

Negation in the history of the Brythonic Celtic languages

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1 Introduction

The Brythonic Celtic languages, Welsh, Breton and Cornish, are particularly interesting from the point of view of negation in that two of them, Welsh and Breton, have independently undergone Jespersen's Cycle. Apart from some residue in the form of initial consonant mutations (see section 3.1 below), present-day spoken Welsh, in (2), has replaced the Middle Welsh preverbal negative marker *ni(t)* in (1) with a postverbal marker *ddim* in main clauses, reaching stage III of Jespersen's Cycle (V-Neg) today (Morris-Jones 1931, Poppe 1995: 154–5):

- (1) ... **ny** wnn i pwy wytti.
 NEG know.PRES.1SG I who be.PRES.2SG-you
 '... I don't know who you are.' (*Pedeir Keinc y Mabinogi* 2.22–3, Middle Welsh)
- (2) Wn i **ddim** pwy wyt ti.
 know.PRES.1SG I NEG who be.PRES.2SG you
 'I don't know who you are.' (Present-day Welsh)

Literary Welsh still allows stage I (Neg-V) preverbal negation, although increasingly formal writing too is switching to stage III. The new negative marker *ddim* derives from an indefinite pronoun *dim* 'thing, anything, nothing'. This item has given rise to a series of homophonous or nearly homophonous items in Present-day Welsh. There are now six synchronically and diachronically related but distinct items: argument *dim*, adverb / pseudoargument *ddim*, quantifier *dim*, pseudoquantifier *dim o*, sentence-final adverbial *dim*, and focus-negating / constituent-negation *dim* (Borsley and Jones 2000, 2005). Adverb / pseudoargument *ddim* is the main sentential negator of Present-day Welsh, as illustrated above in (2). Argument *dim* is

an indefinite pronoun ‘nothing, anything’, illustrated in (3), while quantifier *dim* ‘any, no’ is illustrated in (4).

- (3) Dyw Dafydd ddim wedi dweud **dim**.
 be.PRES.3SG Dafydd NEG PERF say.INF nothing
 ‘Dafydd has said nothing.’ (argument *dim*, Present-day Welsh)

- (4) Dyw Dafydd ddim wedi cael [**dim** anrheg].
 be.PRES.3SG Dafydd NEG PERF get.INF no present
 ‘Dafydd hasn’t received a (any) present.’ (quantifier *dim*, Present-day Welsh)

Pseudoquantifier *dim o*, normally shortened to *mo*, marks a definite object in the scope of negation:

- (5) Welodd Dafydd (**ddi**)m o ’r ffilm.
 see.PAST.3SG Dafydd nothing of the film
 ‘Dafydd didn’t see the film.’ (pseudoquantifier *dim o*, Present-day Welsh)

Sentence-final adverbial *dim* reinforces already present sentential negation:

- (6) Dw i ddim wedi cysgu **dim**.
 be.PRES.1SG I NEG PERF sleep.INF NEG
 ‘I haven’t slept at all.’ (Borsley and Jones 2005: 142) (Present-day Welsh)

Finally, *dim* is used (alongside more formal *nid* and colloquial *ddim*) as a constituent negator with the constituent being negated obligatorily fronting to initial focus position:

(7) **Dim Dafydd** enillodd y rês.

NEG Dafydd win.PAST.3SG the race

‘It wasn’t Dafydd who won the race.’ (Present-day Welsh)

Breton has also undergone Jespersen’s Cycle. It has replaced an inherited stage I pattern with preverbal *ni(t)*, illustrated for Old Breton in (8), by stage II (Neg-V-Neg) bipartite negation *ne ... ket*, illustrated for Present-day Breton in (9).

(8) **Ni** gus coucant.

NEG know.PRES.IMPERS certain

‘It is not known exactly.’ (Fleuriot 1964a: 268) (Old Breton)

(9) **N’** ouzhon **ket** piv out.

NEG know.PRES.1SG NEG who be.PRES.2SG

‘I don’t know who you are.’ (Present-day Breton)

The bipartite pattern is already dominant, although not compulsory, by the time of the earliest Middle Breton texts (1450), and becomes compulsory over the next two centuries. More recently, many dialects have begun to omit the preverbal marker *ne*, leading to a stage III negative pattern with postverbal *ket* alone.

This chapter will begin by tracing these developments in some detail. It will then move on to examine the main developments in the system of indefinites, paying particular attention to indefinites found in negative and non-assertive (negative polarity) contexts. Here, a number of items have become increasingly negative in the historical period, leading to the cyclic creation of new series of pronouns for non-negative contexts. Finally, various other contexts for negation will be considered, for instance, negative nonfinite clauses and negative

imperatives, all contexts where there has been considerable change over the history of the languages.

2 Textual and linguistic background

The Brythonic languages are descended from the Brythonic (British, Brittonic) parent language, the language spoken by the Britons during the Roman and pre-Roman periods. Another branch of Celtic, Goidelic, was spoken in Ireland, subsequently spreading to Scotland and the Isle of Man, giving rise to Irish, Scottish Gaelic and Manx. Brythonic and Goidelic are traditionally classified as Insular Celtic languages, in contradistinction to the Continental Celtic languages (Gaulish, Celtiberian, Lepontic, Galatian) once spoken over much of continental western Europe. Another distinction commonly made is that between P-Celtic, those languages where the reflex of Indo-European **/k^w/* is /p/, namely Brythonic and Gaulish (Welsh *pedwar* ‘four’) and Q-Celtic, those languages where it is /k/, namely Goidelic and Celtiberian (Irish *ceathair* ‘four’).

Despite certain gaps, there is substantial textual attestation of all the Brythonic Celtic languages in the historical period. Welsh is conventionally divided into Old Welsh (800–1150), Middle Welsh (1150–1500) and Modern Welsh (1500 to the present day). Within the modern period it is useful to refer to Early Modern Welsh (1500–1700) and to Present-day Welsh. Old Welsh is attested in a modest corpus of glosses on Latin texts, charters and similar texts in contemporary manuscripts, and a larger body of poetry preserved largely in later manuscripts. Middle Welsh is preserved in an extensive corpus of texts including both native and translated tales and romances, fixed-metre poetry, law codes, chronicles, saints’ lives and other religious texts, and scientific and medical works. For the modern period, attention here will focus heavily on the evidence of sources that give a reliable reflection of spoken practice:

dialect plays, ballads, court-case depositions, personal letters by less educated individuals and the representation of speech in novels.

Breton is conventionally divided into Old Breton (800–1100), Middle Breton (1100–1650) and Modern Breton (1650 to the present day). Old Breton is attested only in glosses and similar documents giving only isolated words and phrases. There is a substantial gap in attestation between Old Breton and the earliest Middle Breton texts, which appear from 1450. This makes it difficult to trace the development of the language. Middle Breton boasts a moderately sized corpus of verse drama on religious topics (saints' lives, mystery plays etc.), carols, and various prose works, including homilies and travellers' phrase books. A continuous tradition of printed and manuscript sources exists since then.

Apart from Old Cornish glosses, Cornish is attested from religious plays dating from the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries onwards, as well as a collection of sixteenth-century prose homilies and various other prose pieces from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Discussion here focuses on the language of the canonical Middle Cornish verse plays, with some reference to developments in Late Cornish (1575–1800), where these can be identified.

The standard grammars are those of Evans (1964) for Middle Welsh, Hemon (1975) for Middle Breton, and Lewis (1946, 1990) for Middle Cornish. General overviews of the languages can be found in Macaulay (1992), Russell (1995), and Ball and Müller (2009), while there is an introduction to the historical syntax of Welsh in Borsley, Tallerman and Willis (2007: 286–337).

Contact with English and French has been a feature of all the Brythonic languages since the early Middle Ages. In the case of Cornish, this led to complete language shift to English and the death of the language in the eighteenth century. In Wales, contact with English culminated in the emergence of mass bilingualism in the nineteenth century and rapid language shift to English in many areas. In Brittany, mass bilingualism developed in the late

nineteenth century, followed by even more rapid shift to French. Both Breton and, especially, Welsh are the focus of lively revitalization efforts today, and this may affect the grammatical structure of both languages.

3 The Welsh Jespersen Cycle

3.1 Preverbal negative markers in Middle Welsh

In both Old Welsh (800–1150) and Middle Welsh (1150–1500), sentential negation is expressed using a particle in immediately preverbal position. In declarative main clauses, this is *ny* /ni/, *nyt* /nɪd/ before a vowel (spelled *ni(d)*, but also pronounced /nɪd/ in Modern Welsh). Word order in negative clauses is predominantly verb-initial, although the language as a whole is verb-second in main clauses (Willis 1998), so this results in the negative marker being clause-initial with negation – verb – subject – object order:

(10) ... **ny** cheffy di varch gennyf i.

NEG get.PRES.2SG you horse with.1SG me

‘... you will not get a horse from me.’ (*Ystoryaeu Seint Greal*, l. 1940, Middle Welsh)

In embedded clauses, a different particle, *na(t)* /na:d/ (spelled *na(d)*, but also pronounced /na:d/ in Modern Welsh), is used:

(11) Pann welas Kicua ... **nat** oed yn y llys namyn

when see.PAST.3SG Cigfa NEG.COMP be.IMPF.3SG in the court except

hi a Manawydan ...

she and Manawydan

‘When Cigfa saw that there was no one in the court except her and Manawydan ...’

(*Pedeir Keinc y Mabinogi* 57.13–14, Middle Welsh)

A third particle, *na(c)* /na:g/, is used to negate imperatives, as in (12), subjunctives (optatives), as in (13), and to give a negative response to a question (responsives), as in (14). Note that, before a consonant, the two particles /na:d/ and /na:g/ are homophonous. Only before a vowel can their form be distinguished.

(12) ... **na** **arch** dim namyn lloneit y got o uwyt.

NEG ask.IMPER.2SG anything except fill the bag of food

‘... don’t ask for anything except for the fill of the bag of food.’ (*Pedeir Keinc y Mabinogi* 15.4–5, Middle Welsh)

(13) **na** **ueidych** ditheu dangos dy wyneb lliw dyd byth

NEG dare.PRES.SUBJ.2SG you show.INF 2SG face colour day ever

‘... may you not dare to show your face in daylight ever again ...’ (*Pedeir Keinc y Mabinogi* 91.10, Middle Welsh)

(14) ... a doyt ti y dangos imi yr aneuil hwnnw?

QU come.PRES.2SG you to show.INF to-me the animal that

Nac af.

NEG go.PRES.1SG

‘Will you come to show me that animal?’ ‘No.’ (lit. ‘I will not go.’) (*Peredur* 68.15, Middle Welsh)

All of these particles trigger morphophonological alternations on the following verb, part of the wider system of initial consonant mutations found at all stages of Welsh. The negative particles uniquely trigger a mixture of two mutation patterns: aspirate mutation, /p t k/ > /f θ x/, if the verb begins with /p t k/, and soft mutation, /b d m r^h ɸ/ > /v ð v r l/ and /g/ > zero, otherwise. Aspirate mutation occurs in example (10) above (*keffy* /k/ > *cheffy* /x/), and soft mutation occurs in example (13) (*beidych* /b/ > *ueidych* /v/).

3.2 The emergence of negative reinforcement

In the course of Middle Welsh, a new adverb emerges to reinforce negation, based on a reanalysis of the indefinite pronoun *dim* ‘anything, nothing’. In early Middle Welsh, this pronoun is used exclusively as a verbal argument (see section 6.2 below), typically as subject or direct object. Use as a direct object, found at all stages of Welsh, is illustrated in (15).

- (15) Ac ny mynnwys ef **dim**.
 and NEG want.PAST.3SG he anything
 ‘And he didn’t want anything.’ (*Pedeir Keinc y Mabinogi* 27.10–11, Middle Welsh)

It is also used as an ‘extent argument’, that is, as complement to a verb of succeeding, a verb of caring or indifference or a verb of compensation (*tygyaw* ‘work, help’, *diwygyaw* ‘compensate, put right’ etc.), expressing the extent to which something succeeds, the extent to which it is (un)important, or the extent to which compensation is made:

- (16) ac ny thygyawd ydunt **dym** ...
 and NEG avail.PAST.3SG to.3PL anything
 ‘and it didn’t help them at all ...’ (*Brenhinedd y Saesson* 192.13–14, Middle Welsh)

However, a new pattern emerges in texts from the second half of the thirteenth century onwards. In this pattern, *dim* has no selectional relationship with the verb; that is, it is not an argument of the verb, but rather reinforces the negative polarity of the clause (Willis 2006, Poppe 2009):

(17) A gwedy gwelet o 'r brenhin hynny ny chyffroas arnaw **dim** ...
 and after see.INF of the king that NEG agitate.PAST.3SG on.3MSG at.all
 ‘And after the king saw that, he did not become agitated (in the least) ...’ (*Brenhinedd y Saesson* 70.9–10, Middle Welsh)

(18) A phan weles ynteu daruot llad y varch, ny
 and when see.PAST.3SG he PERF.INF kill.INF 3MSG horse NEG
 lidiawd **dim** yr hynny ...
 become.angry.PAST.3SG at-all despite that.NEUT
 ‘And when he saw that his horse had been killed, he still didn’t get angry (in the least).’ (*Ystoryaeu Seint Greal* 2874, Middle Welsh)

This reanalysis represents a split of one item, argument *dim*, into two items: one continues argument *dim* ‘anything’, the other represents a new emphatic marker. The conservative pattern is clearly continued today as the indefinite pronoun ‘argument *dim*’ (see section 6.2 below).

This item differs in several ways from the Present-day Welsh negative marker *ddim*. First, Middle Welsh pseudoargument *dim* is actually a negative polarity adverb rather than a negator in its own right. This can be seen from the fact that, like the indefinite pronoun *dim*, it occasionally occurs in non-assertive environments other than negation, for instance in the

embedded interrogative in (19). Effectively, then, its distribution is equivalent to that of a negative polarity adverb such as English *at all*.

- (19) Ac yno y wylyaw a orugant y edrych a allei
 and then 3MSG watch.INF PRT do.PAST.3PL tolook.INF PRT can.IMPF.3SG
 ymdidan **dim** ac wynt.
 converse.INF at.all with them
 ‘And then they watched him to see whether he could converse with them at all.’
 (*Ystoryaeu Seint Greal* 5213, Middle Welsh)

Secondly, it was emphatic. This is partly demonstrated by its low frequency (under 5% of negative clauses) even in those Middle Welsh texts where it is found. Its emphatic character is clear in example (19), where it seems to mean ‘in any way’; that is, they watched him to see whether he could converse with them by means of any language, or by signs, or by any other means imaginable. This is also demonstrated by sixteenth-century texts translated from or influenced by English, where it normally corresponds to some emphatic element in English, as in (20), where *ddim* corresponds to *in no wise* in the English King James Bible, with which the Welsh Bible was brought into line:

- (20) a 'r hwn a ddêl attafi, **ni** 's bwriaf ef
 and the DEM PRT come.PRES.SUBJ.3SG to.1SG-me NEG ACC.3 cast.PRES.1SG him

allan **ddim**.

out NEG

‘and anyone who may come to me, I shall not cast him out.’ (cf. King James Bible *and him that commeth to me, I will in no wise cast out.*) (*Y Bibl cyssegr-lan*, John 6: 37, 1620)

From a syntactic perspective too, it differs from Present-day Welsh *ddim* in occupying a late clausal position. In particular, it may follow prepositional-phrase complements of verbs, as with *arnunt* ‘(waiting) for them’ in (21) (Willis 2011a: 105–6), and may follow nonfinite verbs in periphrastic tenses, as with the continuous *oeddynt yn mendio* ‘were mending’ in (22) (Willis 2010: 123–4).

- (21) Ac wynteu ... nyt arhoysant [arnunt] **dim** ...
and they NEG waited.3PL on.3PL at.all

‘And they didn’t wait for them ...’ (*Ystoryaeu Seint Greal* 1919, Middle Welsh)

- (22) Eithr **nid** oeddynt yn mendio **dim**.
but NEG be.IMPF.3SG PROG mend.INF at-all

‘But they did not mend their ways at all.’ (*Darn o’r Ffestival* 106.6, mid sixteenth century)

In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, modern-like properties emerge. The form of the sentential negator becomes fixed as *ddim*, rather than alternating between *dim* and *ddim* according to syntactic environment. It loses its emphatic semantics, appearing in translated texts in contexts where there is no corresponding emphatic element in the English:

- (23) ac o herwydd hynny ... ni ddeuaf i **ddim** i mewn.
 and because this NEG come.PRES.1SG I NEG to in
 ‘... and because of this I will not come in.’ (Translates *and therefore [I will not accept of it] nor come in*) (Edward Fisher, *Madruddyn y difinyddiaeth diweddaraf*, p. 147, 1651)

It also appears in an earlier sentence position, coming to occupy the position immediately following the subject, as it does today. This means that it comes to appear consistently before a prepositional-phrase complement of the verb, as illustrated in (24), where the negator precedes *i’r Cyngor* ‘to the council’, rather than following it.

- (24) Hefyd ni ddoe Escobion y Dwyrain **ddim** i ’r Cyngor yn Sirmium
 also NEG come.IMPF.3SG bishops the east NEG to the council in Sirmium
 ‘Also the eastern bishops did not come to the Council of Sirmium ...’ (John Jewel, *Deffynniad ffydd Eglwys Loegr*, p. 81, 1595)

It also appears in the middle of an aspectual periphrasis, illustrated with *oedd hi ... yn pechu* ‘she was sinning’ in (25). The contrast in both these cases with examples (21) and (22) above shows clearly the shift to an earlier clausal position.

