uncovering which forms of negation they used themselves. Especially for those authors who do not explicitly argue for or against either form of negation, this helps us to get an idea of their position on the subject. In this way, we hope to correlate usage and prescription, but also aim to shed light on how negation may have changed in one particular genre throughout the eighteenth and early nineteenth century.

We excerpted the first ten negation contexts with *niet* or *geen* in all of the cited works.[12] Only clause negation was taken into account. Excerption of negation contexts was done indiscriminately from the first page onwards where possible, avoiding prefaces or other passages with potentially questionable authorship. The main results (N=380) are shown in the rightmost column of Table 1 above.

5.2.2 Prescriptions and practice
We can see that, overall, bipartite negation is on the decline. In the first half of the eighteenth century, it is still the dominant variant in all of the works under

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[12] We excluded Lier ([1792]) and Mechelen (1817) as they are mostly reproductions of earlier works without any change to the negation forms. Gent (1770) and Lier ([1774]) also draw heavily on earlier books, but they did sometimes make significant changes to the negation variants used in the source text.

investigation, with the sole exception of the Northern-oriented E.C.P. (1713). Even authors who do not prescribe negation with *en* still use it. This changes from the late 1750s onwards. Des Roches ([1761]) is the first author to exclusively use postverbal negation, and many after him do the same. From then onwards, bipartite negation goes out of use very rapidly. Only three works still use it in a majority of cases after 1761, and for two of them, de Bast and de Laval (1805; 1806), this might have been inspired by the parallel with French (cf. also the next subsection).

All authors who prescribe postverbal negation adhere to their own norm in 100% of the investigated cases. This is remarkable, and shows the successful and rapid spread of the incoming variant. These language users no longer deem bipartite negation to be a valid option at all, regardless of the linguistic context. Contrarily, authors prescribing bipartite negation hardly ever use it all the time, and presumably no longer see it fit under certain syntactic or phonological conditions. Even the Southern language activist van Daele (1805–1806) uses postverbal negation as the majority variant, in spite of his own prescription in favor of negation with *en.*

5.2.3 Explicit interventions and corrections

We can also briefly signal several explicit interventions, corrections and deliberate changes concerning negation. Verpoorten, for instance, dropped his use of bipartite negation from 80% to 0% between 1752 and 1759.[13] Similarly, Gent (1770), a partial pirate edition of Verpoorten (1752), removed *en* in all eight of the sentences with bipartite negation present in our sample of the original. Finally, also Lier ([1774]), a partial rewrite of P.B. (1757), switched from bipartite to postverbal negation in all but one of the four cases where it was still present in our excerpts from the source text. All of theses changes are part of a wider set of linguistics interventions – mostly minor spelling alterations –, which may indicate that the authors consciously tried to avoid the older forms of bipartite negation. The fact that such adjustments were made over a relatively short period of time confirms that the feature was undergoing rapid change. Nonetheless, while an author such as Verpoorten (1759) does comment on some other morphosyntactic issues, he fails to give any explanation for his changed negation usage.

5.2.4 A final word

This survey of codifiers' own usage confirmed our earlier findings based on metalinguistic prescriptions. The major shift from bipartite to postverbal negation can be situated roughly around 1760, and from the second half of the eighteenth century onwards, a growing yet largely unarticulated consensus arose among language professionals considering negation without *en* to be the variant of preference. By the beginning of the nineteenth century, bipartite negation can

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[13] We used new passages from the expanded 1759 edition, but even in the text copied from the first edition, several instances of the negator *en* had simply been removed.

hardly still be seen as a typically Southern or Flemish variant, at least not based on the language used in linguistic guidebooks. The analyses in the next section will show how often bipartite negation was still used in other text types.

6. Language use in the early nineteenth century
6.1 Corpus and methodology

In this section, we will report on a more extensive study of negation, using the afore-mentioned corpus of judicial and administrative texts.[14] This digitized collection of handwritten documents was compiled and transcribed for the purposes of this research project, and contains texts originating from *assizes* court files:

(1)   police reports, drawn up at the local level by police constables, rangers, or other members of the municipal authorities;

(2)   interrogation reports, written down by district-level scribes and signed by the *juge d'instruction* in charge;

(3)   indictments, issued by the professional scribes of one of the high courts; as well as a smaller amount of:

(4)   letters, usually between different parties of the prosecution;

(5)   and third-party declarations, by witnesses, bailiffs, former employers, etc.[15]

The three main text types range from the very local to the supraregional level, and clearly represent different levels of formality. All Southern provinces are represented, with an equal amount of material per region coming from a central city and different peripheral towns or villages. The corpus contains 225 unique documents, written by a total of 132 scribes and amounting to 101,454 words, excluding editorial and linguistic markup. The material also has a built-in diachronic dimension, with texts from approximately 1823 and 1829. These two years have been chosen because of their sociohistorical importance. In January 1823, language laws came into practice that made the use of Dutch compulsory in most of the government administration and judiciary in the Dutch-speaking provinces of the Southern Netherlands. For the majority of the departments, which were operating in French before, this means that the documents under investigation are among the first of their kind to be written in Dutch since before the French rule of 1794–1814. The manuscripts give us an

[14] The corpus draws on a collection of digital images of court files compiled by Rotthier (2007), with the support of the Koninklijke Academie voor Nederlandse Taal- en Letterkunde. The linguistic corpus itself was compiled and transcribed at the Center for Linguistics of the Vrije Universiteit Brussel, as part of the PhD research of Rik Vosters, sponsored by the Research Foundation Flanders (FWO). The corpus material was normalized and tagged for word class by the Instituut voor Nederlandse Lexicologie (INL) in Leiden, the Netherlands.
[15] For more details on the configuration of the corpus and the exact number of words per text type, see Vosters (2011: 187-222).

interesting overview of the language during the early years of the Dutch government. This allows us to compare them with 1829, at the end of the United Kingdom of the Netherlands, and to see if any changes occurred after those years of political union between the North and the South of the language area.

We excerpted all instances of clause negation with *niet* and *geen* in our corpus (N=395), and linked up each token with a number of language internal and external factors. The main findings are discussed below.

6.2 Results

Overall, 19% of all negation tokens in our corpus use bipartite negation. While single postverbal negation is clearly the majority variant, negation with *en* cannot be discarded as a marginal phenomenon. Its use did decrease over time: in 1823, bipartite negation still accounted for 28% of all negation tokens (N=216), as opposed to a mere 9% in 1829 (N=179). This confirms our earlier findings from the normative works about the rapid decline of bipartite negation in the Southern Netherlands. Although the manuscripts under investigation here did retain more instances of the older variant than we could expect from our grammar corpus, it is evident that we are witnessing the top end of an *S*-curve.

Inter- and intra-speaker variation also confirms this trend. Out of the 33 scribes who contributed more than three instances of negation to the corpus, no less than 18 use the postverbal variant all the time, as opposed to a mere two scribes who exclusively use bipartite negation. Furthermore, two out of eleven writers who contributed to both subsamples made the switch from bipartite to postverbal negation between 1823 and 1829, whereas the opposite change never occurred.

6.2.1 Word order

One of the main predictors of negation is word order. As we can see in Table 2, there are no tokens with *en* in V1 environments, and only very few with inversion (XVS). The distinction between main and subordinate clauses known from the literature also holds true for our material: bipartite negation is preserved most in SOV contexts.

Table 2. Word order effects on negation

WORD ORDER	% BIPARTITE	% POSTVERBAL	N
SOV	23%	77%	288
SVO	15%	85%	60
XVS	9%	91%	23
V1	0%	100%	24
TOTAL	19%	81%	395

However, when we split up the data per year, as in Figure 1, we see that the SOV/ SVO distinction only holds true for the 1823 data. While bipartite negation was already a minority variant in 1823, it especially succeeded in holding its ground in subordinate clauses. By 1829, its overall decline had become so widespread that SOV contexts also witnessed a severe drop in *en* use, from 35% to 10%. By that time, the distinction between the different word order patterns had become less clear, and bipartite negation in SVO contexts surprisingly rose from 12% to 19%. These results hint at a clear syntactic conditioning of negation in our corpus, that becomes weaker as bipartite negation is on its way out.
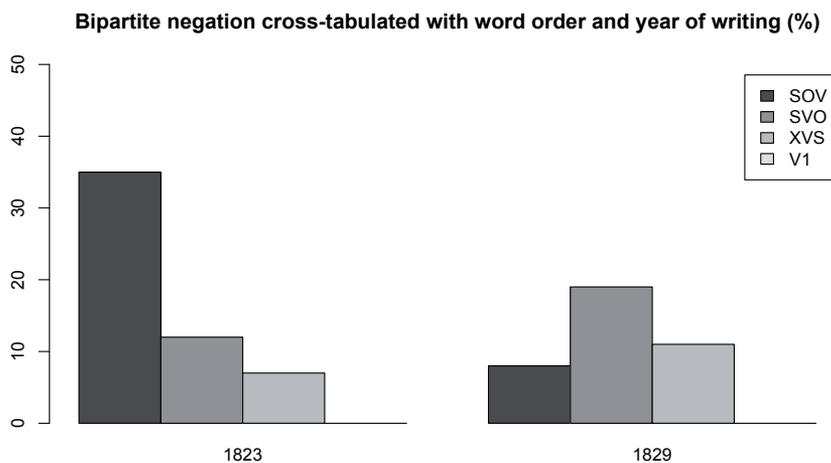
Bipartite negation cross-tabulated with word order and year of writing (%)