- (25) Ac velly pawb a wybu nad oedd hi **ddim** yn pechu.
 and thus everyone PRTknow.PERF.3SG NEG.COMP be.IMPF.3SG she NEG PROG sin.INF
 ‘And thus everyone realized that she was not sinning.’ (*Teithie Syr Sion Mandefyl*, Peniarth 218, ll. 127–8, 1605–10)

We thus reach the system of Present-day Welsh, where pseudoargument *ddim* in (26) occupies a position after the auxiliary and the subject but before the aspectual particle and conveys pragmatically neutral sentential negation:

- (26) Doedden nhw **ddim** yn gwella.
 NEG.be.IMPF.3PL they NEG PROG improve.INF
 ‘They weren’t improving.’ (Present-day Welsh)

A residue of the earlier system is the maintenance of an emphatic marker of negation in Present-day Welsh, limited to clause-final (or at least clause-late) position:

- (27) Doedden nhw ddim yn gwella **dim**.
 NEG.be.IMPF.3PL they NEG PROG improve.INF at.all
 ‘They weren’t improving at all.’ (Present-day Welsh)

Note that this can co-occur with the plain sentential negator *ddim* in (27), demonstrating that the two are different items today.

Once again, then, we have a split, this time in the sixteenth century. Middle Welsh pseudoargument *dim* /ðɪm, dɪm/ split into two items. One item, clause-late *dim*, represents continuity in acquisition of the inherited system. The other item results from a reanalysis based on sentences where the syntactic position of *dim* (in the form /ðɪm/) is not self-evident. A new item, *ddim*, was created in immediately post-subject position. Clause-late *dim* remained in a prosodically prominent position favourable to it retaining its emphatic character, whereas the move to an earlier, prosodically weaker position for the new *ddim* encouraged the loss of its emphatic force.

As we saw above, Middle Welsh pseudoargument *dim* was a weak negative polarity adverb and could occur in a variety of non-negative environments meaning ‘at all’. Today, however, it is inherently negative and cannot occur in interrogative and conditional clauses without giving rise to a negative interpretation. This development is difficult to date as non-negative uses were never particularly common anyway. Some possible historical examples in non-negative contexts from the sixteenth century are given in examples (28) (interrogative) and (29) (conditional):

- (28) Ai tybied, y lleihaant hwy **ddim** ar eu balchder ...?
 Q wonder.INF PRT reduce.PRES.3PL they at.all on GEN.3PL pride
 ‘I wonder, will they reduce their pride at all ...?’ (translates *Will these men abate their ambition and pride?*) (John Jewel, *Deffynniad ffydd Eglwys Loegr* 80, 1595)
- (29) pe y baei r iaith yn talu **dim**
 if PRT be.IMPF.SUBJ.3SG the language PROG count.INF at.all
 ‘if the language mattered at all’ (*Drych Cristianogawl* A4v.28–9, 1585)

The pattern in (28), with *ddim* in interrogative clauses, has been reinterpreted as expressing a negative question in Present-day Welsh:

- (30) Wyt ti **ddim** yn gwybod lle mae Mair?
 be.PRES.2SG you NEG PROG know.INF where be.PRES.3SG Mair
 ‘Don’t you know where Mair is?’ (Present-day Welsh)

Negative questions may also be expressed using the negative question particle *on’d* (< Middle Welsh *pony(t)*). Note that this is the first context in which *ddim* appears alone without *ni(d)*

with a negative interpretation, a phenomenon also observed in French (Price 1978, Muller 1991: 225, Price 1993, Ayres-Bennett 1994: 66–7, Martineau and Mougeon 2003: 120).

3.3 The loss of preverbal negation

Ddim has gone further in becoming the main marker of sentential negation in speech in northern dialects (on southern dialects, see section 10.1). Today, in speech, *ddim* is obligatory in negative main clauses containing no n-word (such as *neb* ‘anyone, no one’) and *ni(d)* has disappeared entirely from main clauses. Thus, (31) has been replaced by (32), and (33) has been replaced by (34). The forms in (31) and (33) survive in literary written Welsh but are never found in spontaneous speech.

(31) Ni chysgais i.

NEG sleep.PAST.1SG I

‘I didn’t sleep.’

(32) Chysgais i ddim.

sleep.PAST.1SG I NEG

‘I didn’t sleep.’

(33) Nid ydwyf i wedi cysgu.

NEG be.PRES.1SG I PERF sleep.INF

‘I haven’t slept.’

(34) Dydw i ddim wedi cysgu.

NEG.be.PRES.1SG I NEG PERF sleep.INF

‘I haven’t slept.’

The mutation effect of the preverbal particle *ni(d)* (mixed soft and aspirate mutation) remains on the verb to some extent. In (32), negation is partially marked by the aspirate mutation of the verb from *cysgais* to *chysgais*. The verb *bod* ‘be’ prefixes a *d-* in the negative, the remains of the final consonant of *nid*, as can be seen in (34) (cf. negative *dydw* with *(y)dw* ‘I am’). However, many varieties have generalized soft mutation to negatives. In (35), the verb (radical form *chlyw(a)ist* ‘heard’) undergoes soft mutation to *glywist*, rather than more traditional aspirate mutation *chlywaist*:

(35) Glywist ti ddim!

SM.hear.PAST.2SG you NEG

‘You didn’t hear!’ (Angharad Jones, *Y dylluan wen*, p. 142, 1995)

In many, but not all, cases, therefore, the verb appears in a distinct form in negative clauses: affirmative *cysgais* vs. negative *chysgais* in (32), and affirmative *dw* vs. negative *dydw* in (34). Even in (35), there is a distinction between obligatory soft or aspirate mutation in the negative, contrasting with variability between no mutation and soft mutation in the affirmative.

The extension of *ddim* in speech to all negative main clauses containing no n-word belongs to the period after the emergence of a standard language in the sixteenth century, and this makes dating it difficult against the background of literary texts where *ddim* is not and has not become obligatory. The most likely scenario seems to be that the frequency of pseudoargument *ddim* rose sharply in speech in the late eighteenth century, perhaps becoming obligatory in negative main clauses lacking an n-word by the mid nineteenth century. In late eighteenth-century colloquial texts, we find all three stages of Jespersen’s Cycle (stage I *ni(d)* verb, stage II *ni(d)* verb *ddim* and stage III verb *ddim*) represented with lexical verbs from the

1770s. However, stage I patterns dominate, perhaps even until as late as the second quarter of the nineteenth century. The three patterns are illustrated below:

- (36) **Ni** 'mâd â hi, bydd siwr o 'i chalyn.
 NEG leave.PRES.3SG with her be.FUT.3SG sure of GEN.3FSG follow.INF
 'He won't leave her; he'll be sure to follow her.' (Hugh Jones, *Protestant a neilltuwr* 19.8, 1783)

- (37) **nid** ydwi **ddim** 'ch dynabod
 NEG be.PRES.1SG NEG GEN.2PL recognize.INF
 'I don't recognize you.' (Ellis Roberts, *Gras a natur* 19.24, 1769)

- (38) **Mi** roedd hi yn discwyl iddo fo ei chymeryd hi
 PRT be.IMPF.3SG she PROG expect.INF to.3MSG him GEN.3SF take.INF her
 ac wnei[ff] o **ddim**.
 and do.FUT.3SG he NEG
 'She was expecting him to take her but he won't.' (*Welsh defamation suits, Caernarfon Sessions, 1778*)

Stage III patterns emerge with lexical verbs in the 1770s. With the verb *bod* 'be', reduction of *ni(d)* to an initial *d-* before forms of *bod* 'be' is well attested somewhat earlier, with a high frequency in colloquial texts by the mid eighteenth century:

- (39) **doedd** mo 'i fath am fyta oddyma i fon
 NEG.be.IMPF.3SG NEG 3MSG kind for eat.INF from.here to Anglesey
 'There was no one like him for eating from here to Anglesey.' (*Brenin Llur* 230, c. 1700–50)

A few other verbs, common verbs beginning with /a/, are also advanced with respect to the innovation of a Stage III pattern. This principally concerns inflected forms of *mynd* ‘go’ and *gallu* ‘be able’, which are found with *d*-initial forms in colloquial texts in the mid eighteenth century. This is illustrated for *mynd* in (40) (*ei* ‘(you) go’) and for *gallu* in (41) ((*g*)*all* ‘is able’).

(40) 'deidi buth i 'r ne ni dwaunost mo 'r llwubre
 NEG.go.PRES.2SG.you ever tothe heaven NEG know.PRES.2SGNEG the ways
 ‘You’ll never get to heaven; you don’t know the way.’ (*Brenin Llur* 677, c. 1700–50)

(41) 'Dall neb o ran gwaith salach swilio.
 NEG.be.able.PRES.3SG anyone on-account-of work wretched.COMP be-ashamed.INF
 ‘No one can be ashamed on account of more wretched work.’ (*Barn ar egwyddorion y llywodraeth* 46.14, 1784)

The stage II pattern illustrated in (37) is never particularly common, and the transition from stage I to stage III seems to run to completion in perhaps just over half a century from around 1770 to around 1850. It is thus a characteristic feature of the Welsh Jespersen Cycle, unlike, for instance, Breton, Dutch or French, that stage II is highly unstable and disappears very quickly.

3.4 Summary of the Welsh Jespersen’s Cycle

The chronological development of the Welsh Jespersen’s Cycle is summarized below:

- Middle Welsh had a stage I preverbal negative marker *ny(t)*

- in late Middle Welsh *dim* ‘anything’ was reanalysed to create a new negative-polarity adverb in a clause-late position, the ancestor of Present-day Welsh sentence-final *dim* ‘not at all’
- in Early Modern Welsh *dim* split into two items: the new one, ancestor of Present-day Welsh pseudoargument *ddim*, occupied the immediately post-subject position and was non-emphatic, while the old one, the ancestor of Present-day Welsh clause-late *dim*, continued the distribution and pragmatics found in Middle Welsh
- in Early Modern Welsh before forms of *bod* ‘be’, the final /d/ of *nyt* was reanalysed as part of the verb, effectively creating a distinct non-assertive paradigm for this verb
- *ni(d)* became optional, first with forms of the verb *bod* ‘be’ beginning with a vowel, with this pattern spreading to other verbs towards the end of the eighteenth century
- *ddim* was introduced in all cases where negation was not marked by other means (an n-word), becoming compulsory in such environments in the nineteenth century
- *ni(d)* disappeared from speech in the early nineteenth century, leaving only a stage III pattern with verb + *ddim*

4 The Breton Jespersen Cycle

Like Welsh, Breton has undergone Jespersen’s Cycle. While Old Breton had preverbal negation markers like Old and Middle Welsh, a new item, Middle Breton *quet*, Modern Breton *ket*, develops and spreads in the Middle Breton period, giving rise to bipartite negation, which, as *ne ... ket*, is now the norm in literary Breton. Colloquial Breton and many of the dialects, particularly the southeastern Vannes dialect, have gone further towards eliminating the preverbal particle altogether (Le Roux 1924–63, maps 206, 235, 242, 250 and 251).

Middle Breton has two preverbal markers of negation *ne(nd)* and *na(c)*. *Ne(nd)* is used in main clauses, where Middle Welsh would use *ny(t)*, and *na(c)* is used in all embedded contexts (including relative clauses) and in imperatives, that is, a range of contexts where Middle Welsh would use *na(t)*, *na(c)* or relative *ny(t)*. Thus, in main clauses, negation is expressed using the preverbal marker *ne*:

(42) **Ne** mem caffaff da vezaff quen sauant;

NEG 1SG.ACC+REFL find.PRES.1SGto be.INF so wise

‘I do not find myself to be so wise.’ (*Le mystère de sainte Barbe* 87, 1557)

While, unlike in Welsh, no consonant is systematically added before a vowel, a special form *nenn d-* is used before those forms of the highly irregular verbs *bout* ‘be’ and *monet* ‘go’ that begin with a vowel:

(43) Ma-z aff araucq **nenn d-** aff adreff

if go.PRES.1SG forward NEG go.PRES.1SG back

‘If I go forward, I do not go back.’ (*Trois poèmes en moyen-breton* 42, 1530)

In embedded clauses, the negative marker *na* is used:

(44) Hoz tat eu /A archas dimp ... /**Na** rasemp ny muy ...

your father be.PRES.3SG REL ask.PAST.3SG to.1PL NEG do.PAST.1PL we more

‘It is your father who asked us not to make more ...’ (*Le mystère de sainte Barbe*, stanza 250, 1557)

This is also found with imperatives, in (45), and in *wh*-questions and parallel contexts (relative clauses etc.), in (46):

(45) Ach autrou doe **na**- m ancoffet
 oh lord God NEG 1SG.ACC forget.IMPER.3PL
 ‘Oh, Lord God, do not forget me.’ (*Trois poèmes en moyen-breton*, stanza 28, 1530)

(46) Perac **na** rechuy ... /Quichen e quichen tri frenest ...
 why NEG do.PRES.2PL-you side in side three window
 ‘Why don’t you make three windows side by side ...?’ (*Le mystère de sainte Barbe* stanza 248, 1557)

Before a future form of the verb, *na* gives optative meaning, whereas *ne* gives ordinary future meaning.

While Middle Welsh distinguishes between *na(t)* in embedded complement clauses, *ni(t)* in *wh*-questions and relative clauses, and *na(c)* in imperatives, optatives and responsives, neither Middle Breton nor Middle Cornish shows such a distinction, all these clauses being treated alike. The Breton–Cornish system may reflect the ancestral state more faithfully, with Welsh having innovated the distinctions (Willis 2011b: 440–1). Furthermore, while the Welsh preverbal negative markers trigger a mixture of soft and aspirate mutation on the following verb, depending on the nature of the initial consonant, the Breton markers always trigger soft mutation. This is not marked in Middle Breton orthography, but can be inferred from patterns of alliteration and from the modern language. Many modern Breton dialects have given up the distinction between *ne* and *na*, generalizing *ne* (with schwa) to all contexts (Hemon 1975: 283–4), while Late Cornish generalized *na* (see section 8 below).

While all the Middle Breton examples given so far instantiate stage I of Jespersen's Cycle, containing only a preverbal marker of negation, the language was already well advanced along the cycle. Stage II patterns, using an innovated postverbal marker *quet* (Modern Breton *ket*) are well represented in the texts, although are far from compulsory:

(47) hac euitce ne scuyzont quet.

and yet NEG tire.PRES.3PL NEG

'and yet they do not tire.' (*La vie de sainte Catherine* 80.9, 1576)

In Present-day Breton, *ket* is compulsory except in the presence of another n-word, and *ne* may be elided, as in French.

Such patterns, while attested extensively in even the most conservative Middle Breton texts, are not found in Old Breton, where main-clause negation is marked using *ni(t)*, as in Old Welsh, or occasionally *ne*, as in Middle Breton, and there is no sign of *ket* (Fleuriot 1964b: 275–7). It can therefore be concluded that *ket* emerged during the lengthy gap in attestation between Old Breton (ninth to eleventh centuries) and Middle Breton (from 1450).

The origin of *ket* is unclear. Fleuriot (1964b: 283) suggests that it is 'not impossible' that *ket* developed from the Old Breton complementizer *cet* 'although' (Middle Welsh *kyt*). However, Hemon (1975: 284), while noting that Middle Breton *quet* sometimes seems to mean 'indeed' (but see below), ultimately rejects the connection. It is indeed difficult to conceive of a convincing means to connect the two. More recently, Schapansky (1994) has defended this etymology. Building on Hemon's comments, she argues that Old Breton *cet* 'although' was shifted to other positions in the sentence, taking on the meaning of an adverb 'indeed', from where it came to reinforce negation. The role of Middle Breton *quet* in non-negative environments is certainly crucial to understanding its development. However, the

proposal that a complementizer ‘although’ was reanalysed as an adverb ‘indeed’ and thence as a marker of negation seems a priori improbable, and does not conform with what we know of the more general paths of development of new markers of negation, where we know that minimizers (French *pas* < ‘(not even) a step’) and indefinites (English *not* < ‘nothing’) are overwhelmingly the dominant sources.

More promising, given general pathways of grammaticalization, is an etymological connection with Welsh *cadach* ‘rag’ (a loan from Irish *cadach* ‘calico’) or with Welsh *ceden* ‘coarse hair, nap, shag, cotton’ (cognate with Irish *catán* ‘nap of shagged cloth’). While the bare-root formation *cet* is not found independently in Breton, it is found as part of a compound noun in Old Breton *guelcet* ‘festival clothing’ (< *guel* ‘festival’ + *cet* ‘clothing’) and possibly in Old Welsh *bronnced* ‘breast veil’ (< *bronn* ‘breast’ + *ced* ‘clothing’), although the latter is itself dubious, cf. Falileyev (2000: 19). In this case, *quet* would have developed from use as a minimizer (‘he didn’t eat a scrap’ > ‘he didn’t eat at all’). This can be compared to the development of English *scrap*, which has also grammaticalized as a weak negative polarity item (including as a quantifier e.g. *The police didn’t have a scrap of evidence* but not **The police had a scrap of evidence*). Although this may be a promising line of inquiry, the connection between these items and Middle Breton *quet* is not phonologically straightforward, and more research is needed to evaluate this hypothesis.