Figure 1. The use of bipartite negation: Word order and year of writing

6.2.2 Phonological context and haplology

Apart from word order, we also found a strong effect based on the element preceding the position of the preverbal negator: the preverbal negator *en* is much less likely to be retained after a preceding *-en/en* element, which can come from the pronoun *men* 'one', a verbal or nominal ending *-en*, or the coordinating conjunction *en* 'and' (Figure 2).

Looking at the data per year, we can furthermore see that this restriction becomes even more stringent over time: as the general number of bipartite negation forms declines, haplological *en* deletion even reaches 100% by 1829.
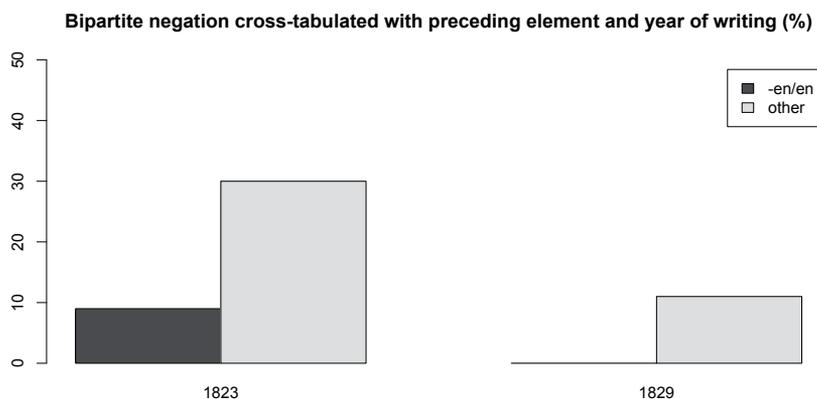
Bipartite negation cross-tabulated with preceding element and year of writing (%)

Figure 2. The use of bipartite negation: Preceding element and year of writing

6.2.3 Regional variation

The trend to drop preverbal *en* did not affect all regions to the same degree, as is evident from Figure 3.[16] We can see that, in 1823, bipartite negation still showed up fairly frequently and to somewhat comparable degrees in all provinces. By 1829, however, it had been pushed back to the provinces of East and West Flanders, which are still today its dialectal homeland.
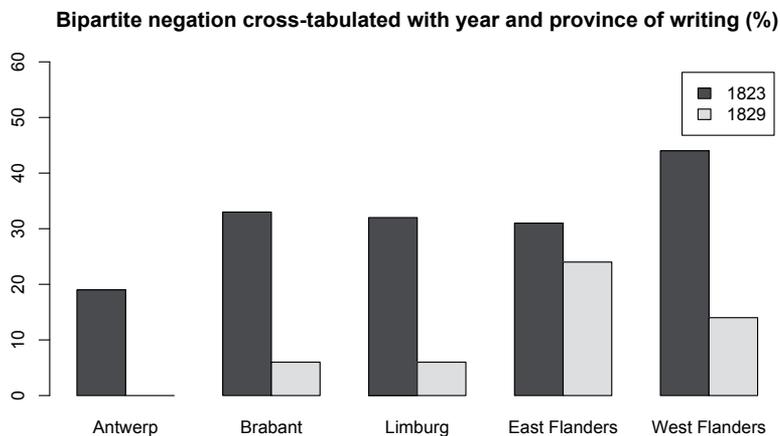
Bipartite negation cross-tabulated with year and province of writing (%)

Figure 3. The use of bipartite negation: year and province of writing

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[16] For this graph, as for all further analysis involving regional variables, we excluded the indictment section of the corpus, as these documents were produced centrally in the high courts of Brussels and Liège.