Middle Breton *quet* occurs freely in a variety of weak negative polarity environments, in addition to its use as a reinforcer of the preverbal negative markers. Examples are given below, where (48) shows its use in a conditional; (49) and (50) show it in main and embedded yes–no interrogatives; and (51) shows it inside the scope of universal quantification.

- (48) an tat han mam, á dle blam pep amser, /Ho buguel
the father and-the mother PRT should.3SG reproach.INF every time their child

- mar bez **quet**, coezet en pechet scler
 if be.HAB.3SG QUET fall.PP in sin clear
 ‘the father and the mother should always reproach their child if he/she has fallen into
 sin’ (*Le mirouer de la mort*, ll. 1039–40, 1519/75)
- (49) Ac eff so **quet** ... den sauant ...
 Q he be.PRES.REL QUET man wise
 ‘Is he (at all) a wise man ...?’ (*Le mystère de Saine Barbe* stanza 133, 1557)
- (50) me ya ... da gouzout a den an menez en quarter se he
 I go.PRES.3SG to know.INF QU man the mountain in district this 3FSG.ACC
 guelse quet ...
 see.IMPF.3SG QUET
 ‘I shall go ... to find out whether a mountain dweller in this district has seen her (at
 all) ...’ (*Le mystère de sainte Barbe* stanza 365, 1557)
- (51) ancouffnez ...ho holl poan hodeues quet gouzaffet ... araint
 forget.INF their all pain have.PRES.3PL QUET suffer.PP PRT-do.FUT.3PL
 ‘They will forget all the pain that they have ever suffered.’ (*Le mirouer de la mort*, ll.
 3312–4, 1519/75)

It is not possible in any of these contexts in Present-day Breton, where it has become purely a marker of negation.

Middle Breton *quet* differs from a fully grammaticalized negation marker in a number of other ways. First, its word order is freer than in Present-day Breton. It may be fronted to clause-initial position, as in (52), and it may occur in a clause-late position, separated from the verb by complements or adjuncts, as in (53).

(52) **quet** nen gry

QUET NEG-3SG.ACC do.FUT.3SG

‘He won’t do it.’ (*Le grand mystère de Jésus* 52a, 1530)

(53) En caffou na saouzan noz lesyf aman **quet**

in bereavement nor surprise NEG-2PL.ACC leave.FUT.1SG here QUET

‘I shall not leave you here in bereavement and astonishment.’ (*L’ancien mystère de Saint-Gwénéolé* 97, 1580)

Neither of these word orders is particularly common, and their presence may be due to the needs of (internal and external) rhyme in poetic texts. It is possible though that they represent real phenomena, since they have analogues in other languages at the early stages of stage II of Jespersen’s Cycle. In Old French, for instance, *pas* is sometimes found in fronted position (Buridant 2000, Detges 2003: 214), and, as we saw above, the emerging Welsh negator *ddim* occurs for a while in a clause-late position. These phenomena are, therefore, not unexpected in the history of Breton.

Secondly, *ne* and *quet* may occur in different clauses, with *ne* occurring in the main clause, and *quet* in a subordinate clause:

(54) Muy **ne** guelaf ez duhen **quet**

more NEG see.PRES.1SG PRT come.COND.1SG QUET

‘I do not see that I should return again at all.’ (*L’ancien mystère de Saint-Gwénéolé* 69, 1580)

This suggests that *ne* and *quet* were once semantically independent from one another, having different scopes. In (54), for instance, ‘at all, to any extent’ modifies the embedded verb

‘return’, while the negation has scope over the entire proposition, including the main clause verb ‘see’.

Quet also has various uses as a quantifier. With the following preposition *a* ‘of’, we find *quet a*, sometimes used as an adnominal quantifier ‘any’:

- (55) ... hoguen nemeus **quet a couff** pe en lech bonamant
 but NEG+have.PRES.1SG QUET of memory which in place exactly
 ‘... but I do not remember (I have no memory) where exactly.’ (Guillaume Quiquer,
 Dictionnaire et colloques françois et breton, Chrestomathie bretonne, 309.8–9, 1633)

More commonly it is found without a preposition, in which case it is hard to know whether it actually forms a constituent with the following noun phrase. In common, perhaps fossilized, phrases such as *hep quet gou* ‘without any lie’ or *hep quet sy* ‘without any doubt’, it seems clear that *quet* forms a constituent with the following noun, and is therefore a quantifier inside the noun phrase.

Finally, in Modern Breton, *ket* can be used as a pronoun:

- (56) N’ eo ket hep ket.
 NEG be.PRES.3SG NEG without anything
 ‘He’s not without anything.’ (Favereau 1997: 283) (Present-day Breton)

In terms of its distribution in Middle Breton, *quet* shows a number of features found in other cases of emergent negative markers: an initial period where it occurs in non-assertive contexts as well as with negation, a greater freedom of positioning than later, and co-existence of adverbial and adnominal (quantifier) uses. All of these are features of *ne ... point* in the

French of the same period, and, to a less extent, of the other emerging French negators *ne ... pas* and *ne ... mie* (Catalani 2001: 100). Since they are found in other cases where a new negative marker emerges from a noun, the existence of these phenomena all point to a nominal original for *quet*, rather than a connection with ‘although’.

While in Welsh the new marker of negation *ddim* ultimately comes to occupy a syntactic position immediately after the subject, in Breton, *ket* occupies a position immediately before the subject (Borsley and Stephens 1989: 413–15, Borsley and Roberts 1996: 22):

- (57) Ne sell ket james Marijo (*ket james) ouzh an dud war ar blasenn.
 NEG look NEG never Marijo NEG never at the people on the square
 ‘Marijo never looks at the people on the square.’ (Jouitteau 2005: 156)

While it is possible that this reflects a difference in the properties of the negation markers, it has generally been interpreted as being due to a difference in the position to which subjects move in the two languages, subjects raising higher in Welsh than in Breton (Borsley and Roberts 1996: 46).

5 Sentential negation in Cornish

Cornish maintains the inherited stage I system of sentential negation, and participates in Jespersen’s Cycle only to a very limited degree. In Middle Cornish, the preverbal negative particle is *ny* in main clauses (*nyns*, the regular phonetic correspondence of Middle Breton *nend*, before the verbs *bos* ‘be’ and *mones* ‘go’) (Lewis 1946: 48–9):

(58) **Ny** won a raf.

NEG know.PRES.1SG REL do.PRES.1SG

‘I don’t know what I shall do.’ (*Bewnans Ke*, l. 331, Middle Cornish)

To negate imperatives, embedded clauses (including relatives) and responsives, *na(g)* is used:

(59) **Na** vith ydyot.

NEG be.IMPER.2SG idiot

‘Don’t be a fool!’ (*Bewnans Ke*, l. 268, Middle Cornish)

(60) Rys ew gwelas orth an wel/ **nag** ota ge mowas lows
 necessary is see.INF by the work NEG.COMP be.PRES.2SG you girl loose

‘We must see by the work that you are not a slack girl.’ (*Bewnans Ke*, ll. 1115–16, Middle Cornish)

(61) **Nag of**, ou arluth, defry ...

neg be.PRES.1SG my lord indeed

[in response to (60)] ‘Indeed, my lord, I am not ...’ (*Bewnans Ke*, l. 1117, Middle Cornish)

While Cornish does not undergo Jespersen’s Cycle, it does undergo change: in Late Cornish, *na(g)* is extended to main clauses and replaces *ny* entirely (Wmffre 1998: 57), perhaps via reinterpretation of responsives such as (61) as not being triggered by a question. An example of the new pattern is given in (62).

(62) Nages travith dale talues an bees ...

NEG.be.PRES.3SG anything should.PRES.3SG value.INF the world

‘There is nothing that the world should value ...’ (*The Cornish writings of the Boson family*, p. 8, c. 1660–1700)

The development is paralleled in some southern Welsh dialects.

The Middle Cornish system, then, is identical to what Breton must have had before embarking upon Jespersen’s Cycle. Despite its general conservatism with respect to Jespersen’s cycle, Middle Cornish does use a number of originally nominal items adverbially to reinforce negation. Price (1996) has argued that use of these amounts to a discontinuous (stage II) construction. He identifies 19 examples of negative reinforcement in Middle Cornish texts, using the items *cam(an)* ‘step’, *banna* ‘drop’, *tam* ‘bit’ and *poynt* ‘point’, all cognate with items used in this way in Breton. Middle Cornish uses these items at a much lower frequency than Middle Breton uses its postverbal negator *quet*, and individual texts differ according to which reinforcer is preferred, suggesting a lower degree of grammaticalization of these items than in Breton. The fact that Cornish and Breton use identical lexical items suggests a connection, although it is difficult to determine whether this is through genetic inheritance (southwestern Brythonic providing the basis for conventionalization of these items), through medieval contact between Breton and Cornish (which was extensive) or through external influence on both. Price considers the possibility of French or Anglo-Norman influence on Cornish in this respect, but this seems unlikely.

6 Welsh indefinites

Similar tendencies to those found in the Welsh and Breton Jespersen cycles, including a move towards increasingly negative meaning, are seen also with indefinite pronouns and adverbs.

On the one hand, emphatic forms lose their emphatic quality and form, and new forms develop to renew the old items. On the other hand, forms previously found in all weak negative polarity contexts become inherently negative and restricted to negative contexts. This section examines these developments in Welsh, while section 7 considers parallel independent developments in Breton and section 8 looks at Cornish.

Middle Welsh has two series of indefinite pronouns, a fully grammaticalized series found in negative polarity contexts, (63) (henceforth the *neb*-series), and a semi-grammaticalized series based on generic nouns found predominantly in affirmative contexts, (64) (henceforth the generic-noun series). Some minor items or items that grammaticalize during the course of Middle Welsh are omitted from these lists.

(63) *neb*-series

person	<i>neb</i> ‘anyone’
thing	<i>dim</i> ‘anything’
quantity	<i>dim</i> + noun / <i>un</i> + noun ‘any’
quality	<i>neb</i> + noun ‘any’

(64) generic-noun series

person	<i>dyn</i> ‘a person, anyone’ (= <i>dyn</i> ‘person’)
thing	<i>peth</i> ‘a thing, anything’ (= <i>peth</i> ‘thing’)
quantity	<i>peth o</i> (mass noun) / <i>rei o</i> (count noun) ‘some’
quality	<i>ryw</i> ‘some’ (< <i>ryw</i> ‘kind, type’)

Items for ‘any (amount of)’, ‘any (kind of)’, ‘anyone’ and ‘anything’ are distinguished. The items expressing ‘any (amount of)’ distinguish mass from count nouns consistently. The *neb*-

series shows no synchronic morphological motivation: each member is monomorphemic and there is no particular series marker. Such lack of transparency is uncommon crosslinguistically (Haspelmath 1997: 21–4). The items in the generic-noun series, with the exception of *rei o*, are all homophonous with ordinary indefinite noun phrases (‘a person’, ‘a thing’ etc.), hence this is a poorly defined series. Other ontological categories (place, cause, reason, manner) are expressed using generic nouns such as *lle* ‘place’ or *mod* ‘manner’ in both negative polarity and affirmative contexts.

The general developments are as follows: the *neb*-series in (65) develops inherently negative meaning; the generic-noun series is reformed and given transparent morphological motivation by the creation of new items based on *ryw* ‘some’, giving rise to the Present-day Welsh *rhyw*-series in (66); and a new series based on the innovation *unrhyw* (< *un* ‘one, any’ + *rhyw* ‘kind’) in (67) has more recently been created. While initially the non-assertive negative polarity functions of the *neb*-series were taken over by the *rhyw*-series, more recently the *unrhyw*-series has become specialized for this use. The three main Present-day Welsh series of indefinites are thus as listed in (65) (the *neb*-series), (66) (the *rhyw*-series), and (67) (the *unrhyw*-series). The time adverbs *byth* and *erioed* have special distributions that do not conform to the general patterns (Borsley and Jones 2005: 109–12) and, in a sense therefore, lie outside of these series.

(65) *neb*-series

person *neb* ‘no one’

thing *dim byd* ‘nothing’

quantity *dim* (mass or count nouns) / *'run* (< *yr un* ‘the one’) (count nouns) ‘no, none’

place *nunlle / unman / lle'm byd* (dialectally variable) ‘nowhere’

time *byth* (generic or future-oriented) / *erioed* (past-oriented)

(66) *rhyw*-series

person *rhywun* ‘someone’

thing *rhywbeth* ‘something’

quantity *peth o / rhai (o) / rhywfaint o* ‘some’

quality *rhyw* ‘some (kind of)’

place *rhywle* ‘somewhere’

time *rhywbryd* ‘sometime’

manner *rhywsut / rhywfodd* ‘somehow’

(67) *unrhyw*-series

person *unrhyw un* ‘anyone’

thing *unrhyw beth* ‘anything’

quality *unrhyw* ‘any’

place *unrhyw le* ‘anywhere’

time *unrhyw bryd / byth / erioed* ‘ever’

manner *unrhyw sut* ‘any way’

6.1 ‘Anyone, no one’

Middle Welsh expresses ‘anyone, no one’ using the inherited pronoun *neb* in all negative polarity contexts: in negative clauses in (68) and (69), in interrogatives in (70), in conditionals in (71), and in comparatives in (72).

(68) A **neb** ny dieghis ody na namyn ef a 'e wreic.
 and anyone NEG escape.PAST.3SG from-there except he and GEN.3MSG wife
 ‘And no one escaped from there except him and his wife.’ (*Pedeir Keinc y Mabinogi*
 36.21–2, Middle Welsh)

(69) ny welynt **neb**.
 NEG see.IMPF.3PL anyone
 ‘... they saw no one.’ (*Pedeir Keinc y Mabinogi* 52.7, Middle Welsh)

(70) ... a weleisti **neb** o 'r llys yn dyuot y'm hol i?
 QU see.PAST.3SG anyone from the court PROG come.INF after-me
 ‘... have you seen anyone from the court coming after me?’ (*Peredur* 14.6–7, Middle
 Welsh)

(71) ... pei kymerwn i **neb** y 'm kanlyn, mi a 'th
 if take.COND.1PL I anyone to GEN.1SG follow.INF I PRTACC.2SG
 gymerwn ditheu.
 take.COND.1SG you
 ‘... if I took anyone to accompany me, I would take you.’ (*Ystoryaeu Seint Greal* 731,
 Middle Welsh)

- (72) ... canys mvy y carei ef Eudaf no **neb** ...
 for more PRT love.IMPF.3SG he Euddaf than anyone
 ‘... for he loved Euddaf more than anyone.’ (*Brut Dingestow* p. 71.24 = ms. 99.12–13,
 Middle Welsh)

Occasionally, the generic nouns *dyn* ‘person’, either alone or as *un dyn* ‘any person’, and *gwr* ‘man’ are used in this function too, although they are more usual in affirmative contexts:

- (73) Ny lafasswys **dyn** vynet y ’r forest ys blwydyn.
 NEG dare.PAST.3SG person go.INF to the forest since year
 ‘No one has dared to go to the forest for a year.’ (*Peredur* 68.15–16, Middle Welsh)

The combination *neb un* ‘any one’ occurs occasionally too in negative polarity environments (see section 9.1 below), as does *un* ‘one’ alone, to mean ‘anyone’. Of these miscellaneous items, only *undyn* seems to have grammaticalized as a fixed item, becoming moderately common in Modern Welsh, where it bears a single stress on the first syllable rather than two stresses, and which seems historically to have followed *neb* in terms of its distribution.

Neb has come to be inherently negative. When it occurs in interrogative and conditional clauses, it is now interpreted as negative. In such clauses, an affirmative meaning is now conveyed either by *rhywun* or the recently innovated item *unrhyw un* ‘any one’ (< *unrhyw* ‘any’ + *un* ‘one’).

6.2 ‘Anything, nothing’

In Middle Welsh ‘anything’ in negative polarity contexts is expressed using *dim*, a grammaticalized form of the noun of the same form meaning ‘thing’. While the generic noun

exists to a certain extent in Middle Welsh, its use had been seriously curtailed and it was limited to some fixed expressions and certain narrowly defined constructions. Middle Welsh use of *dim* to express ‘anything’ in a negative context is illustrated in (74). Its use in other weak negative polarity contexts is illustrated in (75) (interrogative) and (76) (comparative).

(74) Ac ny mynnwys ef **dim**.
 and NEG want.PAST.3SG he anything
 ‘And he didn’t want anything.’ (*Pedeir Keinc y Mabinogi* 27.10–11, Middle Welsh)

(75) A wdom ninheu **dim** y wrth hynny?
 Q know.PRES.1PL we anything about that
 ‘Do we know anything about that?’ (*Pedeir Keinc y Mabinogi* 53.16, Middle Welsh)

(76) ... rac ouyn colli y wreic, yr hon a garei ynteu y wuy
 for fear lose.INF the woman the DEM PRT love.IMPF.3SG he PRED more
 no **dim daearavl**.
 than anything earthly
 ‘... lest he should lose the woman that he loved more than anything on earth.’ (*Brut Dingestow*, p. 136.26–7 = ms. 211.5, Middle Welsh)

Middle Welsh already has a range of emphasizing prepositional phrases based on ‘in the world’. The exact form varies slightly, as does the position of the prepositional phrase with relation to the indefinite pronoun. The main forms found are *yn y byt* ‘in the world’ and *o’r byt* ‘of the world’ or *o’r holl uyt* ‘of the whole world’. This seems to be a way of producing an emphatic negative with an indefinite pronoun. Examples with modification of *dyn* ‘person, anyone’ are given in (77)–(79). Note that the form of the prepositional phrase varies between

yn y byt in (77) and (79), and *o'r byt* in (78); and that the *byd*-element may follow, as in the first two examples, or precede, as in (79).

(77) ... ny adwn ni drwc arnam ny hunein yr **dyn yn y byt**.
 NEG allow.PRES.1PL we harm on.1PL us REFL for person in the world

‘... we shall not allow ourselves to be harmed for anyone’s sake (in the world).’

(*Pedeir Keinc y Mabinogi* 21.4–6, Middle Welsh)

(78) ... ac nyt **dyn** bydawl o 'r **byt** a 'e lliwyassei wyntwy.
 and NEG person earthly of the world PRT 3PL colour.PLUPERF.3SG them

‘... and it was no earthly person (in the world) who coloured them.’ (*Ystoryaeu Seint*

Greal 4255–6, Middle Welsh)

(79) ... nyt oes **yn y byt dyn** uwy y galar no hi yn y ol.
 NEG be.PRES.3SG in the world person greater 3FSG grief than she after-him

‘... there is no one (in the world) whose grief for him is greater than hers.’ (*Pedeir*

Keinc y Mabinogi 26.22–4, Middle Welsh)

These prepositional phrases appear to have played a similar emphasizing role with *dim*: as illustrated by examples from Middle Welsh and from the sixteenth century in (80) and (81).

(80) Yr hynny ual kynt ny wneuthum j **dim drwc** o 'r byt.
 despite that as before NEG do.PAST.1SG I anything bad of the world

‘Nevertheless as before I didn’t do anything bad at all (in the world).’ (*Ystoryaeu Seint*

Greal 2122, Middle Welsh)

(81) ... amnad oedd ef yn kasav **dim yn y byd**
 for NEG.COMP be.IMPF.3SG he PROG hate.INF anything in the world

yn gymaint a medd-dod.

PRED so.much as drunkenness

‘... since he hated nothing in the world (nothing at all) as much as drunkenness.’

(*Gesta Romanorum* 1889, sixteenth century)

Today, *dim yn y byd* has contracted to *dim byd* ‘anything, nothing’. In doing so, it undergoes a loss of its emphatic quality: speakers today do not perceive *dim byd* to be an emphatic version of *dim*, but merely a variant. Furthermore, it undergoes phonetic reduction with the loss of the preposition *yn* and the article, such that its meaning can no longer be derived compositionally. Phonological reduction of *dim yn y byd* to *dim byd* had occurred by the mid nineteenth century:

(82) fel na cheis i ddim amser i syfenu **dim byd**.

so.that NEG.COMP get.PAST.1SG I any time to write.INF anything

‘... so that I didn’t get any time to write anything.’ (William Rees, *Llythyrau ’Rhen Ffarmwr* 5.3–4, 1847)

6.3 ‘Any, no’

Middle Welsh expresses ‘any, no’ using a range of quantifiers. It is expressed by *dim* (< *dim* ‘thing’) if the head noun is a mass noun:

(83) A guedy nat oed **dim bvyt** gan y Saesson ...

and after NEG.COMP be.IMPF.3SG any food with the English

‘And once the English didn’t have any food (left) ...’ (*Brut Dingestow* p. 147.17 = ms. 228.12, Middle Welsh)

If the head noun is a count noun, *un* ‘one’ is the most frequent option:

- (84) a diamheu yw gennym na welsam eiroet uilwraeth yn **un**
 and doubtless is with.1PL NEG.COMP see.PAST.1PL ever valour in any
wreic kymeint ac ynot ti.
 woman so-much as in.2SG you
 ‘... and we have no doubt that we have never seen as much valour in any woman as in
 you.’ (*Pedeir Keinc y Mabinogi* 20.26–8, Middle Welsh)

We also find *neb* ‘any’ (< *neb* ‘anyone’):

- (85) Ny byd kylus **neb brawdwr** yr rodi a datganu brawt
 NEG be.FUT.3SG faulty any judge for give.INF and announce.INF judgement
 o awdurdawt yscriuennedic ...
 from authority written
 ‘No judge is at fault for giving and announcing a judgement on the basis of written
 authority ...’ (*Llyfr Blegywryd* 102.5–6, Middle Welsh)

Neb tends to be used with animate count nouns, as in (85), but it is not entirely restricted in this way, and less frequent cases with inanimate count nouns or inanimate mass nouns do occur:

- (86) mal na chaffvn y ganthunt vynteu weithyon **neb amdifin**.
 so NEG.COMP get.COND.1SGfrom.3PL them now any defence
 ‘... so that we could not get any defence from them now.’ (*Brut Dingestow* p. 85.6–7 =
 ms. 125.6–7, Middle Welsh)

Where ‘any’ means ‘any member of a contextually salient group’, *yr un* ‘the one’ is used:

- (87) Ac yn hynny tyuu kedymdeithas y rydunt yll pedwar,
 and in that grow.PAST.3SG companionship between.3PL all four
 hyt na mynnei **yr un** uot heb y gilid na
 until NEG.COMP want.IMP.3SG the any be.INF without 3MSG RECIP neither
 dyd na nos.
 day nor night
 ‘And thereby companionship grew between all four of them, such that none wanted to
 be without the others day or night.’ (*Pedeir Keinc y Mabinogi* 51.9–11, Middle Welsh)

These distinctions became blurred with time, and the three items *dim*, *neb* and *un* were evidently more or less equivalent by the sixteenth century. The 1567 New Testament translation, which gives synonyms designed to bridge dialect differences, for instance offers the following, glossing *dim* as *neb* or *vn*:

- (88) val y gallom ddiddanu yr ei ’sy mewn
 as PRT can.PRES.SUBJ.1PL comfort.INF the ones be.PRES.REL in

* *dim* [:- * *neb*, *vn*] gorthrymder

any affliction

‘that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble’ (King James Version)

(*Testament Newydd*, 2 Cor. 1: 4, 1567)

Neb and *un* die out as adnominal quantifiers. Quantifier *dim* has spread to occur before any noun, not just mass nouns. We find free use of *dim* before plural nouns for instance in the sixteenth century:

- (89) *Ag nid oedd yddo ef ddim plant, namyn vn verch ...*
 and neg be.IMP.F.3SG to.3MSG him any children except one daughter
 ‘And he didn’t have any children, except for one daughter ...’ (*Gesta Romanorum*
 425, sixteenth century)

Such usage forms the basis for Present-day Welsh, where *dim* is the usual quantifier for ‘any, no’.

While Middle Welsh *un* has died out as a means of expressing ‘any’, the related form *yr un* has survived, in speech normally in the reduced form *’run*. This represents an extension of its use, since in Middle Welsh it is found only to refer to any member of a previously definite group. That is, while in Middle Welsh the definite article *yr* contributes a definite interpretation (requiring a previously defined, hence definite, group), this requirement has been lost in Modern Welsh and there is no longer any semantic connection with the definite article. Examples where no connection with a previously defined group is evident appear already in late Middle Welsh:

- (90) Ac ony ellwch chwi ... y dwyn hi, myui a 'e
 and unless can.PRES.2PL you GEN.3FSG take.INF it I PRT GEN.3FSG
 dygaf, kan nyt oes im yr vn.
 take.PRES.1SG since NEG be.PRES.3SG to.me the one
 'And if you can't take it, I will take it, since I haven't got one (any) (shield).
 (*Ystoryaeu Seint Greal* 538–9, Middle Welsh)

Here, a magic shield has been discussed, but the speaker is saying that he has no shield of any kind, not simply that he does not have the shield just discussed. Phonetic reduction to *'run*, with loss of the initial schwa of the definite article, had occurred by the seventeenth century at the latest. It is now essentially synonymous with *dim* 'no', and has undergone the same shift to being inherently negative. However, it retains the requirement that the following noun should be singular.

An ultimately unsuccessful grammaticalization occurs in later Middle Welsh: a new form for 'any' arises, namely *neb ryw*. Originally this meant 'any kind of ... (at all)' ('generalizer any'), from *neb* plus *ryw* 'kind, type', but it seems to be used as a simple synonym for the other items by late Middle Welsh:

- (91) heb dywedut vn geir wrth **neb ryw** Gristyawn
 without say.INF one word to any kind Christian
 'without saying a word to any Christian' (*Peredur* 40.15–16, Middle Welsh)

While very widespread in late Middle Welsh, this died out completely in Early Modern Welsh.

6.4 Other *neb*-series indefinites

Middle Welsh expresses ‘ever’ using either *ermoet* (< *er’m oet* ‘in my life’) / *eiroet* (< *er y oet* ‘in his life’) (Modern Welsh *erioed*) or *byth* ‘ever’. The former is past-oriented, while the latter must refer to a generic event or to an event in the future. These are not actually negative polarity items, and, while they fill slots in the negative system, they have affirmative uses too:

- (92) *direidwreic uuost eiroet ...*
 evil-woman be.PERF.2SG ever

‘you have always been an evil woman ...’ (*Pedeir Keinc y Mabinogi* 83.14, Middle Welsh)

As might be expected from the fact that are somewhat detached from the negative system, *erioed* and *byth* do not participate in the general drift for *neb*-series items to become inherently negative, and are still possible in non-assertive and even affirmative contexts today:

- (93) *Mae o wedi sgwennu ’n dda erioed.*
 be.PRES.3SGhe PERF write.INF PRED good ever

‘He has always written well.’ (Borsley & Jones 2005: 160) (Present-day Welsh)

There is no conventionalized indefinite referring to place in Middle Welsh. Instead various circumlocutions using the generic noun *lle* ‘place’ are used. In many varieties, particularly northern ones, *yn un lle* ‘in any place’ conventionalizes and gives rise to a new indefinite *nunlle* ‘anywhere, nowhere’, which joins the *neb*-series, and which has joined the drift to become inherently negative. In the south, *unman* (< *un man* ‘any place’) undergoes the same development. A third item, *lle’ m byd*, derives from *lle* ‘place’ plus the emphatic use of

yn y byd ‘in the world’, as discussed above, paralleling the development of *dim byd* ‘nothing’.

6.5 The Welsh quantifier cycle

All of the items discussed in the previous section, with the exception of the ‘ever’ items, *erioed* and *byth*, undergo a shift towards being inherently negative. We saw above, (68)–(72), that *neb* occurred in a range of non-assertive negative polarity environments in addition to negative clauses in Middle Welsh. The same is true of all the other items mentioned in this section. In Middle Welsh, their negative interpretation depends on their co-occurrence with a marker of sentential negation such as *ni(t)* or *na(t)*. Two changes affect the status of these items. First, they come to express negative meanings in the absence of a marker of sentential negation. Secondly, they lose the ability to appear in non-assertive environments with non-negative meanings.

Even in Middle Welsh, *neb*-series items may have negative interpretations where the scope of negation is limited to the item itself, and where the overall proposition is not negative. Thus, in (94), there is narrow scope negation over *dim* ‘nothing’ alone.

- (94) *Ac y velly e dielws ryuyc y Freinc hyt ar dim.*
 and thus PRT avenge.PAST.3SG arrogance the French as-far-as nothing
 ‘And thus he avenged the arrogance of the French down to nothing.’ (*Historia Gruffud vab Kenan* 23.2, Middle Welsh)

Negative interpretations of *neb*-series items in sentence fragments (typically answers to questions) are found at least as early as the seventeenth century:

(95) Scot: Pa ryw newydd, noble Crwmel?

Scot what kind news noble Cromwell

Crwmel: **Dim** ond darfod cwrs y rhyfel.

Cromwell nothing but finish.INF course the war

‘Scot: What news, noble Cromwell?’

Cromwell: Nothing except (only) that the course of the war has ended.’ (*Rhyfel cartrefol*, ll. 810–11, after 1660)

In the nineteenth century, negative interpretations appear in certain non-elliptical syntactic environments. Initially, irrealis conditional clauses, as in (96), and absolute clauses, as in (97), seem most favourable to negative interpretations.

(96) tase **dim** arath i 'ch atal chi

be.COND.3SG nothingother to 2PL stop.INF you

‘if there was nothing else to stop you’ (William Rees, *Llythyrau 'Rhen Ffarmwr* 62.15–16, 1870)

(97) ... yr oedd y pin ysgrifennu wedi mynd ar goll

PRT be.IMPF.3SGthe pen write.INF PERF go.INF on lose

... a **dim** sgrap o bapur gwyn yn y tŷ.

and no scrap of paper white in the house

‘the writing pen had become lost ... and not a scrap of white paper in the house.’

(William Rees, *Helyntion bywyd hen deiliwr* 52.1–3, 1877)

Absolute clauses containing *neb*-series items were once interpreted non-negatively, as witnessed by the following example from the 1588 Bible translation (retained in the 1620

Bible) where *dim cîg noeth byw*, with quantifier *dim*, is interpreted as ‘any live raw flesh’ rather than ‘no live raw flesh’:

- (98) Ac edryched yr offeiriad, yna, os chŵydd gwynn [a fydd] yn y
 and look.IMPERS the priest then if swelling white PRT be.FUT.3SG in the
 croen, a hwnnw wedi troi y blewyn yn wynn, a **dim cîg noeth**
 skin and that PERF turn.INF the hair PRED white and any flesh naked
byw yn y chŵydd;
 live in the swelling

‘And let the priest look, then, if [there will be] a white swelling in the skin, and it has turned the hair white and there is any naked live flesh in the swelling ...’ (Tyndale Bible: ‘and let the preast se him. Yf the rysinge apeare white in the skynne ad haue also made the heer white, ad there be rawe flesh in the sore also’) (Leviticus 13: 10, 1588)

There are also nineteenth-century examples of inherently negative indefinites in tenseless complement clauses.

Conversely, *neb*-series items have disappeared (or have come to be interpreted as negative) in interrogatives and in conditionals, the two major non-assertive environments where they were once possible. In the nineteenth century and into the twentieth century, *neb*-series items were possible in these contexts, although they were already being replaced by *rhyw*-series items (see below). The *neb*-series items *dim* ‘any’ and *run* ‘any’ (cf. (65) above) are shown in interrogative and conditional contexts in (99) and (100) respectively.

- (99) a. A oes **dim rhew** ac eira yn Awstralia?
 Q be.PRES.3SG any frost and snow in Australia
 ‘Is there any frost and snow in Australia?’ (John Williams, *Awstralia a’r cloddfeydd aur*, 1852)
- b. ous gynoch chi **run** ci arall
 be.PRES.3SG with.2PL you the.one dog other
 ‘Have you got any other dog?’ (William Rees, *Llythyrau ’Rhen Ffarmwr* 30.6, 1850)
- (100) a. tae **dim synwyr** yn dy goryn di
 be.COND.3SG any sense in 2SG skull you
 ‘if you had any sense in your skull’ (William Rees, *Llythyrau ’Rhen Ffarmwr* 45.11, 1851)
- b. mi ’rydw’ i wedi cael troad os cafodd **yr un dyn**
 PRT be.PRES.1SG I PERF get.INF conversion if get.PAST.3SG the one man
 erioed dro
 ever conversion
 ‘I’ve had a conversion if any man ever had a conversion.’ (William Rees, *Helyntion bywyd hen deiliwr* 84, 1877)

Middle Welsh had already grammaticalized *ryw* ‘kind, type’ as an adnominal quantifier ‘some (kind of)’. When followed by a generic noun it often fulfilled the same function as the generic-noun series. Collocations such as *ryw beth* ‘some thing’ and *rhyw le* ‘some place’ conventionalized and came to be used in place of generic nouns functioning as indefinites. There is also a semantic shift from ‘such a thing’ or ‘something such that it has the property ...’ etc. to the indefinite meaning that these items have today. Specific indefinite

readings seem to emerge in late Middle Welsh, with non-specific readings slightly later. An example where *ryw beth* seems to function as a specific indefinite pronoun ‘something’ in late Middle Welsh is given in (101).

- (101) ‘Nac ef, y rof a Duw,’ heb yr iarll, ‘ef a vu **ryw beth**
 no between.1SG and God said the earl it PRT be.PERF.3SG some thing
 yn ymdidan a thi.’
 PROG converse.INF with you
 “No, between me and God,” said the earl, “there was something talking to you.”
 (*Kedymdeithyas Amlyn ac Amic*, ll. 536–7, Middle Welsh)

In these cases, the *rhyw*-items seem to be competing with generic nouns, ultimately replacing them to form a morphologically uniform series of indefinites.

From the point of view of negation, however, the most significant shift comes rather later, when the *rhyw*-series pronouns start being used freely in non-assertive contexts. In the nineteenth century (at the latest), we find the *rhyw*-series being used in conditionals and interrogatives where there is no presupposition of the existence of a referent for the pronoun:

- (102) a oes gennyh chwi **rywbeth** arall a recomendwch i mi?
 Q be.PRES.3SG with.3PL you something else REL recommend.PRES.2PL to me
 ‘Have you anything / something else that you recommend to me?’ (David Owen, *Wil Brydydd y Coed*, p. 4, 1863–5)

(103) a. os bydd **rhywbeth** ynddo.

if be.FUT.3SG something in.3MSG

‘... if there is anything / something in it.’ (David Owen, *Wil Brydydd y Coed*, p. 7, 1863–5)

b. os oes **ryw** **ystyr** iddo

if be.PRES.3SG some meaning to.3MSG

‘if it has some / any meaning’ (William Rees, *Helyntion bywyd hen deiliwr* 62.14, 1877)

This amounts to encroachment on the previous territory of the *neb*-series: in both (102) and (103), we might have expected to find *dim* ‘anything, any’ at an earlier date. It is thus symptomatic of the ongoing narrowing of the *neb*-series to negative contexts at this period, a process which reached its full expression in the twentieth century. The disappearance of *neb*-series items in interrogatives and conditionals probably dates to the last hundred years, and its course may have varied from item to item. Fynes-Clinton gives no non-negative uses for quantifier *dim* ‘no, any’ in his comprehensive 1913 description of the Bangor dialect, while he does give non-negative uses for *neb* ‘anyone, no one’ (Fynes-Clinton 1913: i.88–9).