We furthermore uncovered a clear inverse correlation between the use of bipartite negation and the size of the town where the document was written, distinguishing between small (less than 5,000 inhabitants), average (5,000–10,000 inhabitants), large (10,000–30,000 inhabitants) and very large (more than 30,000 inhabitants) municipalities.[17] 35% of all tokens in small villages (N=57) still took bipartite negation, as opposed to 25% in average-sized towns (N=89), 20% in large towns (N=66) and 18% in very large cities (N=115).
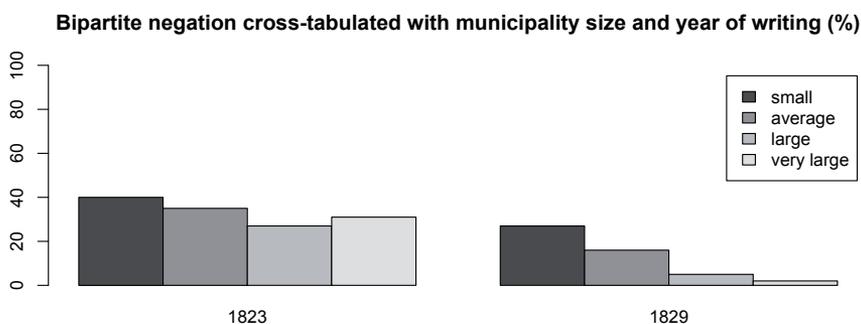

Figure 4. The use of bipartite negation: municipality size and year of writing

What is more, this pattern stands out much more clearly in the 1829 dataset (Figure 4). Bipartite negation was still used to comparable degrees in all sorts of towns in 1823, but over time, it became more and more limited to smaller settlements. This, along with the patterns per province, suggests that bipartite negation was initially part of fairly wide Southern writing tradition, but was gradually pushed back to its local dialectal basis in the smaller villages of the Western provinces.

6.2.4 Text type and formality
An analysis of negation and text type, as presented in Table 3, illustrates that there is an especially large divide between the less formal police and interrogation reports on the one hand, and the high court indictments on the other. We noted not a single example of bipartite negation in the latter text type, which clearly confirms that negation with *en* was deemed inappropriate for formal writing. The fact that the outgoing variant actually occurs more often in interrogation than in police reports is remarkable, and might be related to a higher degree of orality in the former text type.

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[17] Population data are based on the 1820 census (Vrielinck 2000).

Table 3. Text type effects on negation

TEXT TYPE	% BIPARTITE	% POSTVERBAL	N
Police reports	17%	83%	98
Interrogation reports	25%	75%	205
Indictments	0%	100%	68
Letters	31%	69%	13
Declarations	27%	73%	11
TOTAL	19%	81%	395

The minor text genres, letters and declarations, show a surprisingly high number of bipartite negation forms. As these sorts of documents are even closer to the spoken vernacular than the more formal judicial reports, these findings confirm the informal character of negation with *en*.

7. Discussion and conclusion

This study offered an insight into the use, change and spread of the two main negation variants in Southern Dutch. We have shown that bipartite negation was still commonly used and prescribed in the early eighteenth century, but it rapidly disappeared from normative writings from the 1750s onwards. Nonetheless, negation with preverbal *en* lingered on for a longer period of time in other sorts of writing, and still occupied a place on the variation spectrum in handwritten documents from the early nineteenth century, when Northern and Southern Low Countries were united under Dutch rule.

It is unlikely that scribes consciously dropped *en* forms from their writings under normative influence. After all, many grammatical works only implicitly prescribed the incoming variant, and at a time when we could still observe bipartite negation being used in about one fourth of all cases, it had long since disappeared off the grammatical radar. Negation, unlike many other – mainly orthographical – features of the language, did not grow into a pragmatically salient stereotype of local, regional or Southern usage, even though it did become more regionally confined.

Nonetheless, the use of bipartite negation does show clear signs of stylistic variation, which can be related to orality and the local dialects. This indicates that the rapid shift from bipartite to postverbal negation between 1823 and 1829 happened above the level of social awareness, and, in that sense, can be characterized as a change from above. In our manuscript corpus, postverbal negation was steadily pushing its bipartite counterpart back to less formal texts, especially originating from smaller towns in the southwest of the language area. From an older element in a Southern Dutch writing tradition, bipartite negation became increasingly more local, dialectal and unsuitable for formal usage. Just as individual grammarians

adapted their texts to show less *en* forms in the eighteenth century, individual scribes in the early nineteenth century sometimes switched from bipartite to postverbal negation as well.

At the same time, just as bipartite negation became more and more restricted in sociolinguistic terms, we discovered that the internal constraints allowing for the preverbal negator *en* to remain in place became more stringent as well. By 1829, the variant did not appear anymore in unfavorable morpho-phonological surroundings, while syntactic restrictions had always been operative as well.

In conclusion, as in the North, there are indications that bipartite negation in the South originally had more formal connotations, but gradually went out of use as being colloquial, local and dialectal. Following the metaphor in van der Horst (2000), negation with *en* came into the language through the front door, but went out the back. The result is the present situation, where it is not used in writing anymore at all, and is confined to an ever decreasing number of local dialects in some areas of the South, often only under linguistically favorable conditions.

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