In the nineteenth century, the *neb*-series lost ground in non-assertive negative polarity contexts to the *rhyw*-series. Later, in the twentieth century, when the *neb*-series was ousted completely from interrogatives and conditionals, a different series, namely the *unrhyw*-series, also played a significant role. This series is a relatively recent innovation. Although a Middle Welsh word *unryw* is attested in the meaning ‘same’ (< *un* ‘one, same’ + *rhyw* ‘kind’), this does not seem to be the source of the modern item. Rather, modern *unrhyw* is a new creation dating from the sixteenth century, when it first appears with the meaning ‘any kind of, any’ (that is, based on *un* ‘one, any’ + *rhyw* ‘kind’):

- (104) llymach nac vnrryw gleddau-daufinioc
 sharper than any sword two-edged
 ‘sharper than any (kind of) two-edged sword’ (*Testament Newydd* 330b, Hebrews 4: 12, 1567)

The pronouns *unrhyw beth* ‘anything’ and *unrhyw un* ‘anyone’ are of more recent provenance, however, being first attested in 1711 and 1852 respectively according to the University of Wales Dictionary. *Unrhyw*-series items are quite rare until the second half of the nineteenth century. However, they have become common in the late twentieth century, where they appear extensively in negative, interrogative, conditional and comparative clauses, as well as being used as free-choice items. Transfer from English seems to be apparent here, as *unrhyw*-series items have come to be identified as translation equivalents of English *any*-series items, and have adopted a syntactic distribution to match (Willis 2008).

The changes in the patterns of distribution of indefinites across the history of Welsh are summarized in Figures 7.1 and 7.2, using Haspelmath’s (1997: 63–4) implicational map of indefinite pronoun functions.

Figure 7.1. Expression of indefinites in Middle Welsh

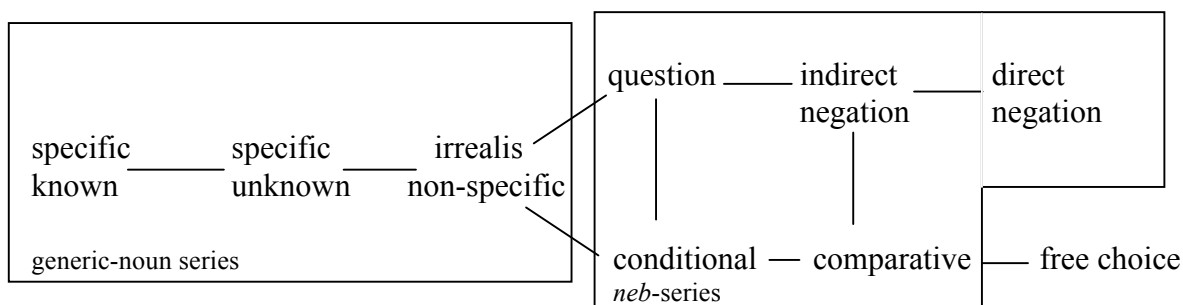
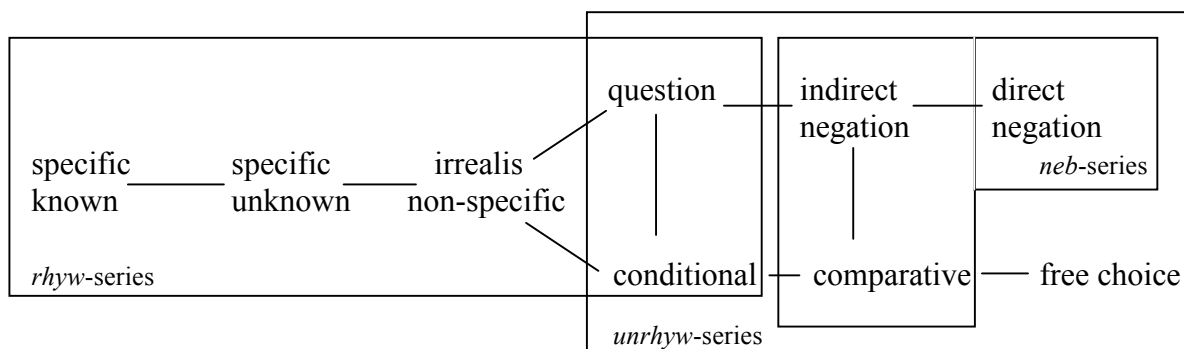


Figure 7.2. Expression of indefinites in Present-day Welsh



6.6 Negative concord in Welsh

Present-day Welsh has two forms of negative concord. First, the result of the loss of the preverbal negative marker *ni(d)* is that verbs have special negative forms. Either the *d-* of *nid* has prefixed to the verb (mainly restricted today to the verb *bod* 'be'), or else the mixed soft–aspirate mutation triggered by *ni(d)* remains on verbs in negative clauses. If a clause contains an n-word (from the *neb-series*) and a finite verb, the finite verb must take on the special negative form if it can, hence negative *does* rather than affirmative *mae* in the following examples:

(105) Does neb yn ennill.

NEG.be.PRES.3SG no.one PROG win.INF

(106) *Mae neb yn ennill.

be.PRES.3SG no.one PROG win.INF

'No one is winning.' (Present-day Welsh)

Secondly, there is limited negative concord (negative doubling) between the postverbal negative marker *ddim* and an n-word. This concord occurs in some environments but not in others. Where the n-word is the object of a verb in a compound tense, such as the periphrastic

perfect in (107), *ddim* is mostly compulsory. Omission of *ddim* would lead to ungrammaticality here.

- (107) Dyw Dafydd ddim wedi gweld neb.
 NEG.be.PRES.3SG Dafydd NEG PERF see.INF no.one
 ‘Dafydd hasn’t seen anyone.’ (Present-day Welsh)

Where the n-word is in subject position or the object in a synthetic clause, then negative concord with *ddim* is impossible:

- (108) Welodd neb (*ddim) Dafydd.
 see.PAST.3SG no.one NEG Dafydd
 ‘No one saw Dafydd.’ (Present-day Welsh)

- (109) Welodd Dafydd (*ddim) neb.
 see.PAST.3SG Dafydd NEG no.one
 ‘Dafydd saw no one.’ (Present-day Welsh)

There is variability when an n-word is within a prepositional phrase, negative concord with *ddim* being optional:

- (110) Dydy Dafydd (ddim) yn siarad am ddim byd ond ei hun.
 NEG.be.PRES.3SG Dafydd NEG PROG talk.INF about anything but 3MSG.REFL
 ‘Dafydd doesn’t talk about anything except himself.’ (Present-day Welsh)

Finally, an n-word in a position that does not require negative doubling with *ddim* licenses further instances of n-words (negative spread):

(111) Does **neb** yn gwneud **dim byd**.

NEG.be.PRES.3SG no.one PROG do.INF nothing

‘No one is doing anything.’ (Also ‘No one is doing nothing.’) (Present-day Welsh)

Whether *ddim* is also present, giving negative doubling, depends on the rules given above. If the highest n-word is a position that requires negative concord, *ddim* may co-occur with two (or more) n-words, giving negative doubling (*ddim ... dim byd*) and negative spread (*dim byd ... neb*) at the same time:

(112) Dyw Dafydd **ddim** wedi dweud **dim byd** wrth **neb**.

NEG.be.PRES.3SG Dafydd NEG PERF say.INF nothing to no.one

‘Dafydd hasn’t said anything to anyone.’ (Present-day Welsh)

Where two n-words co-occur, both a negative spread (single-negation) interpretation and a double-negation interpretation are possible (but with different intonations), hence the ambiguity of (111) above.

Historically, this system is of very recent provenance. In Middle Welsh, *neb*-series items cannot convey negation on their own, and they can be analysed as weak negative polarity items. At some point in the Early Modern Welsh period, they became inherently negative, disappearing from non-negative environments and sufficing to convey negation on their own in some contexts. Since *ni(d)* continued to co-occur with *neb*-series items, Early Modern Welsh became a strict negative concord language with *ni(d) ... neb* ‘not ... no one’ as

result of this change in status of the *neb*-series items. As Jespersen's Cycle progressed, *ni(d)* was dropped, leaving only a residue in special negative verb forms, and *ddim* was introduced. Negative concord between the special verb forms and the *neb*-series was maintained, and Welsh remained a negative concord language with respect to the special negative verb forms.

The spread of *ddim* adds a new dimension to the picture, since it raises the question of whether negative concord holds between *ddim* and the *neb*-series. In the nineteenth century (and before), there is only limited negative concord between *ddim* and the *neb*-series. Examples are found where a *neb*-series n-word acting as object of a verb in a compound tense is not doubled by an instance of *ddim* after the subject (contrast (107) and (112) above). Note that, in (113) and (114), the object is argument *dim* 'nothing' in its soft-mutated form (not the marker of sentential negator *ddim*).

(113) tydi hi wedi gwneud **fawr ddim** ond fy synu
 NEG.be.PRES.3SG she PERF do.INF much nothing but 1SG surprise.INF
 'She hasn't done anything except surprise me.' (Beriah Gwynfe Evans, *Dafydd Dafis*,
 p. 326, 1898)

(114) dydi ysbrydoliaeth wedi deyd **dim** am dano fo
 NEG.be.PRES.3SG inspiration PERF say.INF nothing about.3MSG him
 'Inspiration hasn't said anything about him.' (Annie Harriet Hughes, *Plant y
 gorthrwm*, p. 26, 1908)

The spread of negative concord seems to occur earlier with *neb* 'no one' than with *dim* (*byd*) 'nothing'.

The result of these developments taken together is that Present-day Welsh is a strict negative concord language with respect to the relationship between special negative verb

forms and n-words, while it shows a variant of non-strict negative concord with respect to the relationship between *ddim* and n-words.

A prominent analysis of negation in Present-day Welsh is that of Borsley and Jones (2005), who develop an HPSG model that imposes distributional constraints on the various elements involved. The relevant question in our context is whether this analysis can be extended to provide an insightful interpretation of the historical developments.

Borsley and Jones divide verbal forms into weak, strong and extra-strong negative verbs, given in slightly simplified form below:

(115) **weak negative verbs** (special negative verbal forms)

d-forms (e.g. *oes* be.PRES.3SG > *does* NEG.be.PRES.3SG)

mixed soft or aspirate mutation on verbs (*cafodd* get.PAST.3SG > *chafodd* NEG.get.PAST.3SG)

strong negative verbs

embedded negative particle *na(d)* + verb (*bydd* be.FUT.3SG > *na fydd* NEG.COMP be.FUT.3SG)

main-clause negative particle *na(g)*

negative infinitive marker *peidio* (see section 10.2 below)

extra-strong negative verbs

negative imperative marker *paid* / *peidiwch* (see section 12 below)

s-forms of the negative auxiliary (*sa*, *so*, *s(i)mo* etc.) (see section 10.1 below)

Weak negative verbs require a negative dependent (either *ddim* or an n-word in a relevant syntactic position) (the Negative Dependent Constraint); strong negative verbs do not require a negative dependent but are compatible with them; and extra-strong negative verbs allow a dependent n-word, but cannot co-occur with *ddim*.

For n-words, Borsley and Jones invoke a Negative Context Requirement, which states that Welsh n-words must appear in a negative context. They treat Welsh n-words as semantically negative (negative quantifiers), but argue that the quantifier can only be retrieved from storage at various nodes with a clausal interpretation. The contexts in which n-words may appear are then defined as those that allow the quantifier to be retrieved from storage. This includes both straightforward negative concord contexts, and a range of contexts where n-words can have negative interpretations in the absence of another element.

The Negative Dependent Constraint is formalized as a requirement that weak negative heads have a complement (one member of their COMPS list) marked [NEG +]. In HPSG analyses of Welsh, subjects and objects in synthetic VSO structures are all complements of the finite verb, hence an n-word in either of these positions can fulfil this requirement. Hence, in (116), the COMPS list of the weak negative verb *welodd* ‘saw’ contains two items, the subject *Dafydd* and the object *neb*. Since *neb* is marked [NEG +], *welodd* fulfils the Negative Dependent Constraint.

- (116) [_S [_V Welodd] [_{NP} Dafydd] [_{NP} neb]]
 see.PAST.3SG Dafydd no-one
 [_{POL} *weak-neg*] [_{NEG} +]
 ‘Dafydd saw no one.’ (Present-day Welsh)

In the periphrastic structure in (117), on the other hand, the n-word is part of a larger verb phrase *gweld neb* ‘see no one’, itself embedded within an aspectual phrase (AspP). Only the n-word itself bears the feature [NEG +], hence the weak negative verb *dyw* ‘is (not)’ does not have a complement marked [NEG +]. The only way to resolve this is to have *ddim* as an additional complement of *dyw*, as is done in (118).

(117) *[_S [_V Dyw] [_{NP} Dafydd] [_{AspP} wedi [_{VP} gweld neb]]]
 NEG.be.PRES.3SG Dafydd PERF see.INF no.one
 [POL *weak-neg*] [NEG +]
 ‘Dafydd hasn’t seen anyone.’

(118) [_S [_V Dyw] [_{NP} Dafydd] [_{Adv} ddim] [_{AspP} wedi [_{VP} gweld neb]]]
 NEG.be.PRES.3SG Dafydd NEG PERF see.INF no.one
 [POL *weak-neg*] [NEG +] [NEG +]
 ‘Dafydd hasn’t seen anyone.’

On this analysis, negative concord between n-words and special verbal forms is a real phenomenon, mediated by the Negative Context Requirement. Negative concord between n-words and *ddim*, on the other hand, is a by-product of the fact that weak negative verbs cannot use n-words embedded within other phrases to satisfy the Negative Dependent Constraint.

How would this type of analysis deal with the historical developments? First consider the spread of negative concord. We have seen that sentences like (113) and (114), which are, in very broad structural terms, parallel to (117), were grammatical in the nineteenth century. To accommodate this, it would be necessary to say that, in nineteenth-century Welsh, nonfinite verbs and aspectual heads shared their value for NEG with their complements – this

is the approach that Borsley and Jones adopt for prepositional phrases, as in (112) above. This mechanism has declined since then. While this could capture the facts, it hardly offers a satisfying explanation of the change. The introduction of *ddim* in the first place could be dealt with by positing a shift in the polarity specification of special negative verbs from strong negative verbs to weak negative verbs as *ni(d)* was eroded.

Next, consider changes in the distribution of Welsh n-words. There are various non-assertive contexts (interrogatives, conditionals) where n-words were once found but where they are no longer found. There has also been an increase in the range of environments where n-words are grammatical, with a negative meaning, in contexts where there is no other marker of negation at all. Borsley and Jones leave open the question of how to account for use of n-words today in comparatives and ‘before’-clauses, noting that either a mechanism could be proposed to eliminate the inherently negative meaning of the n-word, or else n-words could be analysed as ambiguous between a negative and non-negative item (Borsley and Jones 2005: 89). Changes in the range of environments where negative interpretation of n-words are allowed in the absence of any other negative marker could be achieved by allowing the list of contexts in which a negative quantifier may be retrieved from storage to change over time. While this can deal with the historical facts, it does little to explain why the list of such contexts should have been continually expanding.

7 Breton indefinites

In Middle Breton, the main indefinite pronouns form a single series found in both negative and other non-assertive contexts:

(119) *negun*-series

person	<i>negun, nigun</i> ‘anyone’ <i>den</i> ‘anyone’
thing	<i>netra</i> ‘anything’
quantity	<i>nep</i> ‘any’ (also <i>quet (a)</i> , as in (55) above)
time	<i>bizhuyquen</i> (generic or future-oriented) ‘ever’ <i>bezcoaz</i> (past-oriented) ‘ever’ <i>nepret</i> (< <i>nep pred</i> ‘any time’) ‘ever’
place	<i>en nep lech</i> ‘anywhere’ (lit. ‘in any place’)

Den is homophonous with a generic noun *den* ‘person’, which is found in non-negative-polarity environments. *Negun* is a loan from Latin *nec unus* or a Romance descendant of it (Hemon 1975: 156). In general, in Middle Breton, *negun* tends to be used in negative clauses, while *den* tends to be used in other non-assertive contexts, but this is not an absolute rule.

Netra is derived historically from *nep tra* ‘any thing’. The generic noun *tra* ‘thing’ is found in non-negative-polarity environments. It sometimes occurs in place of *netra* even in negative and other negative polarity contexts.

While negative concord with *ne* is compulsory if a negative interpretation is to arise, negative doubling with the postverbal negative marker *quet* is possible but avoided. This seems to be the case irrespective of the relative positions of the items. Examples (120) and (121) show the normal pattern, with an n-word and no *quet*.

(120) Necun ne deu a dref.

no.one NEG come.FUT.3SG back

‘No one will come back.’ (*L’ancien mystère de Saint-Gwénolé* 477, 1580)

(121) Eno ne guelo den.
 there NEG+3SF.ACC see.FUT.3SG no.one

‘No one will see her there.’ (*Le mystère de sainte Barbe*, stanza 36, 1557)

Doubling of *quet* and an n-word is illustrated in (122).

(122) a. Rac se nepret da monet de metou /Ne lesiff **quet**
 for this ever to go.INF among.3FSG NEG let.FUT.1SG QUET
den en bet ...

anyone in-the world

‘For this reason, I shall never allow anyone ever to go near her ...’ (*Le mystère de sainte Barbe*, stanza 37, 1557)

b. Na nemeux **quet tra en bet** nement huy
 and NEG.have.PRES.1SG QUET anything in.the world except you

‘Nor do I have anything at all except you.’ (*Le mystère de sainte Barbe*, stanza 101, 1557)

This series is renewed by the addition of various new items. The noun *mann* ‘basket’ has given rise to an indefinite pronoun ‘nothing’ via a minimizer use in Middle Breton. Another noun, *seurt* ‘sort’ has also given rise to a similar pronoun. Here the likely historical development is ‘a sort of X’ > ‘such an X’ > ‘such (a thing)’ > (not) ‘such a thing’ > ‘anything, nothing’. As is typical in such cases of grammaticalization, this item still survives in other uses, as a noun meaning ‘sort, kind’ and as an adjective ‘such (a)’, and the existence of these other uses supports the proposed historical development. Their present-day use is illustrated in (123).

(123) Ne gomprenan seurt (ebet) / mann (ebet).

NEG understand.PRES.1SG anything (at all)

‘I don’t understand anything.’ (Present-day Breton)

In some dialects, Middle Breton *heny* ‘one’ has grammaticalized as a negative indefinite. The southeastern Vannes dialect has a pronoun *hañni* ‘no one’ derived in this way. French *jamais* ‘never’ has also been borrowed to give a new item *james* ‘never’.

While the basic membership of the Middle Breton series in (119) has largely remained intact in present-day Breton, its distribution has shifted. In Middle Breton, *negun*-series items are found in a variety of non-assertive negative-polarity contexts, including interrogatives, conditionals and comparatives, as illustrated for *netra* ‘anything’ in (124) (interrogative), (125) (conditional) and (126) (comparative).

(124) Huy ó eus netra da dibriff?

you have.PRES.2PL anything to eat.INF

‘Do you have anything to eat?’ (Parallel French text *Avez-vous quelque chose à manger?*) (Guillaume Quiquer, *Dictionnaire et colloques français et breton, Chrestomathie bretonne* 305.10–11, 1633)

(125) Mar comandet netra a gement a allen

if order.PRES.2PL anything of everything REL be.able.COND.1SG

‘if you order anything that is within my power’ (*La vie de Saint Patrice* 255, eighteenth century)

- (126) An Barnn á vezo ... da vezaff douget, meurbet muyguet **netra**
 the judgement PRT be.FUT.3SG to be.INF feared much more.than anything
 ‘The judgement will be strict ... and to be feared much more than anything’ (*Le
 miroer de la mort*, ll. 643–4, 1519/1575)

In Present-day Breton, this series has disappeared from all of these contexts except comparatives; contrast the ungrammatical interrogative in (127) and conditional in (128) with the grammatical comparatives in (129).

- (127) *Bez ez eus **den** amañ?
 be.INF PRT is anyone here
 ‘Is there anyone here?’ (Present-day Breton)

- (128) *ma’z eus **den** amañ
 if is anyone here
 ‘if there’s anyone here’ (Present-day Breton)

- (129) a. Gouzout a rez gwelloc’h eget **den**.
 know.INF PRT do.PRES.2SG better than anyone
 ‘You know better than anyone.’ (Present-day Breton)

- b. Anavezout a ra ar vro-mañ gwelloc’h eget **nikun**.
 know.INF PRT do.PRES.3SG the country-this better than anyone
 ‘He knows this country better than anyone.’ (Cornillet 2008: 73) (Present-day Breton)

As in Welsh, an emphatic prepositional phrase ‘in the world’, Middle Breton *en bet*, provides the basis for new grammaticalization in the system of negative indefinites. Already

by Middle Breton, it seems that *en bet* had lost its compositional meaning. For instance, the meaning of present-day *en bet* in (130) does not seem to be derivable from ‘a window in the world’:

- (130) Memoa dit ... gourchemennet /... na grases quet /**Prenest**
 I+have.IMPF.3SG to-you ordered NEG.COMP make.PAST.2SG NEG window
en **bet** ... nemet dou
 in-the world except two
 ‘I had ordered you ... that you should not make any window ... except two (... that you should make only two windows)’ (*Le mystère de sainte Barbe*, stanza 286, 1557)

Phonological reduction of *en bet* results in the present-day Breton form *ebet*. In accordance with its historical origin as a prepositional phrase, *ebet* follows its headnoun. This is strange for a determiner in Breton, a generally rigidly head-initial language. *Ebet* joins the *negun*-series, and, as with other members of the series, it occurs in weak negative polarity contexts in Middle Breton. Today, however, *ebet* is restricted to direct negative contexts only (Hendrick 2011: 99–101). Present-day Breton thus has the following series of n-words descended from the Middle Breton *negun*-series:

(131) *den*-series

person *den (ebet) / nikun* ‘no one’

thing *tra (ebet) / netra* ‘nothing’

quantity N *ebet / nep* N ‘no’

[time *gwech ebet / james / morse* ‘never’

birviken/biken (generic or future-oriented) / *biskoazh* (past-oriented) ‘ever’]

place *neblec’h* ‘nowhere’

In interrogatives and conditionals, items from the *den*-series have been replaced by items from a new series, innovated only in Breton, namely the *un ... bennak*-series:

(132) *un...bennak*-series

person *unan bennak / un den bennak* ‘someone, anyone’ (plur. *ur re bennak*)

thing *un dra bennak* ‘something, anything’

quantity *un...bennak* ‘some, any’

[time *ur wech bennak* ‘once, ever’

birviken/biken (generic or future-oriented) / *biskoazh* (past-oriented) ‘ever’]

place *ul lec’h bennak / un tu bennak* ‘somewhere, anywhere’

As in Welsh, the items relating to time do not belong straightforwardly to either series.

Birviken / biken and *biskoazh* ‘ever’ may appear in both negative contexts, in (133), and in non-negative contexts, an interrogative in (134) and a superlative in (135):

- (133) **Biskoazh** n' en deus graet an dra-se.
 never NEG have.PRES.3SG done the thing-that
 'He never did that.' (Cornillet 2008: 103) (Present-day Breton)
- (134) Daoust hag ho-peus gwelet kig rostet war ma zaol **biskoazh**?
 QU QU have.PRES.2PL seen meat roast on my table ever
 'Have you ever seen roast meat on my table?' (Per-Jakez Heliarz, *An dachen piz-bihan*,
 1953)
- (135) Henezh eo kaerañ levr am eus lennet **biskoazh**
 that be.PRES.3SG nicest book REL+have.PRES.1SG read.PP ever
 hag a lennin biken.
 and REL read.FUT.1SG ever
 'That's the nicest book that I've ever read or will ever read.' (Cornillet 2008: 103)
 (Present-day Breton)

For further discussion of the Present-day Breton system of negative indefinites, see Schapansky (2000).

All Brythonic languages have a cognate of Breton *bennak* (Welsh *bynnag*, Cornish *penag*) used to form free relatives (Willis 2011b). While all the languages allow this item to follow a *wh*-word, giving Welsh *pw y bynnag*, Breton *piv bennak* and Cornish *pyv penagh* 'whoever', Breton alone has extended its use, combining it with the indefinite article to form the indefinites listed in (132). With an ordinary singular count noun, *un ... bennak* is an indefiniteness marker meaning 'some, approximately, an X or so', as in *ur gudenn bennak* 'some problem, a problem' or *un dek vloaz bennak* 'some ten years'. These items are found in affirmative contexts and in weak negative polarity contexts (interrogatives and conditionals),

but are marginal in negative contexts unless used to refer to a specific entity outside of the scope of negation:

(136) Bepred e vez **un dra bennak** dedennus da gavout eno.
 always PRT be.HAB.3SG something interesting to have.INF there
 ‘There’s always something interesting to be had there.’ (Present-day Breton)

(137) ma z’ eus **un dra bennak** dedennus
 if be.PRES.3SG something interesting
 ‘if there’s anything interesting’ (Present-day Breton)

(138) Bez’ hoc’h eus **un dra bennak** da zebriñ?
 PRT have.PRES.2PL something to eat.INF
 ‘Do you have anything to eat?’ (Present-day Breton)

(139) *N’ eus ket **un dra bennak** da welet.
 NEG be.PRES.3SG NEG something to see.INF
 ‘There isn’t something to see.’ (Present-day Breton)

The element *bennak* derives historically from *py*, the unstressed form of a general interrogative pronoun ‘who, what’, plus a negative element *na(g)*. The original context for its use must have been something like the free-relative construction that survives in Middle Cornish:

(140) **panak** vo age deses
 whatever be.PRES.SUBJ.3SG their disease
 ‘whatever their disease may be’ (*Life of Saint Meriasek*, l. 3104) (Lewis 1946: 46)

Here the negative must once have been interpreted as an instance of expletive negation, cf. French *Je doute, qu'il ne soit là* 'I doubt that he'll be there' (Rowlett 1998: 26–7), or German *Was es nicht alles gibt!* '(look) who was(n't) there'.

Outside of free relatives, *bennak* remains rare in Middle Breton, although is sometimes found in its modern indefinite sense in affirmative clauses:

- (141) Ret eu diff gouzout ... /Diouz **un re pennac** ... /Vn tra ...
 necessary be.PRES.3SG to-me know.INF from someone a thing
 'I must learn a thing from somebody.' (*Le mystère de sainte Barbe*, stanza 107, 1557)

The pathway by which this use arises may be from free relative ('Bring whoever you like') to free-choice indefinite ('Bring whoever' with omission of the relative clause) and thence to ordinary specific indefinite. The spread to non-assertive contexts seems to postdate the Middle Breton period. The relevant shifts seem to parallel the slightly earlier development of Old French *quel ... que* from free relative 'whatever' along the same pathway to free-choice indefinite marker, attested in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, illustrated in (142), to the Modern French *quelque*-series (*quelque* 'some', *quelqu'un* 'someone', *quelque chose* 'something' etc.) (Foulet 1919). This seems likely then to be a case of transfer from French.

- (142) Qui femme prend, de quelque taille, /Il ne puet faillir a bataille.
 who wife takes of any size he NEG can lack at battle
 'Anyone who takes a wife, of whatever / any size, he cannot be short of battles.' (Jean le Fèvre, *Les lamentations de Matheolus* l. ii, v. 3817–18, c. 1371) (Foulet 1919: 227)

The full set of changes in the indefinite system from Middle to Present-day Breton are summarized in Figures 7.3 and 7.4.

Figure 7.3. Expression of indefinites in Middle Breton

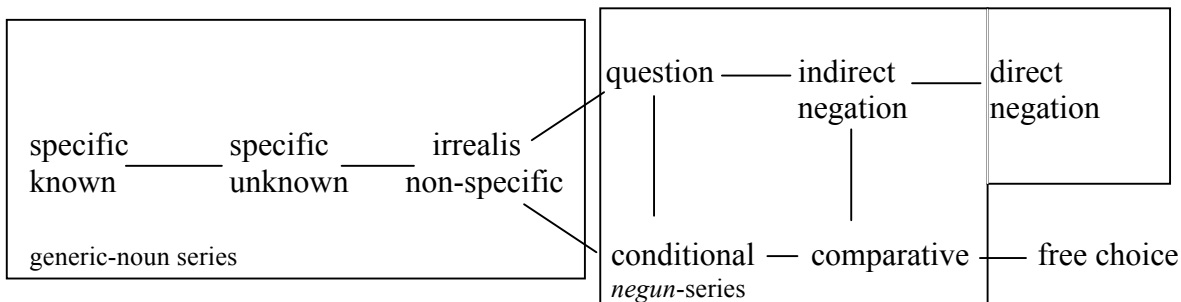
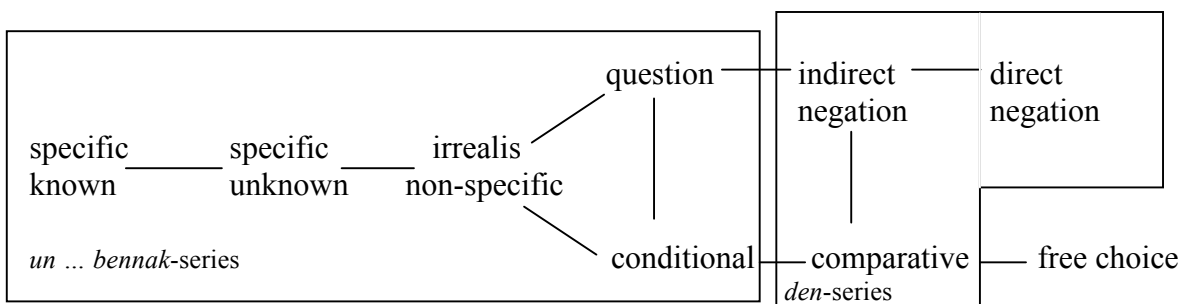


Figure 7.4. Expression of indefinites in Present-day Breton



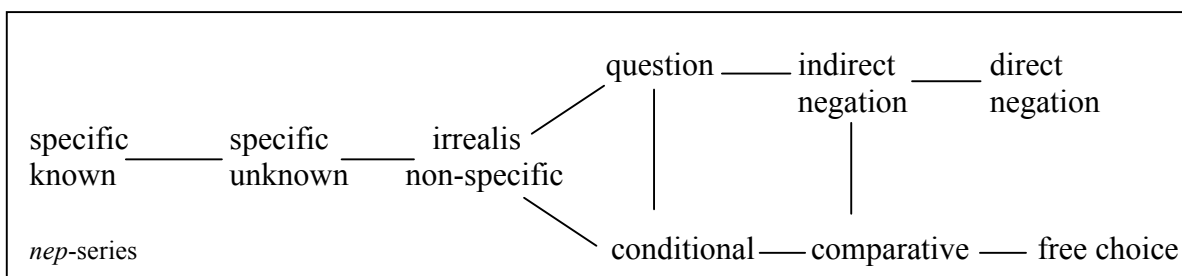
8 Cornish indefinites

Middle Cornish indefinites effectively form a single series with a distribution that is not sensitive to negative polarity; that is, all items are found in negative, non-assertive and affirmative contexts. The system is thus as in Figure 7.5. The forms themselves are given in (143).

(143) *nep*-series

person	<i>den</i> (<i>vyth</i>) / <i>nep</i> (<i>onon</i>) ‘someone, anyone’
thing	<i>nep peyth</i> / <i>nep tra</i> / <i>tra</i> (<i>vyth</i>) ‘something, anything’
quantity	<i>nep</i> N ‘some, any’ (also N <i>vyth</i>)
time	<i>neffra</i> / <i>bythqueth</i> / <i>byth</i> / <i>vyth</i> / <i>nep preys</i> ‘ever, always’
place	(<i>in</i>) <i>nep pow</i> / <i>nep le</i> / <i>nep tu</i> ‘somewhere, anywhere’

Figure 7.5. Expression of indefinites in Middle Cornish



The generic nouns *den* ‘a person’ and *tra* ‘a thing’ are used alone as indefinites as in Middle Breton. The inherited quantifier *nep* ‘some, any’ may also be used with various generic nouns to create indefinites such as *nep peyth* ‘some thing’ or *nep preys* ‘some time’. This strategy is used to create various place indefinites with the generic nouns *pow* ‘country’, *le* ‘place’ and *tu* ‘side’. Of these, *nep pow* seems to show the greatest degree of grammaticalization and greatest degree of semantic separation from its etymological source.

Examples in (144) and (145) show lack of sensitivity to negative polarity: *nep le* ‘somewhere, anywhere’ is used indiscriminately in an affirmative context in (144) and in a negative context in (145).

- (144) Hy re gafes dyhogel /dor dyseghys **yn nep le**.
 she PERF get.PAST.3SG certainly earth dried-out in some place
 ‘She has certainly found dry land somewhere.’ (*The Ancient Cornish Drama, Origo mundi*, ll. 1143–4, Middle Cornish)
- (145) rag bytqueth my ny welys /benen thy’m a wel plekye
 for ever I NEG see.PAST.1SG woman to-me RELbetter please.IMPF.3SG
 /wheth **yn nep le**
 yet in any place
 ‘For never have I seen a woman who pleased me more in any place.’ (*The Ancient Cornish Drama, Origo mundi*, ll. 2107–9, Middle Cornish)

Strikingly, this patterning is even extended to the English loanword *neffra* (< Old or Early Middle English *næfra* ‘never’), which adopts the distribution of its Middle Cornish equivalent *bythqueth*, and is therefore found in both negative and affirmative contexts. Example (146) shows its unexpected affirmative use to mean ‘always’.

- (146) ha **neffra** me a ’th vynyk.
 and ever I PRT you bless.PRES.3SG
 ‘and I shall always bless you.’ (*Bewnans Ke*, l. 791, Middle Cornish)

The only sensitivity to negative polarity seems to be introduced by the item *vyth* ‘ever’, which may optionally be added to a generic noun to create a weak negative polarity item:

- (147) Mars ues **den vith** a vyn cows /py gul
 if be.PRES.3SG person ever REL want.PRES.3SG speak.INF or do.INF
 erbyn both e vres ...
 against will his heart
 ‘If there’s anyone who speaks or acts against the wishes of his heart.’ (*Bewnans Ke*, ll.
 1496–7, Middle Cornish)

In such cases, the temporal sense of *vyth* ‘ever’ seems to have bleached, and it typically follows the generic noun immediately, which is suggestive of grammaticalization. It is possible that Late Cornish developed this more fully to give rise to polarity sensitivity, encouraged by contact with English, with *nabonnen* (< Middle Cornish *nep onon* ‘some one’) corresponding in distribution to English *someone* and *denveeth* (< Middle Cornish *den vyth* ‘person ever’) corresponding to *anyone* (but see also Wmffre 1998: 24, 39):

- (148) ha na ore **denveeth** ...
 and NEG know.PRES.3SG anyone
 ‘and no one knows ...’ (*The Cornish writings of the Boson family*, p. 29, c. 1660–
 1700)

Pervasive lack of sensitivity to negative polarity in indefinites is unique to Middle Cornish among the Brythonic languages. It has no parallel in English – indeed, the later emergence of sensitivity to negative polarity is likely to be due to contact with English – but has parallels in Old Irish (cf. examples (156) and (157) below), and hence is a good candidate for a feature that reflects the syntax of the parent language (see section 9.1 below).

9 Issues in the reconstruction of Brythonic indefinites

9.1 *Neb* in Common Brythonic

Brythonic Celtic languages make extensive use of indefinites arising via grammaticalizations based on generic nouns. In most cases, the earliest items based on generic nouns are different enough to suggest that the Brythonic parent language possessed a productive pool of forms, with the daughter languages only later fixing on particular items. For instance, in the case of indefinites for things, Middle Welsh *dim*, Middle Breton *nep tra* > *netra* and *tra* and Cornish *neb peyth* and *neb tra* ‘anything, something’ are grammaticalizations of the same general type, all derived from generic nouns meaning ‘thing’, but are based on different lexical items. We can conclude that Brythonic made extensive use of generic nouns for indefinites, but that particular items had not yet conventionalized or else had conventionalized differently in different areas. Some similarity of patterning in grammaticalization in Cornish and Breton suggest this latter option to some extent.

All medieval Brythonic languages share a quantifier *neb, nep* ‘any’. Cornish allows it freely across affirmative and negative contexts, while Middle Welsh and Middle Breton show more complex patterning. In addition to using *neb* as a weak negative polarity item, both allow *neb* as the antecedent of a free relative. This is illustrated for Middle Welsh in (149).

(149) A 'r **neb** a dodes hut ar y wlat, a beris bot
and the anyone PRT put.PAST.3SG magic on the land PRT cause.PAST.3SG be.INF
y gaer yma.

the fortress here

‘And whoever bewitched the land caused the fortress to be here.’ (*Pedeir Keinc y Mabinogi* 56.4–5, Middle Welsh)

Furthermore, *neb* is also an element within the specific unknown indefinite quantifier *nebun* ‘any’ (< *neb* + *un* ‘one’), which occurs freely in both negative polarity and non-negative-polarity environments. Its use in an affirmative environment is given in (150).

- (150) ... e wynvydedic wryr a emdangosses y **nebun** yscolheic
the blessed virgin PRT appear.PAST.3SG to some scholar
a dywedut urthav ...
and say.INF to.3MSG
‘... the Blessed Virgin appeared to some (a certain) scholar and said to him ...’
(*Gwyrthyeu e wynvydedic Veir*, Peniarth 14, p. 19, ll. 5–6, Middle Welsh)

Both these uses are archaic today.

These uses of *neb* in Middle Welsh and Middle Breton are surprising, since these languages do not otherwise allow *neb* in affirmative contexts. When compared to more general use of *neb* in affirmative contexts in Cornish, the Welsh and Breton use looks like the fossilized relic of an earlier more productive system. For instance, it looks as though Middle Welsh *nebun* was created as an item at a point when Welsh did allow affirmative uses of *neb*. This suggests that the Cornish pattern, with *neb* freely available in affirmative, non-assertive and negative contexts, is the one that should be reconstructed for the Brythonic parent language.

Middle Welsh and Cornish use *neb* also as an animate indefinite pronoun. Middle Breton, apart from its use as an antecedent to free relatives, does not use it as a pronoun. However, such use is attested in Old Breton, and should therefore be reconstructed for the whole of the Brythonic parent language:

(151) Na dimicit nep.

NEG despise.IMPER.2PL anyone

‘Do not despise anyone.’ (Fleuriot 1964a: 262) (Old Breton)

We can conclude that the Brythonic ancestor of *neb* was both a pronoun and a quantifier, and was freely available in all environments, both affirmative and negative.

The Old Irish quantifier *nach / na* (the ‘dependent’ form of *nech / ní* ‘anyone / anything’) is also cognate. This item is evidently pronominal in origin (< Common Celtic *ne-k^wos NEG + ‘who’) (see section 9.2 below), so the use of *neb* as an adnominal quantifier, in (85) above, is an innovation, based on the abductive reanalysis given in (152).

(152) [DP *neb*] > [DP [Q *neb*] [NP \emptyset]]

anyone any

In (152), *neb* is hypothesized to contain a null head noun and therefore to be an adnominal quantifier rather than, or perhaps in addition to, being a pronoun. Once this reanalysed structure becomes entrenched, it is manifested by the emergence of examples such as (85). Given that use of *neb* as a quantifier is paralleled by the syntax of the cognate items in Old Irish and Middle Breton, we could posit that this reanalysis took place early on in the development of the Celtic languages; however, this reanalysis is so common crosslinguistically that independent innovation in Brythonic and Goidelic cannot be ruled out. The original morphological formation of *neb* is based on the animate form of the interrogative pronoun. This is reflected in Middle Welsh by the fact that pronominal *neb* is animate (‘anyone’ rather than ‘anything’), and that the free-relative antecedent *y neb* is also restricted to animate uses (‘anyone who, whoever’ rather than ‘anything that, whatever’). On the other

hand, quantifier *neb* is possible with a following inanimate, as in (86) above. Historically, this must therefore represent an extension in the environments in which it occurs. It is made possible by the fact that Brythonic does not continue the neuter forms of the pronoun (found in Old Irish as *ní* ‘anything’, *na* ‘any’). The evidence of Breton and Cornish, where quantifier *nep* is used irrespective of animacy, suggests that either: (i) Welsh *neb* was once used more widely for inanimates, and that its rarity with inanimate nouns is due to competition from the innovative quantifier *dim*; or (more economically) that Middle Welsh is conservative and maintains an original restriction to use with an animate head noun.

Quantifier *dim*, on the other hand, is a Welsh innovation, as it is not found in any other Celtic language. It is based on the same form of reanalysis as posited for *neb*, only based on the indefinite pronoun *dim* ‘anything’. That is, *dim* ‘anything’ is (abductively) hypothesized to contain a null or elided head noun:

- (153) [DP *dim*] > [DP [Q *dim*] [NP \emptyset]]
 anything any

Once this hypothesis is accepted, a new item, quantifier *dim* is posited and phrases like that in (83) become possible.

The Welsh quantifier *yr un*, ‘run’ ‘any, no’ has parallels in other Celtic languages, principally in Irish. Although Middle Breton and Cornish have some examples where *un* / *unan* can be interpreted as meaning ‘any’, they are fairly rare, suggesting that this use had not become grammaticalized in these languages. The development of *un* into an indefinite article in Middle Breton (but not in Welsh or Cornish) may have precluded the development of the quantifier. Irish *aon* ‘one’ shows a greater tendency to develop into an ‘any’-word, but this

development is so common crosslinguistically (cf. English *any* < Old English *ǣnig* derivative of ‘one’) that the development in Irish is likely to be independent.

9.2 Common Celtic and the historical development of Old Irish *nech*, Middle Welsh *nep*

In the documented history of Welsh, it is clear that, in very general terms, *nep* becomes more negative, as was seen in section 6.5 above. In Middle Welsh, it has non-negative non-assertive uses and appears in contexts entirely unconnected with negation. However, in Present-day Welsh, it is an inherently negative item. This seems like a straightforward unidirectional development. However, problems arise when we turn to internal and comparative reconstruction.

Brythonic *nep* is cognate with the Old Irish indefinite pronoun *nech* (masculine and feminine), *ní* (neuter). In Old Irish, the ‘independent’ forms *nech* and *ní* are used as pronouns ‘anyone’ and ‘anything’ respectively. Parallel ‘dependent’ forms exist, *nach* (masculine and feminine) and *na* (neuter). These are used as adnominal quantifiers ‘any’. These forms are found in negative polarity contexts, whether negative, as in (154), or other non-assertive environments, as in (155).

(154) *ním-raib ní*

NEG+1SG-be.PRES.3SG anything

‘may I not have anything (*Zeitschrift für Celtische Philologie* 7: 308, §1) (*Dictionary of the Irish Language*, s.v. 1 *ní*)

(155) *cech duine shirfess ni fort*

every man seek.FUT.REL anything on.2SG

‘every man who (whoever) shall ask anything of you’ (*Leabhar Breac* 462) (*Dictionary of the Irish Language*, s.v. 1 *ní*)

They have non-negative uses rather more extensively than their Middle Welsh cognates. *Nach* etc. is used in affirmative environments to meaning ‘some’ and ‘something’:

(156) itá nách cumachta fora cul na n-én-sa
 be.PRES.3SG some power behind the birds-DEM
 ‘there is some power behind these birds’ (*Serglige Conculain* 7) (*Dictionary of the Irish Language*, s.v. 1 *nach*)

(157) ní do thabairt do neuch
 something.ACC to give.INF to someone.DAT
 ‘to give something to someone’ (glossing *aliquid proferre*) (*Milan glosses* 98.a.4)
 (*Dictionary of the Irish Language*, s.v. 1 *ní*)

Old Irish *nech* may serve as the antecedent to a free relative, although in contrast to Middle Welsh usage in (149), it is not preceded by a definite article in a free relative construction:

(158) comalnad neich forchanat
 fulfilling any.NEUT.GEN teach.PRES.3PL
 ‘fulfilling of what they teach’ (*Würzburg glosses* 29a.11) (Thurneysen 1946: 309)

The neuter form *ní* already shows some nominal (as opposed to pronominal) properties, as a noun meaning ‘thing’, in Old Irish. It combines with the quantifier *na* to give *na-nní* or *na ní* ‘anything whatever’ and it also combines with *cach* ‘every’ to form *cach ní* ‘everything’ (Thurneysen 1946: 310). Combinations with the modifying adjective *mór* ‘big, great’ to give *mór ní* ‘a great thing, greatly’ are also found already in Old Irish (*Dictionary of the Irish*

Language, s.v. 2 *ní*). This development has continued in the transition to the modern Goidelic languages, where *ní* has left the pronominal system, acquiring even more nominal characteristics, for instance, a plural form, Scottish Gaelic *nithean* ‘things’, Irish *nithe*. This is a surprising development, since it represents a counterexample to the generalization that grammaticalization is unidirectional. In the current instance, a pronominal element (an indefinite pronoun) develops into a noun. It is thus an instance of degrammaticalization. In fact, the same degrammaticalization has occurred in Bulgarian, where the pronoun *nešto* ‘anything, something’ developed into a common noun ‘thing’ (Willis 2007). In the Irish case, this unexpected change may be attributed to two factors. First, Irish has a series of generic nouns that function as pronouns in negative polarity contexts; for instance, *rud* functions both as a negative polarity indefinite pronoun (‘anything’) and as a generic common noun (‘thing’) (cf. also *duine* ‘person, anyone’). Effectively, *ní* was assimilated to this group. Secondly, the morphologically irregular link between the neuter (*ní*) and masculine/feminine (*nech*) forms of the pronoun could easily be broken, leading to the two being treated as independent items.

Old Irish *nech* and Middle Welsh *nep* clearly go back to a Common Celtic formation **ne-k^wos*. Thurneysen suggests that this was itself a negative pronoun ‘no one’ and that it lost its negative force, coming to mean ‘someone, anyone’ (Thurneysen 1946: 311). Lewis & Pedersen, on the other hand, seem to envisage the original item to have been a free-choice pronoun, suggesting that **ne-k^wos* was short for **k^wos ne-k^wos* ‘someone, someone not’, which seems to imply an original meaning of ‘someone or other, anyone or other’ (Lewis and Pedersen 1937: 233). On Thurneysen’s view, **ne-k^wos* went from negative to non-negative in Common Celtic, before becoming negative again in Welsh. On the first account, this would involve a change of the type given in (159), which Haspelmath (1997: 230) suggests is an impossible direction of change.

(159) NEG V ... NEG-indefinite > NEG V ... (non-NEG) indefinite

Haspelmath considers the Celtic case as a possible counterexample to this generalization, and it is in fact the only possible counterexample for which he is not able to suggest an alternative account. However, there are good reasons for rejecting it as an instance of the development in (159). First of all, on Thurneysen's account, it is not really clear what the basis for the formation is in the first place. On the other hand there are parallels for Lewis and Pedersen's suggestion, for instance the parallel formations of Lithuanian *kas nekas* 'something' and Hindi / Urdu *koi na koi* 'somebody' (Haspelmath 1997: 232). If Lewis and Pedersen are correct, then we have an original free-choice indefinite pronoun that generalizes as an ordinary indefinite in Common Celtic, and then narrows towards negative environments in Welsh. This is entirely in accord with the general patterns of change expected.

9.3 Use of 'world' as a reinforcer in Celtic

We have seen that use of (*yn y*) *byd* to reinforce an indefinite pronoun / negative quantifier is pervasive in Welsh. Although most striking in the case of *dim byd* 'nothing', it occurs sporadically in other parts of the system (cf. examples (77)–(79) above, and also dialectally in *lle'm byd* 'nowhere' < 'place in the world'). We have also seen that Breton creates a postnominal negative quantifier *ebet* from the phrase *en bet* 'in the world':

(160) N' eus den ebet en ti.

NEG be.PRES.3SG person in-world in house

'There's no one at home.' (Present-day Breton)

This presents an interesting question of language contact. All Celtic languages show pervasive use of items cognate with Welsh *byd* ‘world’ to reinforce indefinite pronouns and negative quantifiers. In Irish, *ar bith* ‘in the world’ serves as a regular negative polarity indefiniteness marker:

- (161) Má tá airgead ar bith agat ...
 if be.PRES.3SG money on world at.2SG
 ‘If you have any money ...’ (Haspelmath 1997: 229) (Present-day Irish)

It is also used to produce unambiguous negative polarity indefinite pronouns from generic nouns, hence *duine ar bith* ‘anyone’ from *duine* ‘person, anyone’:

- (162) An bhfuil duine ar bith ann?
 Q be.PRES.3SG.DEP person on world there
 ‘Is there anyone there?’ (Present-day Irish)

Use of items denoting ‘world’ as reinforcers in such contexts is rare crosslinguistically. Irish is the only case noted by Haspelmath (Haspelmath 1997: 229). It therefore appears unlikely that the uses across the various Celtic languages are independent of one another. On the other hand, grammaticalization of these items clearly dates to the period of attested written records. We have seen, for instance, that Welsh *dim byd* is a recent innovation as a fixed unit, while free combinations involving *yn y byd* ‘in the world’ go back to Middle Welsh. The same seems, in broad terms, to be the case in the other Celtic languages. The most reasonable conclusion is that we are dealing here with ‘slope’ in the sense of Sapir (1949 [1921]: 155): ‘the changes of the next few centuries are in a sense prefigured in certain obscure tendencies

of the present and that these changes, when consummated, will be seen to be but continuations of changes that have been already effected'. It seems likely that the phrase 'in the world' was used freely as a marker of emphasis in the Celtic parent language, and the daughter languages have all grammaticalized it in negative environments, differing somewhat in the exact uses and contexts where it is grammaticalized.

10 Negative objects and negative infinitives

10.1 Negative definite objects and negative infinitives

Welsh has developed special marking for negated definite direct objects and infinitives.

Already in Middle Welsh *dim o*, originally the indefinite pronoun (argument *dim*) plus the preposition *o* 'of' began to spread from partitive contexts to being a more general way of marking a direct object in the scope of negation (cf. the rather similar phenomena of the genitive of negation in Slavonic, section 9.4, and use of *de* 'of' with objects in the scope of negation in French, section 2.2.1). That no partitive meaning is any longer conveyed is clearest when the object is a singular pronoun:

- (163) A mi a wnn na wrthyt ef **dim** **ohonat ti**
 and I PRT know.PRES.1SG NEG.COMP reject.PRES.3SG he anything of.2SG you.SG
 'And I know he will not reject you ...' (*Ystoryaeu Seint Greal* 1423, Middle Welsh)

This pattern is also found with the subject of an unaccusative verb, typically *bot* 'be':

(164) ac nyt oed **dim** **ohonaw** yno.

and NEG be.IMPF.3SG anything of.3MSG there

‘... [they looked where they had put the boy,] and he wasn’t there’ (*Pedeir Keinc y Mabinogi* 20.11, Middle Welsh)

It is also found in late Middle Welsh with an infinitive in the scope of negation:

(165) Ny elleis i yr ys deng mlyned **dim** o ’r **kerdet**.

NEG can.PAST.1SG I since ten years anything of PRT walk.INF

‘I haven’t been able to walk for ten years.’ (*Ystoryaeu Seint Greal* 5607–8, Middle Welsh)

This is shortened to *mo* in all major contexts by the sixteenth century, perhaps earlier (Morris-Jones 1913: 314). Examples are given below with *mo* marking a definite direct object in (166), the subject of a negated unaccusative verb in (167), and an infinitive in the scope of negation in (168).

(166) A thross hynny ni chafas **mo** 'r gwassanaeth gan Mr. Wels.
 and for this NEG get.PAST.3SG NEG the service with Mr. Wels
 ‘And for this he didn’t get the service from Mr. Wels.’ (*Rhyddiaith Gymraeg* ii.51,
 1582)

(167) ... yr hwn a ddywedodd, nad oedd **moi** deyrnas ef
 the DEM REL say.PAST.3SG NEG.COMP be.IMP.F.3SG NEG+3MSG kingdom him
 or byd yma
 of-the world this
 ‘... who said that his kingdom was not of this world ...’ (Jakob Böhme, *Yr ymroddiad
 neu bapuryn a gyfieuthiwyd ddwywaith i helpu y cymru unwaith allan or hunan ar
 drygioni*, p. 79, 1657)

(168) ... am ryw negess ni allai **mo** 'i wnevthyd ...
 for some errand NEG can.IMP.F.3SG NEG 3MSG do.INF
 ‘... for some errand that he could not do ...’ (*Rhyddiaith Gymraeg* ii.50, 1582)

This pattern is also found with indefinite objects in a few environments (Morgan 1987).

One subtype of this pattern has given rise to a new negative auxiliary across a large area of south Wales. Consider (169), where the verb is *bod* ‘be’ in an existential construction, and the definite subject is marked with *mo*.

(169) ...**nid** oes **mor** gallu ganddo i wneuthura fynno.
 NEG be.PRES.3SG NEG+the ability with.3MSG to do.INF RELwant.PRES.SUBJ.3SG
 ‘... he hasn’t got the ability to do what he wants.’ (Jakob Böhme, *Yr ymroddiad neu
 bapuryn a gyfieuthiwyd ddwywaith i helpu y cymru unwaith allan or hunan ar
 drygioni* 38, 1657)

In southern varieties, the sequence of *nid oes mo* was contracted to *smo* (also *simo*, *so* and *sa*), which becomes a negative auxiliary verb. The contraction itself will give rise directly to sentences like (170).

- (170) *Smo 'r gath 'ma.*
 NEG.AUX.3SG the cat here
 ‘The cat isn’t here.’ (Present-day southern Welsh)

In the varieties in question, *smo* has spread to be the negative of the present tense of the verb ‘be’ in all contexts, including, for instance, periphrastic tenses that use auxiliary ‘be’, as with the present progressive in (171).

- (171) *Smo fi 'n gweitho heddi.*
 NEG.AUX.1SG I PROG work.INF today
 ‘I’m not working today.’ (Present-day southern Welsh)

Another pattern of contraction from *nid oes mohono* ‘he isn’t’ gives another variant of the same auxiliary, *sano* (Morris 1910).

Many southern varieties have also undergone another non-Jespersen development. In these varieties, the negative responsive particle *na(g)* has been generalized to become a possible marker of negation in any clause:

(172) **Nag** 'yn ni 'n prynu bara o 'r siop, fel pobl normal.

NEG be.PRES.1PLwe PROG buy.INF bread from the shop likepeople normal

'We don't buy bread from the shop like normal people.'

(<http://tadarmab.wordpress.com>)

Effectively, the pragmatic limitation on *na(g)* as occurring only in responses to yes–no questions failed to be acquired in the history of these dialects. Generalization of *na(g)* to embedded clauses in place of *na(d)* is also very common, again predominantly in the south.

10.2 Negation in other nonfinite contexts

In general, nonfinite verbs are not negated directly in Middle Welsh. If they need to be negated independently of the finite verb on which they depend, then the clause is made finite (either indicative or subjunctive) and this finite clause is negated:

(173) Ni allaf i na chyscwyf.

NEG can.PRES.1SG I NEG.COM sleep.PRES.SUBJ.1SG

'I cannot not sleep.' (*Gereint, White Book Mabinogion* 427.23) (Richards 1948: 377)

In Present-day Welsh, nonfinite verbs can be negated directly using the negative auxiliary *peidio*. While this is also an ordinary lexical verb meaning 'stop, cease' (see also section 12 on negative imperatives below), it is used with nonfinite verbs with purely grammatical meaning:

- (174) Dwi 'n methu peidio cysgu.
 be.PRES.1SG PROG be-unable.INF NEG sleep.INF
 'I cannot not sleep.' (Present-day Welsh)

There are very limited environments where this is possible in Middle Welsh. It is found only in bipartite embedded nonfinite yes–no focus questions where the nonfinite verb is elided in the second clause, that is, the pattern in (175).

- (175) Guedy treiglav o Ioachym yn y vedul beth a vnelei
 after turn.INF of Ioachim in 3MSG mind what PRT do.IMP.F.SUBJ.3SG
 ae ymchuelut ae **peidyav** ...
 Q.FOCUS return.INF Q.FOCUS NEG
 'After Ioachim had considered in his mind what he should do, whether to return or not ...' (*Mabinogi Iesu Grist*, Peniarth 5, folio 15r, ll. 19–20, Middle Welsh)

Even here, it is not the only possibility and a finite clause without ellipsis is possible instead:

- (176) dewis di ae kerdet ae **na cherdych.**
 choose.IMPER.2SG you Q.FOCUS walk.INF Q.FOCUS NEG walk.PRES.SUBJ.2SG
 'Choose whether to walk or not to walk.' (*Breudwyt Ronabwy*, Jesus 111, folio 136r, col. 561, l. 27, Middle Welsh)

From this context, use of *peidio* to negate a nonfinite verb seems to spread to other contexts, reaching the dominant position that it has today.

11 Constituent negation and focus

In Middle Welsh, constituent negation is expressed using the particle *nyt*. Note that this differs from the sentential negation marker *ny(t)* in that the final /d/ (orthographic <t>) is always present, irrespective of whether the following word begins with a vowel. The element in the scope of constituent negation normally fronts:

- (177) **nyt** teilygdawt uy anryded a 'm etteil am hynny
 NEG worthiness 1SG honour PRT 1SG.ACC prevent.PRES.3SG on this
 'It is not the honour of my rank that prevents me from [doing] this.' (*Pedeir Keinc y Mabinogi* 2.10–11, Middle Welsh)

In embedded clauses, if there is fronting of the element in the scope of negation, then the subordinate constituent negation marker *nat*, is used. Again, this is distinguished from the marker of sentential negation in subordinate clauses by obligatory presence of the final /d/:

- (178) A ryued oed genhyf, **nat** kyn rodi morwyn gystal a
 and strange be.IMPF.3SG with.1SGNEG.COMP.FOCUS before give.INF maiden as-good as
 honno ym, y gwneit y gwaradwyd a wnelit ym.
 that to-me PRT do.IMPF.IMPERSthe disgrace PRTdo.IMPF.SUBJ.IMPERS to-me
 'And I found it strange that it was not before giving a maiden as good as that to me
 that the disgrace that was perpetrated against me was done.' (*Pedeir Keinc y Mabinogi*
 33.1–3, Middle Welsh)

While this remains a possible standard pattern today, a number of dialect or colloquial variants have very wide currency. For main clause constituent negation, we also find *dim*,

ddim and *nage*. The first two represent the extension of different forms of the sentential negation marker *ddim* to mark constituent negation. The third looks superficially like an extension of the anaphoric negator *nage* ‘no’ used in response to focus questions to be a marker of constituent negation in its own right, although it is unclear if that is actually what happened.

In embedded clauses, affirmative focus markers have tended to spread, giving rise to combinations such as *mai ddim* to mark embedded focus, where *mai* is the affirmative embedded focus marker and *ddim* is the negative focus marker:

- (179) Dwi ’n sicr mai (d)dim ni oedd e.
 be.PRES.1SG PRED sure FOCUS NEG us be.IMP.3SG it
 ‘I’m sure it wasn’t *us*.’ (lit. ‘I’m sure that it’s not us that it was.’) (Present-day Welsh)

This replaces the more traditional pattern, still current, in which embedded negative focus clauses are marked using *nad*, an embedded counterpart for the main-clause focus marker *nid*:

- (180) Dwi ’n sicr nad ni oedd e.
 be.PRES.1SG PRED sure FOCUS.NEG us be.IMP.3SG it
 ‘I’m sure it wasn’t *us*.’ (lit. ‘I’m sure that it’s not us that it was.’) (Present-day Welsh)

12 Negative imperatives

Middle Welsh negated imperatives using the preverbal marker *na(c)* (Modern Welsh *na(g)*), which was illustrated above in section 3.1, example (12). In Present-day spoken Welsh, this is no longer possible, and in place of a true negative imperative we find a negative auxiliary,

singular *paid*, plural *peidiwch*, followed by the preposition *â* ‘with’ (now optional) and a nonfinite verb:

- (181) *Paid* (*â*) *gadael!*
 NEG.2SG with leave.INF
 ‘Don’t leave!’ (Present-day Welsh)

Furthermore, the expected output of Jespersen’s Cycle does not arise. In main clauses postverbal *ddim* ultimately replaces preverbal *ni(d)*. We might expect a parallel development in imperatives, with postverbal *ddim* replacing preverbal *na(g)*. While *na ... ddim* is occasionally found, postverbal *ddim* is not generalized with imperatives and is now ungrammatical:

- (182) **Ad* *ddim!* **Dere* *ddim!*
 leave.IMPER.2SG NEG come.IMPER.2SG NEG
 ‘Don’t leave!’ ‘Don’t come!’ (Present-day Welsh)

Paid is the imperative of the verb *peidio* ‘cease, stop’, a verb that remains in the language, but, in (181), it functions simply in place of a negative imperative. It is not limited to inhibitive readings. It does not imply that a leaving event has begun or that there has been a previous leaving event, and so does not have the expected compositional meaning ‘Stop leaving!’ There is little evidence that *paid* was used for ordinary negative imperatives in Middle Welsh. Middle Welsh examples such as (183) are open to a purely compositional interpretation with the ‘stop’ meaning:

(183) Yna y dy6at Maxen 6rth y 6yr, ‘Kymeruch Porffir heb ohir a dyguch y ganta6 y eneit, a’e aelodeu.’ Porffir a gyuodes y ar y veigc, ac a gymerth ysgaul yn y la6, a phedeir mil o wyr Maxen a ladaud ef rac bronn Maxen. Ac yna yd ofynnes Maxen, ac y cryna6d rac ofyn o tebygu y lledit ynteu. A phedeir mil ereill a vrathaud Porffir. Ac yna Catrin a 6elas hynny ac a dy6at 6rth Porffir, ‘**Peit a’e llad** a choffa dioddeieuint Du6 yn hargl6yd ny Iessu Grist.’

‘Then Maxen said to his men, “Capture Porffir without delay and take away his soul and his limbs.” Porffir got up from his bench, and took a ladder in his hand, and he killed four thousand of Maxen’s men in front of Maxen. And then Maxen took fright, and trembled with fear thinking that he too would be killed. And Porffir wounded another four thousand. And then Catrin saw this and said to Porffir, “**Stop killing them** and remember the suffering of our Lord God Jesus Christ.”’ (*Buched Catrin Sant*, Peniarth 5, folio 22v, ll. 30–6, Middle Welsh)

By the eighteenth century, however, *paid* had spread to ordinary negative imperatives, and had therefore become a prohibitive marker. Example (184), for instance, seems to mean ‘don’t kill’ and not ‘stop killing’.

(184) **paid** tithe a lladd yr henddun
 NEG.2SG you.CONJ with kill.INF the old-man
 ‘Don’t kill the old man.’ (*Brenin Llur*, l. 1192, 1700–50)

The two co-exist in the eighteenth century, the former pattern with preverbal *na(g)* still being found productively in colloquial texts, alongside the new pattern with *paid*:

(185) **Na** ddewch ddim i mewn yma.

NEG bcome.IMPER.2PLNEG to in here

‘Don’t come in here.’ (*Welsh defamation suits*, Archdeaconry of Brecon, 1771)

(186) **paid** ai fissio:

NEG.2SG with+2MS miss.INF

‘Don’t miss it.’ (Edward Thomas, *Cwyp dyn* 45.14, 1767)

However, negative imperatives with *na(g)* seem to have died out in speech soon afterwards, in the nineteenth century. The loss of true negative imperative occurs at about the same time as the loss of the preverbal negative marker *ni(d)* in main clauses, and it is tempting to connect it with Jespersen’s Cycle. In both cases, a preverbal negative particle is renewed by formerly lexical material, but, by adopting a different strategy, the imperative retains preverbal marking of negation. As Horn (1989: 449–50) notes, the Neg First principle is particularly strong in imperatives, and the introduction of *paid*, rather than the expected diffusion of postverbal *ddim* in imperatives (to give the pattern in (182) above), may have been preferred because it allows the negative content of imperatives to be accessed immediately.

Other accounts of why languages often lack true negative imperatives have linked this phenomenon to a variety of factors. Postma and Van der Wurff (2007) link absence of true negative imperatives to ambiguity between the anaphoric negator and the negative particle. That is, languages with the potential for confusion between ‘No, go!’ and ‘Don’t go!’ disallow negative imperatives. While this is difficult to evaluate in Welsh, which does not have and never has had a single word for ‘no’, the basic intuition here does not seem promising: contrary to the prediction of this approach, no significant changes are observed in the anaphoric negator at the time when true negatives disappear.

More promising generally is Zeijlstra's (2004, 2006) proposal that whether a language has true negative imperatives depends on properties of its negative marker. Zeijlstra argues, following Han (2001), that the imperative operator must outscope the negative operator by moving to c-command it. Languages with negative heads bearing interpretable negation [iNeg] (for instance, Italian) lack true negative imperatives, because the negative head blocks movement of the imperative verb to a position above the interpretable negation. Conversely, a language where the negative marker is phrasal will always allow true negative imperatives because a marker in a phrasal position cannot prevent head movement of the imperative verb to a position c-commanding negation. These claims are summed up in Zeijlstra's (2006: 414) two generalizations:

- (187) G1: Every language with an overt negative marker X^0 that carries [iNeg] bans true negative imperatives.
- G2: Every language that bans true negative imperatives exhibits an overt negative marker X^0 .

The Middle Welsh pattern with *na(g)* can be successfully accounted for using this system. Although Middle Welsh negators are all negative heads, there are no syntactic differences between preverbal and postverbal n-words, and hence, in Zeijlstra's system, the negative particles could be uninterpretable, with negation taking scope from an interpretable abstract negative operator in Spec, NegP. While both *na(g)* and the imperative verb would move to C, only the imperative verb would bear an operator feature, and hence the imperative operator in C would outscope the abstract negative operator in Spec, NegP. The appearance of *na(g)* as the negative particle rather than the indicative particle *ni(d)* would simply mean that the Middle Welsh negative particles were sensitive to the realis–irrealis distinction.

However, problems arise when we consider the shift to the Present-day Welsh system. Jespersen's Cycle results in the creation of a new phrasal negator *ddim*, which for Zeijlstra would be located in Spec, NegP, bearing an interpretable [iNeg] feature. Occupying a specifier position, *ddim* cannot block movement of the verb from Neg to C. Thus, the configuration in (188), in which the imperative operator legitimately c-commands the negative operator, should be available in Present-day Welsh.

- (188) *Dere ddim!
 come.IMPER.2SG NEG
 [CP [C dere] [NegP ddim [Neg ~~dere~~] [VP ~~dere~~]]]
 [iImp] [iNeg]

This approach then also ultimately fails to account for the loss of true negative imperatives in Welsh.

In Breton, Jespersen's Cycle spread the bipartite pattern to imperatives, giving a pattern parallel to French:

- (189) N' a ket re vuan!
 NEG go.IMPER.2SG NEG too fast
 'Don't go too fast!'

However, while the pattern in (189) survives, there is an increasing tendency to avoid true negative imperatives, substituting either the present indicative, as in (190), or a negative imperative marker *arabat* (from *arabat da X ober Y* 'it is folly for X to do Y') plus a nonfinite verb, as in (191) (Hemon 1975: 258, Favereau 1997: 201, 252–3).

(190) N' ez ket re vuan!

NEG go.PRES.2SG NEG too fast

'Don't go too fast!'

(191) Arabat mont re vuan!

NEG go.INF too fast

'Don't go too fast!'

The reasons for the ongoing loss of true negative imperatives in Breton are not clear, but it seems unlikely to be related to a change in the status of the ordinary sentential negator.

13 Conclusion

This chapter has surveyed the extensive changes that Brythonic Celtic negation has undergone in almost all areas over the past thousand years. We have seen how independent Jespersen Cycles have arisen in both Welsh and Breton, yielding new postverbal markers of negation in both languages. In the indefinite system, the general trend has been towards the specialization of former negative polarity items as purely negative items, with various new items being created from various sources, including free-choice items, to fill the gap left behind.

Comparison of the daughter languages suggests a parent language with relatively little sensitivity to negative polarity, such sensitivity developing over the history of the languages. Of the various minor developments outside of these areas, perhaps the most significant is the loss of negative imperatives, above all in Welsh. In all of these areas, the Brythonic Celtic developments have the potential to provide an important source of comparative data to help us understand the ways in which many aspects of negative systems develop.

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